

Mystery Jerusalem Rising



The history of God's intervention in space-time

by
Dallas Carter

Mystery Jerusalem Rising is a historical view of the God's intervention in history over the past 5000 years. Read more to see the development of God's story from Creation to the Second Coming of Jesus. (While this book is live, it is still under development)

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Ch 1: A Tale of Two Religions

Many people in this age believe that the religious landscape is very diverse. This is one of the chief arguments used to rebuff the authority of Christianity and the Bible. However, I believe that this diversity is rather misleading. While the religious landscape would seem diverse when measured in terms of differing perspectives and interpretations, when seen in terms of basic meta-narratives, there are only two religions: Mystery Babylon and Judeo-Christian meta-narrative

Mystery Babylon

In *Mystery Babylon Rising*, I wrote that most religions of the world hold to evolutionary naturalism as their meta-narrative*. This meta-narrative asserts that the godhead is a product evolution, is itself undergoing evolution, and the product of its evolution is the created universe. The evolutionary process is the march of god in history. I also wrote that the logical conclusion of faith in the evolutionary process leads to belief in the emergence of both a global state and a world leader as god on earth.

Materialists* are not the only ones who uphold naturalistic religion. Most of the major world religions uphold a naturalistic spirituality: Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, NeoPaganism, and Hermeticism/Gnosticism.

Mysticism appears in almost all religious traditions. Mysticism asserts that we live in a two story universe. The lower story is the domain of facts and reason discernible through the natural senses or the scientific method; these are given generally to people. The upper story is beyond naturalistic reason and given only to an enlightened elite. Wherever Mysticism appears in naturalistic religion, it is always a disguise for Hermeticism or Gnosticism.

Materialism appears to deny the upper story, but there are three reasons to believe that materialist, in actuality, embrace the upper story. The impossibility of living life in a logically consistent manner in just the lower story, the mysticism underlying the materialist's faith in science and evolution, and the political convergence between the materialistic interpretations of evolution and that of other naturalistic religions.

It is impossible to live life in a logically consistent manner in just the lower story. Because the lower story consists only of what is scientifically testable, many things in ordinary life are outside of the lower story. There is no scientific method that can confirm whether it is possible for one to be truly in love. Furthermore, there is no scientifically testable way to infer an "ought" from an "is;" ethics cannot be scientifically proven.

Mysticism underlies the materialist's faith in science and evolution. This is because science cannot be used to prove science is valid. Science is based on inductive reasoning. In 1959, Karl Popper demonstrated the futility of inductive reasoning from a materialist perspective.* Popper proceeded to unveil his criterion of falsification. Even then, he qualified his endorsement of falsification by calling it a "convention"* rather than strict logic. Materialistic science is based on a blind leap of faith.

Evolution is based on an even blinder leap of faith. Evolution, of the scale and type described by the theory of evolution, has not and cannot be tested by actual observation. Scientists take a blind leap of faith concerning events of the distant past based on an interpretation of current scientific knowledge, with no clue whether that knowledge is representative of the whole.

There is also a political convergence between the materialistic interpretations of evolution and that of other naturalistic religions that exist as a result of the commonality of thought amongst different branches. This convergence will put pressure on materialists to move closer to their pantheist brothers by mean of a mystic leap of faith.

Materialists are already making gesture to bridge the gap between them and other naturalistic religions. A movement called trans-humanism is seeking to turn humanity into gods through the use of advanced technology.**

Judeo-Christian Meta-narrative

The Judeo-Christian meta-narrative begins with the existence of a Self Existent God who created the universe. God also created man in his image. While we do not have the same essence as God, the state of being created in God's image means that we have the categories of God. These categories are hardwired into us, giving us a minimal amount of hardwired knowledge. The knowledge of the law of non-contradiction leads us to the knowledge of God.

“If every perception that is objectively true derives this objective truth from Absolute Truth, then the primitive categories of perception and reason are derived from truth. These primitive categories form the operating system of the human mind. From these primitive categories are formed the complex language and thought processes that we think. This also means that the other categories of imagination, morality, and free will are also derived from Absolute Truth. This means that a rational human person with imagination and free will (These categories still exist even if the content is illusory) can exist only if the Ground of all Being (Absolute truth) is a Person with the same categories and He has anointed man with these categories.

Week 33: Fundamental Knowledge of God, Equipping the Saints, para 3-4.

God not only reveals himself to individual consciences, but acts within human history. History is basically a conflict between the Judeo-Christian God and the god of Mystery Babylon. This battle is getting particularly intense in the age of globalization; the ecumenical movement is drawing together all of the religions that uphold the meta-narrative of Mystery Babylon together. The more the majority of the world's religions, and people, come together, the further the Judeo-Christian meta-narrative is pushed towards the margins.

Ch 2 – How God works in history – the Elijah Principle

The god of Mystery Babylon is portrayed as marching through the mainstream current of history. The Judeo-Christian God, while exercising sovereign supervision over all of history, focuses His plan into a counter-cultural current. God moves “against the grain.” God utilizes what I call the Elijah Principle with those He loves as His program for sustaining them and exalting them in due time. In 1 Kings 18 Elijah has a contest with the false prophets at Mt Carmel. Elijah would call upon God and the false prophets would call upon Baal. The God who answers by fire is the true God of Israel.

The deck is horrendously stacked against Elijah. He is outnumbered 850 to 1. The false prophets are given most of the day to do their thing. When it is Elijah’s turn, God tells Elijah to further stack the deck against his own self. Elijah drowns the sacrifice with water. There is no possible way for Elijah to win this contest unless his God is God. God then answers powerfully.

What happened to Elijah is the pattern for the saints. There is an initial call to faith. After a ‘honeymoon’ season, the Lord will stack the deck against His own people for a season, so that He may be glorified through the victory of the saints. God uses the suffering and triumph of the saints to prove His mighty power to an unbelieving world. If you feel like the deck is royally stacked against you, then it may be that God is bestowing upon you the same love He has given the great saints of old. We must through perseverance and tribulations enter the Kingdom of God. Enduring trials produces hope. Our assurance that hope is justified is that God loves us and has put His love into our hearts by the Holy

Spirit. Because God loves and has enabled us to love, we can hope for God to manifest deliverance with an expectation that God will come through for us.

“Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance, and perseverance, character; and character, hope. Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.”

- Romans 5:1-5

“My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.”

- James 1:2-4

The reason that tribulations produce hope is that God pours His love into our hearts. Our assurance that God has poured His love into our heart is that He is treating us like the great saints. When one studies the lives of the saints in the scriptures, a clear pattern commonly emerges as they walk towards victory. There are three stages as they fight the good fight of faith. There is the initial move of faith followed by a season of trials in the wilderness. At the end of this season the child of God reaches the turning point where God brings the victory.

The initial call to the walk of faith begins when God reveals his vision to His child. Sometimes this call goes out in the midst of pre-existing trials. Other times it is immediately followed by trials. Usually there is a

'honeymoon ' period between the initial steps of faith and the start of the tribulations.

The initial call is followed by trials, tribulations, opposition, and Satanic attacks. Sometimes this can last for years. Much of the history of the saints involves God's people waiting while enduring tribulations. These tribulations serve both a corrective purpose as well as the context through which God's power is demonstrated.

After the season of tribulation, there comes a turning point where God brings the victory. Below are several saints whose lives followed this pattern. There are several examples of these three stages in both the Scripture and in subsequent church history.

Joseph

Initial Call: God gave Joseph a dream that he would rule over his brothers.

Tribulation: Joseph was sold by his brothers into slavery and for 13 years became slave and prisoner in Egypt. His leadership experiences as a slave and prisoner prepared him to become Prime Minister of Egypt.

Victory: Joseph became Prime Minister when he both interpreted Pharaoh's dreams and gave wise counsel to Pharaoh.

Moses

Initial Call: Moses saved from death in order to be Israel's deliverer. When Moses was a baby, his parents hid him for three months. When they could no longer hide him, they placed him in a basket. He grew up in Pharaoh's house.

Tribulation: After killing one of the Pharaoh's taskmasters, Moses fled into the wilderness and lived as a shepherd for 40 years.

Victory: God called him back to Egypt to deliver the Israelites. Through great signs and wonders performed by Moses, God delivered Israel from Egyptian bondage.

Ruth

Initial Call: Determined to follow Naomi, Ruth makes profession of faith in the God of Naomi. “ For wherever you go, I will go; And wherever you lodge, I will lodge; Your people shall be my people, And your God, my God. Where you die, I will die, And there will I be buried. The LORD do so to me, and more also, If anything but death parts you and me.” was Ruth’s good confession.

Tribulation: Ruth left her home land and heritage to live as a beggar in a strange land. Naomi and Ruth arrive back in Israel at the end of a famine. The famine devastated the house of Naomi. She lost her husband and both her sons. The only thing Naomi had not lost was her daughter-in-law Ruth and her own life. Ruth took care of Naomi by gleaning wheat in the fields of Boaz.

Victory: She married Boaz and become mother to both the Royal House of David and the Messiah.

David

Initial Call: David was anointed as God’s choice for king. He began his career by killing Goliath and performed exemplary duty as a warrior. God gave David such great success as a warrior that the Israelites were saying ‘Saul has killed his thousands, and David his tens of thousands.’ (1 Sam 18:6–8)

Tribulation: Because Saul was jealous of David, he pursued and sought to kill him. David lived for a number of years as a fugitive. During this time he softened his enemies and acquired skills that would benefit him as king.

Victory: When Saul died the House of David became stronger while the House of Saul became weaker. Finally the elders of Israel crowned David King of Israel.

Jesus Christ

Initial Call: Jesus Christ was chosen by God to be Savior of the world.

Tribulation: Jesus left the glory of heaven to be clothed in human flesh. He also suffered fierce opposition as He did mighty works of God. He eventually suffered an agonizing death on the cross.

Victory: His death on the cross conquered sin and Satan's power. He conquered death by Resurrection from the dead.

Early Church

Initial Call: The Church was chosen to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ to the world.

Tribulation: Christians suffered tremendous persecution at the hands of Jews and the Roman government for 300 years. Christianity is unique among the major world religions in that it was the only one to suffer multiple generations of persecution in its developmental stage.

Victory: The growth and triumph of the Church displaced the pagan culture of Rome.

The Church in Reformation

Initial Call: The Church that overcame Rome eventually fell into backsliding in the same manner that Israel had previously done. By the end of the medieval period, there was very little about what came to be called the Roman Catholic Church that bore any resemblance to Christ's life and teachings. Human conventions had replaced the Scripture and the anointing of the Holy Spirit as the government of the church. It was

in this context that God raised up John Wycliffe to call the church back to Scripture. Wycliffe's followers were called Lollards.

Tribulation: In 1384, Wycliffe was burned at the stake. His followers, the Lollards, were driven out of England. The Lollards went to Bohemia (now the Czech Republic) where they helped John Hus start a reformation in Bohemia. After Hus' death, the Hussite wars were fought until 1431. The forces of Reformation continued to endure in Bohemia, but the remainder of Europe was still in bondage.

Victory: On October 31, 1517, Martin Luther nailed his Ninety-Five Thesis on the door of the church in Wittenberg. This caused a chain of events that led to a political paradigm shift. Those who revered the Bible as the infallible constitution of the faith and the written revelation of the gospel could now both be salt and light to the culture of the "West" and support a large, global missionary movement.

End Time Revival

Initial Call: While charismatic empowerment of the Holy Spirit has been manifest throughout church history, at the start of the twentieth century, a large scale awakening began in the church to seek the baptism of the Holy Spirit. In 1906, God poured out His Spirit in a revival at Azusa Street. This revival jump started the largest move of the supernatural since the book of Acts.

Tribulation: The main issue that has arisen against this move of God is the clash against the very thing that cooled down the first revival: the replacement of the rule of the Word and the Spirit with human institutions. This can take several forms. It can be that of institutional authority rejecting or otherwise desiring to limit the flow of the charismata or the recognition of the apostolic and prophetic offices; it

can also be self-appointed prophets who heed neither the correction of Scripture, the witness of the Lord's, nor the witness of others who have the witness of God. They are like those lawless relativists, doing "whatever is right in their own eyes" rather than following the commands of the Lord (Deuteronomy 12:8).

Victory: In order for God's church to shine in all of her glory, much of the existing man-made structures that frame the church must be tossed, and new structures instituted that more accurately mirror the New Testament church. The Lord Jesus instructs us that no one puts new wine into old wine-skins or new cloth onto an old garment (Matthew 9:16-17, Mark 2:21-22, Luke 5:36-39). This is because the fermentation produced by the new wine will destroy the old wine-skin and shrinkage of the new cloth will tear it from the old. Jesus is not thinking primarily about wine or textiles when He said this. He is saying that the old religious structures cannot contain the new work of God.

Just as Elijah stacked the deck against himself and put both the Lord and Baal to the test at God's command, so God will stack the deck against the church. He gives her supernatural power to endure persecution and trial; when the time comes for a showdown between the church and the hostile cultural forces, He gives her the victory. In Jesus' parable of the two houses, one built on sand and the other built upon the rock, it was the storm that revealed which house that was built upon the rock. A great social, political, and economic storm is coming. In fact, it has already begun. This storm must do its work in demolishing the old man-made structures so that the new wave of God's work, and the new ministries that it will produce, can emerge.

If the call of God is on your life but you feel marginalized by church as usual. Hang in there. The conditions are ripe; the Lord will soon raise you up, if you do not give up.

Ch 3 – Abraham – the pre-Gospel preached

While God communicated with people on an individual basis since Adam, it is with Abraham that the history begins in earnest. When God called Abraham, he called him not only as an individual but as the father of the people of God. Consider the call of Abraham:

“Get out of your country, From your family And from your father’s house, To a land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

– Genesis 12:1–3

God sought to both bless Abraham and make him a blessing. Abraham was to be a blessing to all of the families of the earth. There are two lessons often missed by those who study this passage. These are lessons which will be revisited throughout the remainder of this book. The first is that Jews missed the purpose of the Abrahamic covenant and turned it into a self-absorbed obsession. The second is that Abraham does indeed become a blessing to all of the families of the earth. He does this through his descendant, Jesus Christ, who **“...redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, And have made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on the earth(Rev 5:9–10).”**

Eph 2:8–9 reveals two administrations of God: grace and faith. This passage tells us that salvation is “**by grace through faith – and that [faith] not of yourselves.**” What this text is saying is that God’s grace is the foundation of salvation and faith is the means that God ordained that man is to receive grace. Both of these administrations are manifested in the life of Abraham. While Abraham was not given specifically bio-graphical information about Jesus Christ, he was taught the core elements of the gospel almost two thousand years before it was revealed in the New Testament. Christ Himself is witness to the fact that Abraham received the gospel in advance when He said “**Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad (John 8:56)**”

Abraham saw that God’s grace, His provision, was the basis of salvation. God once tested Abraham by telling him to sacrifice Isaac. When Isaac asked Abraham “**where is the lamb for a burnt offering?**” Abraham replied “**My son, God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering.**” Abraham understood that salvation is by grace while his contemporaries were pursuing salvation by works and useless rituals.

“Then He said, ‘Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you...’

“So Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife, and the two of them went together. But Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, ‘My father!’ And he said, ‘Here I am, my son.’ Then he said, ‘Look, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?’ And Abraham said, ‘My son, God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering.’ So the two of them went together.

“Then they came to the place of which God had told him. And Abraham built an altar there and placed the wood in order; and he bound Isaac his

son and laid him on the altar, upon the wood. And Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son.

“But the Angel of the Lord called to him from heaven and said, ‘Abraham, Abraham!’ So he said, ‘Here I am.’ And He said, ‘Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me.’ Then Abraham lifted his eyes and looked, and there behind him was a ram caught in a thicket by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram, and offered it up for a burnt offering instead of his son. And Abraham called the name of the place, The-Lord-Will-Provide; as it is said to this day, ‘In the Mount of the Lord it shall be provided.’”

- Gen 22:2,6-14

The immediate provision for Abraham was a ram, but Abraham believed for a lamb. This foreshadows the coming of Christ as the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. Abraham became the prototype for salvation by faith. Genesis 15 records God commencing his covenant with Abraham. God gave Abraham a promise *“Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them...So shall your descendants be.”*(Gen 15:5) *In verse 6, it is written “he believed in the Lord, and He accounted it to him for righteousness.”* God counted Abraham’s faith as righteousness. Abraham is the prototype for everyone to follow. Faith was established by God as the foundational method for people to attain righteousness.

In verse 6, it is written that Abraham (Abram) *“believed in the Lord, and He accounted it to him for righteousness.”* God counts one’s faith as righteousness. This is called in the New Testament Justification by faith. What does the Bible mean when it says that we are justified by faith? What happens in the Court of God. The Reformers taught that justification was *merely* a legal process (positional righteousness)

without any connection to *actual* righteousness, but there are difficulties with that view. The Biblical teaching is that justification by faith follows similar principles to those involved in buying a house. Why? God is buying back his creatures that were lost in sin.

There is a transaction that takes place when God justifies us. Faith is the pledge of ourselves to God. Through faith we pledge that we will follow Him and God gives us an earnest deposit–The Holy Spirit. Just as the buyer of a house pays earnest money to hold the property until the deal can be finalized God gives us the Holy Spirit to seal the deal on what He is buying–US

“Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.”
–2 Corinthians 1:22 KJV

“Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit.” – 2 Corinthians 5:5 KJV

“To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: 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 promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.” – Ephesians 1:6–14 KJV

When a buyer gives earnest money, the seller commits to hold or reserve the property for the buyer until the deal is final. What does this mean for justification by faith? Since we must come to God by faith, faith is our pledge in the transaction. When the buyer—in this case God—pays the earnest –We must pledge our lives to God as His property. God then plants into us the Holy Spirit, who works in us so that

Justification by Faith Prelude to Righteous Living

The Protestant Reformers taught that Justification by Faith was merely legal or declared righteousness without any connection to righteous living. This is false but there is a kernel of Truth: God counts us as righteous before we do any works. However, the Justice of God bars God from declaring one righteous if there no corresponding righteousness. Even by human standards a judge would be viewed as corrupt or treasonous if he were to grant amnesty to someone who was a habitual criminal who then continued to commit crimes after he was pardoned. If the idea of a human judge declaring one just without regard to the law or the fact is outrageous then it is blasphemy to attribute that to God. Justification by faith must uphold God’s Law and correspond to actual facts. Something must count as righteousness in order for a just God to declare one righteous. If a man is not justified by works, then what counts as righteousness?

“And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.” – Genesis 15:6

It is faith that counts as righteousness. Part of God's grace is that He has given everyone a measure of faith. Faith is the seed of righteousness. When God sees that righteousness in seed form in one's faith, He counts it as the mature righteousness that will emerge from it. We are justified by faith alone before we do any works, but the seed of those works are embedded in that faith are the works God has called us to do. This seed is the Holy Spirit given as earnest payment for us. The Holy Spirit **"works in you [the believer] both to will and to do for His good pleasure (Philippians 2:13)."** This is why Jesus said that faith is the work God requires:

"Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him." Then they said to Him, "What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?" Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent."

-John 6:27-29

If faith is the work God requires, then the nature of living faith is the cause of works. Living faith is a pipeline through which the Holy Spirit works. James describes how faith works.

"What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,' but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

"But someone will say, 'You have faith, and I have works.' Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—

and tremble! But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, *'Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.'* And he was called the friend of God. ²⁴ You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.

²⁵ Likewise, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out another way? For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also."

– James 2:14–26

James makes an analogy between faith without works and a dead body. According to this analogy, works is the spirit of living faith. The works that are the spirit of living faith are not the mature, outward works but righteousness in seed form. This is the Holy Spirit given as earnest to empower that faith to accomplish the works God has prepared (Ephesians 2:9). James describes this action as faith working together with works, meaning seed-form righteousness, to accomplish outward works. This process fulfills the implications of justification by faith. This is why James says of Abraham **"And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, *'Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.'*"**

Compare Gen 15:6 which says

"And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness."

With Gen 26:2–5 which says

“Then the Lord appeared to him and said: ‘Do not go down to Egypt; live in the land of which I shall tell you. ³ Dwell in this land, and I will be with you and bless you; for to you and your descendants I give all these lands, and I will perform the oath which I swore to Abraham your father. And I will make your descendants multiply as the stars of heaven; I will give to your descendants all these lands; and in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed; because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws.’ ”

Genesis 15:6 describes the beginning of faith. God’s declaration that the believer is righteous, apart from any works requires that God **“works in you [the believer] both to will and to do for His good pleasure (Philippians 2:13).”** God’s declaration that Abraham was righteous resulted in God’s intervention in a chain of events that resulted in Abraham’s obedience, obedience that confirmed the covenant.

Abraham father of those who believe

One of the mistakes that the Jews, and many modern Christians, make is the thinking that the covenants are automatically extended to whatever group they reckon as the children of Abraham. The Jews, in particular, believed that they automatically inherited the promises given to Abraham. This was based upon the promise that the covenant with Abraham was with both Abraham and his descendants (). God, however, has a different idea. Let’s consider this passage in Gen

“Then God said to Abraham, ‘As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. And I will bless her and also give you a son by her; then I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of peoples shall be from her.’

“Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed, and said in his heart, ‘Shall a child be born to a man who is one hundred years old? And shall Sarah,

who is ninety years old, bear a child?’ And Abraham said to God, “Oh, that Ishmael might live before You!”

“Then God said: ‘No, Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac; I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his descendants after him. And as for Ishmael, I have heard you. Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly. He shall beget twelve princes, and I will make him a great nation. But My covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear to you at this set time next year.’ Then He finished talking with him, and God went up from Abraham.”

–Genesis 17:15–22

When God said that Abraham’s covenant would apply to his descendants, He was not altering his genetics to pass on a biological trait to his children. We see clearly from this passage that a mere paternity match was not enough. Ishmael was Abraham’s biological son, but he was flat-out rejected from inheriting the covenant. Isaac was to be the heir to the Abrahamic covenant. Even with Isaac, it was not an automatic path put into his DNA that assured that he would actually receive this blessing. The Lord promised Abraham that **“My covenant I will establish with Isaac.”** God will establish the Abrahamic covenant with Isaac as His covenant **with Isaac**. The words *‘I will’* is also future tense. The Abrahamic covenant has not yet been confirmed in Isaac’s life. Isaac must embrace the Abrahamic covenant as **his own covenant** with God. As Abraham embraced his covenant with God through faith, so Isaac must also through faith embrace covenant with God. While Isaac was Abraham’s biological son, in terms of the covenant Isaac became the son of Abraham through faith. Because faith is the path to legally recognized relationship to Abraham in terms of the covenant, we can also become a child of Abraham through faith. I have more on this in chapter 10. In the next chapter, I will show that Abraham’s faith was just the beginning of

God's dealings with his people. Abraham's obedience was not perfect, and it became necessary for God to bring about the next phase of His plan.

Ch 4 – Into famine and bondage.

Abraham's obedience to God was not perfect. His son, Isaac, also fell short. They both had faith which was anointed by the Holy Spirit, but they did not have access to all of the components of God's program. For example, they did not have the blessing of the Holy Spirit taking up permanent residence as believers in Christ do today. Neither did they have the scope of revelation that we do today. The Patriarchs of the Judeo-Christian meta-narrative had an immature, undeveloped faith-system.

Because their faith-system was immature, God dealt with them as a parent must deal with a small child. Paul describes this process

“What purpose then does the law serve? It was added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was appointed through angels by the hand of a mediator. Now a mediator does not mediate for one only, but God is one.

Is the law then against the promises of God? Certainly not! For if there had been a law given which could have given life, truly righteousness would have been by the law. But the Scripture has confined all under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed. Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor

Now I say that the heir, as long as he is a child, does not differ at all from a slave, though he is master of all, but is under guardians and stewards until the time appointed by the father. Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world. But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.”

- Galatians 3:19-25; 4:1-5

There are two principles here. One was that because of sin, the law was added. This refers to the Mosaic covenant which was future to Isaac. The second was that until Christ, the people of God were generally regarded as small children who were not capable of walking solely through faith. God, as our loving heavenly Father, must also mete out disciplinary action.

“Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance 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 has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

“For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls. You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin. And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons:

“ ‘My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord, Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; For whom the Lord loves He chastens, And scourges every son whom He receives.’

“If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? But if you are

without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons. Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live?¹⁰ For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness. Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it. ”

- Hebrews 12:1-11

God metes out disciplinary action through actions in history. In this chapter, I will show how the patriarchs fell short of the glory of God, and in the next chapter I will show that God established the Mosaic covenant as a “schoolmaster” to guide the people until they were mature enough for a covenant of faith.

Abraham’s first compromise involves taking the promises of God into his own hands. At his wife Sarai’s urging, he sexually approached her maid Hagar. She conceived Ishmael. This resulted in tension between Sarai and Hagar. This tension ended when Hagar was forced out of Abraham’s household

“And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, scoffing. Therefore she said to Abraham, ‘Cast out this bondwoman and her son; for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, namely with Isaac.’ And the matter was very displeasing in Abraham’s sight because of his son.

But God said to Abraham, ‘Do not let it be displeasing in your sight because of the lad or because of your bondwoman. Whatever Sarah has said to you, listen to her voice; for in Isaac your seed shall be called. Yet I will also make a nation of the son of the bondwoman, because he is your seed.’”

– Genesis 21:9–13

Ishmael became the father of the Arabic world, which today is predominantly Islamist. Before Ishmael was born, God told Hagar that Ishmael “shall be a wild man; His hand shall be against every man.” Abraham’s compromise set the stage for numerous wars in the Middle East that have been going on for the past four thousand years, from the day Ishmael mocked Isaac to the current chaos in the Middle East.

Abraham and Isaac: Like father, like son

.Both Abraham and Isaac made the same compromise when in the land of Gerar. <http://www.bibleplaces.com/gerar.htm>. They both lied to Abimelech* about their wives. They each told Abimelech the lie that “she is my sister” because each believed that Abimelech would kill them to take the wife. (Gen 20:1–18; 26:1–10)

Liars and Family Favorites. Isaac married Rebekah and became the father of twins: Isaac favored one while Rebekah favored the other:

“Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah as wife, the daughter of Bethuel the Syrian of Padan Aram, the sister of Laban the Syrian. Now Isaac pleaded with the *Lord* for his wife, because she was barren; and the *Lord* granted his plea, and Rebekah his wife conceived. But the children struggled together within her; and she said, “If all is well, why am I like this?” So she went to inquire of the *Lord*.

And the *Lord* said to her: ‘Two nations are in your womb, Two peoples shall be separated from your body; One people shall be stronger than the other, And the older shall serve the younger.’

So when her days were fulfilled for her to give birth, indeed there were twins in her womb. And the first came out red. He was like a hairy garment all over; so they called his name Esau. Afterward his brother came out, and his hand took hold of Esau’s heel; so his name was called Jacob. Isaac was sixty years old when she bore them. So the boys grew. And Esau was a skillful hunter, a man of the field; but Jacob was a mild man, dwelling in tents. And Isaac loved Esau because he ate of his game, but Rebekah loved Jacob.”

– Genesis 25:20–28

These opposing favoritisms set the stage for sibling rivalry between Esau and Jacob. This rivalry created the temptation for Jacob to become a schemer and liar. He used this to con Esau out of the blessing.

Rebekah helped him con Esau. She coached him on how to trick Isaac into giving Jacob the blessing (Gen 27). Isaac asks Esau to hunt and prepare choice game so that he can eat it and give him the blessing he received from Abraham. She has Jacob kill from his flock; she prepares it to taste like cooked, wild game. She then dresses Jacob in Esau’s cloths. Jacob goes to Isaac, pretending to be Esau, and gets the blessing through deception.

These compromises amounted to the people of God taking the promises into their own hands. God promised Isaac; Abraham took matters into his own hands and got Ishmael; God told Rebekah that Jacob would dominate Esau; Jacob took matters into his own hands.; Deception and treachery became the family heritage.

There was kidnapping and murder in the family

By the time Jacob's sons were grown, the corruption of sin was reaching an advanced stage of treachery. There are three major incidents that show their treachery: the Dinah incident, Judah's affair, and the selling of Joseph into slavery.

The story of Dinah is found in Gen 34. When Dinah, Jacob's daughter, was grown, she went out on the town to meet other young women in the land. Shechem, the son of the prince of that land was attracted to her. They ended up having pre-marital sex. When Shechem's father attempted to make arrangements to acquire Dinah as a wife for him, the sons of Jacob acted deceitfully. They told the men that they needed to be circumcised first, and then Dinah would be married to Shechem. While the men were recovering from their circumcision, two of Jacob's sons, Simeon and Levi physically attacked and killed all of the men in the town. Their brothers joined them in both plundering the wealth in the town and the capture of the women and children. These women and children were likely sold into slavery to local traveling slave traders.

The selling of women and children into slavery was preparation for the mistreatment of their own brother. Gen 37 is the story of how the second from the youngest of Jacob's sons, Joseph, had a dream that he would rule over his brothers. Because Joseph was the first-born of Jacob's love, Rachel, he was Jacob's favorite son. The favoritism, coupled with knowledge of Joseph's dreams, drove his brothers to extreme jealousy. They threw him into a pit and sold him to Ishmaelite who sold him to an Egyptian.

Descent into famine, slavery, and idolatry in Egypt

Because the household of Abraham was wandering farther and farther away from God's righteousness, it became necessary for God to assert Himself as a stern Father to them. The first of many instances of a pattern of chastisement was about to begin. God's people would initially follow Him; only to subsequently wander from Him, resulting in descent to bondage or slavery. They would cry out to Him and He would deliver them.

Gen 39–50 documents the story of Joseph in Egypt. God was with Joseph in Egypt in his trials; these trials eventually open up the opportunity for Joseph to become Prime Minister of Egypt. When famine hits hard that area of the world, Joseph is in an ability to assist his family, and they relocate to Egypt where they end up becoming slaves.

Ch 5– Into the Promised Land

Exodus 1 takes up the narrative of the descendants of Jacob (Israel) in Egypt. We quickly discover two things about these “Israelites.” They prosper and multiply heavily while in Egypt. Because of this prosperity, the Egyptian Pharaoh becomes jealous and fearful of them. As a result, they are forced into slavery.

“Now these are the names of the children of Israel who came to Egypt; each man and his household came with Jacob: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah; Issachar, Zebulun, and Benjamin; Dan, Naphtali, Gad, and Asher. All those who were descendants of Jacob were seventy persons (for Joseph was in Egypt already). And Joseph died, all his brothers, and all that generation. But the children of Israel were fruitful and increased abundantly, multiplied and grew exceedingly mighty; and the land was filled with them.

Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who did not know Joseph. And he said to his people, “Look, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we; come, let us deal shrewdly with them, lest they multiply, and it happen, in the event of war, that they also join our enemies and fight against us, and so go up out of the land.” Therefore they set taskmasters over them to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh supply cities, Pithom and Raamses. But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew. And they were in dread of the children of Israel. So the Egyptians made the children of Israel serve with rigor. And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage—in mortar, in brick, and in all manner of service in the field. All their service in which they made them serve was with rigor.”

–Exodus 1:1–14

Even though the people of God went into slavery, God never abandoned them. God blessed Jacob in spite of all his lying and scheming. God appeared to him at Bethel. Jacob referred to the place as the house of God. Jesus use to imagery of the ladder with angels of God ascending and descending to refer to Himself as the gateway to God.

“So he came to a certain place and stayed there all night, because the sun had set. And he took one of the stones of that place and put it at his head, and he lay down in that place to sleep. Then he dreamed, and behold, a ladder was set up on the earth, and its top reached to heaven; and there the angels of God were ascending and descending on it.

And behold, the Lord stood above it and said: “I am the Lord God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and your descendants. Also your descendants shall be as the dust of the earth; you shall spread abroad to the west and the east, to the north and the south; and in you and in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed. Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have spoken to you.”

Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, “Surely the Lord is in this place, and I did not know it.” And he was afraid and said, “How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven!”

Then Jacob rose early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put at his head, set it up as a pillar, and poured oil on top of it. And he called the name of that place Bethel [lit:house of God];”

- Gen 28:11-19

God continued to bless and multiply the descendants of Jacob – so much that, according to Exodus 1:22, the Pharaoh decided to kill off the males. God had not forgotten them, but sent them a deliverer. It was during this holocaust that the man God appointed to deliver them, Moses, was born.

Exodus 2 documents the first 80 years of his life. Moses spent the first 40 years in Pharaoh's house. At some point in time, Moses realized that the Hebrew slaves were his native people; he also likely sensed the call of God to deliver them*. One day, Moses decided to take the deliverance of the Israelites into his own hands. According to Exodus 2:11–15, ***“...it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown, that he went out to his brethren and looked at their burdens. And he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his brethren. So he looked this way and that way, and when he saw no one, he killed the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. And when he went out the second day, behold, two Hebrew men were fighting, and he said to the one who did the wrong, “Why are you striking your companion?” Then he said, “Who made you a prince and a judge over us? Do you intend to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?” So Moses feared and said, “Surely this thing is known!” When Pharaoh heard of this matter, he sought to kill Moses. But Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh and dwelt in the land of Midian; and he sat down by a well.”***

The next forty years he lived in Midian. While there he rescued the daughter of Ruel, priest of Midian, from some shepherds that were trying to deny them the use of Midian's wells. Moses lived with Ruel and married his daughter, Zipporah. Moses' life from age 40 to 80 was relatively uneventful.

When Moses was about eighty years old, God revealed Himself. Moses saw a bush burning that was not being burned. When he approached the site, God spoke to him out of the burning bush, calling him to deliver His people.

“And the Angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire from the midst of a bush. So he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, but the bush was not consumed. Then Moses said, ‘I will now turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush does not burn.’

“So when the Lord saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush and said, ‘Moses, Moses!’ And he said, ‘Here I am...’

“...And the Lord said: ‘I have surely seen the oppression of My people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows. So I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and large land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites. Now therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel has come to Me, and I have also seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them. Come now, therefore, and I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt.’”

- Exodus 3:2-4,7-10

Supernatural deliverance from Egypt

When Moses returned to Egypt, he did not take up again the power of the flesh as he did forty earlier. God revealed to Moses His power and then commanded Moses to use this power.

“Then Moses answered and said, ‘But suppose they will not believe me or listen to my voice; suppose they say, ‘The Lord has not appeared to you.’ So the Lord said to him, ‘What is that in your hand?’ He said, ‘A rod.’ And He said, ‘Cast it on the ground.’ So he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from it. Then the Lord said to Moses, ‘Reach out your hand and take it by the tail’ (and he reached out his hand and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand), ‘that they may believe that the Lord God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has appeared to you.’”

– Exodus 4:1–5

Moses used God’s power to deliver Israel. Ten plagues fell upon the Egyptians. These plagues included blood, frogs, lice, boils, etc. After the last plague, Pharaoh finally let the people go; he then relapsed and pursued them until his army drowned in the red sea.

Salvation by Grace through Faith at the Passover

When God first began plaguing the Egyptians, he discriminated against the Egyptians. By this I mean Egyptians suffered because they belonged to Pharaoh; the Israelites were exempted from these because they were the descendants of Jacob. The last plague, the angel of death, was different. The Lord required participation on the part of the delivered. He required this to show salvation by grace through faith.

“For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the Lord.

And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt.”

- Exodus 12:12-13

The angel of death was entering Egypt to kill the firstborn of every house. This time, God did not discriminate on the grounds of ancestry or nationality. The death angel “passed over” every house that had lamb’s blood on the doorpost; but invaded every house that did not have lamb’s blood on its door post, killing any first-born that were in the house. If a God-fearing Egyptian followed the instruction Moses delivered and put lamb’s blood on the door post of his house, then God passed over his house*. If a godless Israelite refused to heed Moses instruction, his house suffered the wrath of God. The lamb’s blood represented God’s grace that was poured out through the shedding of the blood of Christ, and applying the lamb’s blood represent faith in God.

Partaking the Passover involved entering into, or confirming, the covenant of Abraham. Ex 12:48 spell out rules about who may take the Passover. **“And when a stranger shall sojourn with thee, and will keep the passover to the *Lord*, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it; and he shall be as one that is born in the land: for no uncircumcised person shall eat thereof.”**Egyptians, Ethiopians, and other nationalities who took the Passover, because they feared the God of Israel, were from that day forward counted as heirs to the Abrahamic covenant*. They shall be **“as one that is born in the land.”**

Faith in the Wilderness

The necessity of entering into, and standing on, the covenant by faith applied to the wilderness. God was leading them to conquer nations stronger than they were to see whether they would trust God or not.

Numerous times, the people showed that they did not have the faith necessary to enter the land. Numbers 13–14 records the occasion when Moses sent twelve spies to spy out the land. All twelve spoke of the abundance of the land. Two of them, Joshua and Caleb, spoke with faith that the Lord would deliver the land (13:30; 14:6–8). The other ten, however, gave an evil report that destroyed the faith of the camp. They told the Israelites that there was no possibility that they could take the land (13:31–33). Their unbelief stirred up full rebellion against God.

The rebellious Israelites decided to **“make a captain, and let us return into Egypt.”** (14:4). While their bodies were delivered from Egypt, their hearts were still enslaved to Egypt. They were prepared to stone Moses, Aaron, Joshua, and Caleb to get them out of the way (14:10). Before they could carry out their murderous plot, the glory of the Lord appeared. God pronounced His judgment on them for their refusal to believe His promises.

God decided to disinherit them. He actually contemplated wiping them out, but Moses interceded for them. God did effectively disinherit them by letting their bodies die in the wilderness. (14:11–35). Caleb and Joshua were the only ones who were over 20 who would enter the land. The rest were rejected for refusal to believe.

Entering the Promised Land

After the forty years of wandering was finished, God raised up Joshua to lead the children of Israel into the Promised Land. The book of Joshua

documents these battles. The land is secured, but god stops short of completely wiping out all of Israel's enemies.

Ch 6 – The Purpose of the Mosaic Covenant

What was the purpose of the Mosaic Covenant? There are three purposes for the advent of this unique Covenant. The Mosaic Covenant provided a legal structure, The Mosaic Covenant school-mastered an immature people, and provided for Rollover into the New Covenant.

The Mosaic Covenant provided a legal structure.

We read in John 1:17 that *“the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.”* However, we have seen that both law and grace were manifested in the Old Testament prior to Moses.

God’s law existed in the Old Testament prior to Moses. It only by understanding that God’s law pre-existed Moses that we can explain why Adam was punished as a transgressor when he disobeyed God in the Garden of Eden. It only by understanding that God’s law pre-existed Moses that we can explain that God’s justice demanded a world-wide flood on the earth in Noah’s time. It only by understanding that God’s law pre-existed Moses that we can make any sense out of the discourse found in the book of Job.

God’s grace also existed in the Old Testament prior to Moses. We read in Gen , that Noah found “grace in the eyes of the Lord.” The fact that God credited Abraham faith as righteousness can only be explained in terms of God’s grace (Gen 15:6). Paul appeals to Abraham’s faith-based righteousness as an Old Testament argument for salvation by grace in Romans 4.

“What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. For what saith the scripture?

'Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.' Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, 'Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.'

"Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision.

-Romans 4:1-10

If both law and grace both pre-existed Moses, then what does John 1:17 mean when it says that *"the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."* It is referring to the establishment of a governmental structure of law and grace. Moses established the first governmental structure for God's law and Jesus Christ established the governmental structure for God's grace.

Prior to the institution of government in Gen 9:6, where God commanded that murderers be executed by man's hand, there was no government. Between Noah and Moses, governments simply followed the wishes of the leader without reference to God's law. Government simply became another tool for rebellion against God. The advent of government created the environment for the rise of Mystery Babylon at the Tower of Babel*; God responded by splitting up the world on the basis of language. Moses delivered to the world the first governmental structure based on God's law.

The governmental structure delivered by Moses has three basic levels of authority: ecclesiastical authority, civil authority, and the authority of the conscience. There are definite spheres in which these operate with a separation of powers. This means that the priests do not have authority over secular matters or matters of conscience; secular authorities do not have authority to administer the priesthood or dominate the conscience. While the authority of the conscience is supreme in the heart, subject only to God, the ability to act upon it in spheres controlled by the priests or the elders may be restricted.

Ecclesiastical authority is vested in the priesthood of Aaron. The priests have authority over the temple, the sacrificial system, and determinations of ceremonial uncleanness. In these matters, the determinations of the priests are binding upon the people (Ex28; Num3; Deuteronomy 17:8–12).

Civil authority is vested in a system of elders. Elders enforce civil laws and settle disputes. It was the job of the elders to resolve tort disputes and adjudicate criminal complaints on the basis of precepts found in the Law of Moses (Numbers 11; Deuteronomy 17:8–12). The authority of the elders in these matters is binding upon the people.

“I am not able to bear all this people alone, because it is too heavy for me. And if thou deal thus with me, kill me, I pray thee, out of hand, if I have found favour in thy sight; and let me not see my wretchedness. And the Lord said unto Moses, Gather unto me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom thou knowest to be the elders of the people, and officers over them; and bring them unto the tabernacle of the congregation, that they may stand there with thee. And I will come down and talk with thee there: and I will take of the spirit which is upon thee, and will put it upon

them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with thee, that thou bear it not thyself alone.”

- Numbers 11:14-17

When Moses complained the burden of legal jurisprudence was too heavy for him to do by himself, God told him to anoint the elders to administer the law. These men would not make decisions concerning the temple or ceremonial cleanness, but would administer secular matters of the law.

The authority of the conscience is vested in the heart of the individual. The conscience has authority to determine belief. There are three passages that explicitly designate the conscience as the arbiter of belief. *“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.”*

-Deuteronomy 6:4-9

“For this commandment which I command thee this day, it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it

-Deuteronomy 30:11-14

“And Moses wrote this law, and delivered it unto the priests the sons of Levi, which bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and unto all the elders of Israel. And Moses commanded them, saying, At the end of every seven years, in the solemnity of the year of release, in the feast of tabernacles, When all Israel is come to appear before the Lord thy God in the place which he shall choose, thou shalt read this law before all Israel in their hearing. Gather the people together, men and women, and children, and thy stranger that is within thy gates, that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear the Lord your God, and observe to do all the words of this law: And that their children, which have not known any thing, may hear, and learn to fear the Lord your God, as long as ye live in the land whither ye go over Jordan to possess it.”

–Deuteronomy 31:9–13

Deuteronomy 6:4–9 tells us that the Word of God is in the hearts of the people; teaching authority is vested in the parents, not the priests and not the elders. Ch 30:11–14 tells the people that they do not need to call on someone in the enlightened elite to fetch it for us; it is in the heart upon people hearing and meditating upon it. Deuteronomy 31:9–13 teaches us that Moses wrote down all of the law to make knowledge of the law available to everyone. There is no secret law known to only a few people.

While the priests and the elders would assume a teaching role in promoting knowledge of the law in the life of the community, neither of these groups were given authority to bind the conscience. It is the conscience that has ultimate authority to determine belief, subject only to God. It is also in the conscience that man has communion with God.

This three part legal structure exists in some form in all ages of God's governance over his people, and nearly every apostasy or departure from God involves an imbalance in this structure. Within this structure are checks and balances that act as a bulwark against apostasy. It was the job of the priests to ensure that the temple functions were administered in accordance to God's commands. The Elders insured that secular society and civil transactions were administered in according with God's law. The conscience is the storehouse of essential morality and acted as a check to institutional apostasy on the part of the priests and elders.

In the subsequent history of God's people, we will discover that apostasy was frequent. We will see that it was not only numerous individuals that departed from God, but often institutions also entered into apostasy. God would deliver His words to the consciences of faithful servant and they would deliver words of prophecy to bring the people of God back to the correct path. Sometimes the people listened to the prophet; other times the prophet would proclaim words of judgment followed by chastisement⁶ from God. There is more information on how this process works in "*True Prophets Vs the Profitable Prophets.*"

The Mosaic Covenant schoolmasters an immature people.

Galatians 3:19–4:5 says that the people of God were under the law in the same way that a minor child is under tutors and legal guardians until the "age of majority." Another way of expressing this concept is to describe the relationship of God is that of a Father to his children. Heb 12 describes our relationship to God precisely in those terms.

The concept of God as the ultimate Father with the people of God is not unique to the New Testament. The Law of Moses speaks of the relationship of God to His people as a love relationship:

“The Lord did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people: But because the Lord loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the Lord brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

“Know therefore that the Lord thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations; And repayeth them that hate him to their face, to destroy them: he will not be slack to him that hateth him, he will repay him to his face. Thou shalt therefore keep the commandments, and the statutes, and the judgments, which I command thee this day, to do them. Wherefore it shall come to pass, if ye hearken to these judgments, and keep, and do them, that the Lord thy God shall keep unto thee the covenant and the mercy which he sware unto thy fathers:”

- Deuteronomy 7:7-12

Whereas Deut 7 describes the relationship of the Lord to his people as a love relationship, Ch 32 describes it specifically as that of a Father with His children:

“Because I will publish the name of the Lord: ascribe ye greatness unto our God. He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he.

“They have corrupted themselves, their spot is not the spot of his children: they are a perverse and crooked generation. Do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish people and unwise? is not he thy father that hath

bought thee? hath he not made thee, and established thee? Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations: ask thy father, and he will shew thee; thy elders, and they will tell thee..

“When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel. For the Lord’s portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance. He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye. As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings: So the Lord alone did lead him, and there was no strange god with him.”

– Deuteronomy 32:3–12

If God be our Heavenly Father, then should He not train us – discipline us– as a father does his children. Good fathers provide reasonable, age-appropriate boundaries for their children. A good father will treat a toddler in a different way than he treats his teenage or adult children. Numerous rules that apply to small children drop off as the child matures into an adult. This is that Paul meant when he said that the Law of Moses was a guardian and tutor until faith was revealed (Gal 3:19–4:5).

An example of rules meant to train small children that would drop off as the small children reach greater maturity can be found in Leviticus 11:43–45

“Do not defile yourselves by any of these creatures. Do not make yourselves unclean by means of them or be made unclean by them. I am the Lord your God; consecrate yourselves and be holy, because I am

holy. Do not make yourselves unclean by any creature that moves along the ground. I am the Lord, who brought you up out of Egypt to be your God; therefore be holy, because I am holy. 'These are the regulations concerning animals, birds, every living thing that moves about in the water and every creature that moves along the ground. You must distinguish between the unclean and the clean, between living creatures that may be eaten and those that may not be eaten.' ”

– Leviticus 11:43–47 NIV

The moral status of a person had nothing to do with the nature of animals he eats. Eating the flesh of an unclean animal does not make the heart of a human evil. As Christ Jesus said, food goes through the digestive tract and is expelled as waste (Mark 7:17–23). Man is defiled by what is in the heart, not the stomach.

What was the purpose of these rules, then? The purpose of the food laws and ceremonial cleanness rules was to train God's people to discern between clean and unclean. God used food as a concrete example to illustrate a principle whose primary application was not always concrete. God was training his people to make a distinction between good and evil, right and wrong, moral and immoral, and just and unjust.

The Mosaic Covenant provides for Rollover into the New Covenant.

The biggest difficulty for some in developing a coherent Biblical theology is how to reconcile the Mosaic Covenant with the rest of Scripture. The answer is that was meant only to be temporary legal structure. Jewish people, however, are often troubled by the many references to statutes in the Covenant being “perpetual.*” These objections are answered by the fact that the Mosaic covenant provides for its own obsolescence. There are four provisions, from within the Mosaic Covenant, for its demise and replacement by better covenants: the provision for a Prophet

like unto Moses, the provision for a New Covenant to those faithful to Mosaic Covenant, the provision for the coming King, and the provision of the eternal Priesthood of Melchizedek.

The Mosaic Covenant provides for a Prophet like unto Moses. Moses occupied a unique position in the Mosaic Covenant as its Lawgiver. In this position, Moses set the terms of the covenant. The Biblical prediction that another prophet “like unto Moses” meant that another would come who would have power to set terms of the covenant between God and His people. Acts 3:20–23 tells us that Christ Jesus is the “Prophet like unto Moses” and the Lawgiver of the New Covenant. This is important to know as it will be demonstrated that the Mosaic Covenant makes provision for replacement by the New Covenant.

“The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken; According to all that thou desiredst of the Lord thy God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not.”

“And the Lord said unto me, They have well spoken that which they have spoken. I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him.”

– Deuteronomy 18:15–18

The Mosaic Covenant provides for a New Covenant to those faithful to Mosaic Covenant. In Exodus 19, God commanded people to consecrate themselves. In verses 5–6, a promise is given. *“if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me a*

kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.” Obedience to the covenant results in being positioned as a nation of kings and priests. The promise of installing the nation as kings and priests eliminates the need for a Levitical priesthood, as it limits priesthood to the Levites. Because Christ was faithful to the Mosaic Covenant during his earthly life, He became a nation of kings and priests without the need of the Levitical priesthood. The abolition of, or succession to, the Levitical Priesthood is a major change in the Mosaic covenant.

This promise was not available to those who first heard it. They were prohibited from approaching the mountain blessed with the special Presence of God filled under penalty of death.

Moses was faithful in the midst of an unfaithful nation. On one occasion, God was about to wipe out the nation of Israel and create a new nation from Moses. Moses intercession saved them. Notice that Moses does not argue that wiping out everybody but he would violate the terms of the covenant.

“Only rebel not ye against the Lord, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us: their defence is departed from them, and the Lord is with us: fear them not. But all the congregation bade stone them with stones. And the glory of the Lord appeared in the tabernacle of the congregation before all the children of Israel. And the Lord said unto Moses, How long will this people provoke me? and how long will it be ere they believe me, for all the signs which I have shewed among them? I will smite them with the pestilence, and disinherit them, and will make of thee a greater nation and mightier than they.

¹³ *And Moses said unto the Lord, Then the Egyptians shall hear it, (for thou broughtest up this people in thy might from among them;) And they will tell it to the inhabitants of this land: for they have heard that thou Lord art among this people, that thou Lord art seen face to face, and that thy cloud standeth over them, and that thou goest before them, by day time in a pillar of a cloud, and in a pillar of fire by night. Now if thou shalt kill all this people as one man, then the nations which have heard the fame of thee will speak, saying, Because the Lord was not able to bring this people into the land which he sware unto them, therefore he hath slain them in the wilderness. And now, I beseech thee, let the power of my lord be great, according as thou hast spoken, saying, The Lord is longsuffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression, and by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation. Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people according unto the greatness of thy mercy, and as thou hast forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now.*

And the Lord said, I have pardoned according to thy word: But as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord. Because all those men which have seen my glory, and my miracles, which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have tempted me now these ten times, and have not hearkened to my voice; Surely they shall not see the land which I sware unto their fathers, neither shall any of them that provoked me see it: But my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, and hath followed me fully, him will I bring into the land whereinto he went; and his seed shall possess it.”

-Numbers 14:9-24

God promised to wipe them out for plotting to kill Moses. Because Moses was faithful to the covenant as God's servant, God was offering to create out of Moses a nation of kings and priests. The annihilation of all of Israel but Moses would have annihilated the Levites and trashed the Mosaic Covenant. When Moses interceded, he did not appeal to the Law, but to God's glory. God had the right to rescind the Covenant as they breached it.

God put it into Moses heart to intercede, as it was not time for the next phase of God's plan to unfold*.Whereas Moses was faithful as a servant, Christ was faithful as a Son. Because Christ was faithful, He was offered the same opportunity that Moses. When Christ was offered the opportunity to become a nation of kings and priests that was promised in Ex 19:6, He accepted.

The Mosaic Covenant provides for the coming King. The Mosaic Covenant anticipated that the Israelites would someday choose to be ruled by a king rather than by elders or God. Guidelines were given for the conduct of the king,

"When thou art come unto the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, and shalt possess it, and shalt dwell therein, and shalt say, I will set a king over me, like as all the nations that are about me;Thou shalt in any wise set him king over thee, whom the Lord thy God shall choose: one from among thy brethren shalt thou set king over thee: thou mayest not set a stranger over thee, which is not thy brother.

"But he shall not multiply horses to himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt, to the end that he should multiply horses: forasmuch as the Lord hath said unto you, Ye shall henceforth return no more that

way. Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away: neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold.

“And it shall be, when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book out of that which is before the priests the Levites: And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life: that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them: That his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the commandment, to the right hand, or to the left: to the end that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he, and his children, in the midst of Israel.”

- Deuteronomy 17:14-20

In the days of Samuel, the people demanded a king. This provided an opportunity for God to commence an everlasting covenant with David. The Throne of David is an everlasting throne that will inherit all nations. It is from this throne that Jesus Christ rules the earth.

The Mosaic Covenant presupposes the provision of the eternal Priesthood of Melchizedek. The Mosaic Covenant is a fulfillment of God's covenant with Abraham. If Abraham was ancestor of the Levites, then who was priest for Abraham? Gen 14:18-15:6 records the encounter with Melchizedek, priest of God Most high, with Abram (Abraham).

“And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God. And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth: And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all.

“...After these things the word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward. And Abram said, Lord God, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus? And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir. And, behold, the word of the Lord came unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir. And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. And he believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness.”

–Gen 14:18–20;15:1–6

After Abraham emerged from battle victorious, Melchizedek blessed him and received tithes from him. It is after Abraham received the blessing from Melchizedek that the Word of the Lord came to him. Abraham was justified by faith in that Word which was given after he received the blessing from Melchizedek. God had already chosen him and used Melchizedek to formally set him apart before revealing justification by faith and long before the Abrahamic covenant was confirmed. The priestly authority of Melchizedek precedes and supersedes that of the Levitical priesthood. The argument, in fact, can be made that the authority of the Levitical priesthood is dependent on the authority of the priesthood of Melchizedek. At the very minimum, the priesthood of Melchizedek opens up the prospect of God’s people having access to God apart from the Levitical priesthood.

The Mosaic Covenant is a uniquely breachable covenant. The Mosaic Covenant is legally structured in a different way than the other covenants. In the Abrahamic Covenant, the Davidic covenant, and the New Covenant man’s role is completely fulfilled. Once Abraham showed

willingness to offer Isaac, God promised to fulfill his part was guaranteed. The actions of David and of Christ likewise guaranteed God's fulfillment of his part towards the beneficiaries of these covenants independently of their subsequent actions. The Mosaic Covenant, however, makes no such promise. In numerous places, it is made clear that God's promise to perform His part of the Mosaic Covenant is dependent on man's obedience to his part. Deuteronomy 28–30 describes, in detail, the conditional nature of the Mosaic Covenant. If the people of God faithfully obey all of the terms of the Covenant, then great blessings will follow. If, however, they disobey, then great curses will follow and God would evict His own people from the Promised Land.

As the Mosaic Covenant is focused on occupation of the Promised Land, eviction from the land ends the covenant. Deuteronomy 30:1–10 contains a **conditional** promise of restoration of the covenant. God would restore His people to the land **IF** they turned back to Him and after they turned back.

“When all these blessings and curses I have set before you come on you and you take them to heart wherever the *Lord* your God disperses you among the nations, and when you and your children return to the *Lord* your God and obey him with all your heart and with all your soul according to everything I command you today, then the *Lord* your God will restore your fortunes and have compassion on you and gather you again from all the nations where he scattered you. Even if you have been banished to the most distant land under the heavens, from there the *Lord* your God will gather you and bring you back.

“He will bring you to the land that belonged to your ancestors, and you will take possession of it. He will make you more prosperous and

numerous than your ancestors. The *Lord* your God will circumcise your hearts and the hearts of your descendants, so that you may love him with all your heart and with all your soul, and live. The *Lord* your God will put all these curses on your enemies who hate and persecute you. You will again obey the *Lord* and follow all his commands I am giving you today. Then the *Lord* your God will make you most prosperous in all the work of your hands and in the fruit of your womb, the young of your livestock and the crops of your land. The *Lord* will again delight in you and make you prosperous, just as he delighted in your ancestors, if you obey the *Lord* your God and keep his commands and decrees that are written in this Book of the Law and turn to the *Lord* your God with all your heart and with all your soul.”

- Deuteronomy 30:1-10 NIV

As we shall see later in this book, Israel was indeed evicted from the Promised Land. Israel was evicted three times. The first time they were evicted, ten of the tribes were evicted by Assyria, scattered, and for centuries lost to history*. The second time, the two and a half tribes that remained were deported to Babylon as a group and returned after 70 years. The third eviction was a true scattering of all Israel among all nations after they had Christ crucified.

Ch 7 From Chaos to Corruption to Chains in the Promised Land

7 From Chaos to Corruption to Chains in the Promised Land

The Law of Moses provided a much needed legal structure for the people of God. It had one major weakness: no adequate mechanism to internalize the law in the hearts of the people. The result of this was that the people periodically forgot the hard lessons the Israelites learned under Moses. Those who saw what the Lord did for Israel remembered the hard lesson. Israel was faithful during the lifetime of Joshua and the elders who served alongside of him. After they died, Israel departed from following the Lord and served false gods.

“So the people served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the Lord which He had done for Israel. Now Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died when he was one hundred and ten years old. And they buried him within the border of his inheritance at TimnathHeres, in the mountains of Ephraim, on the north side of Mount Gaash. When all that generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation arose after them who did not know the Lord nor the work which He had done for Israel. Then the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and served the Baals;”

– Judges 2:7–11

Because God knew they would be so quick to depart, he left some of the nations there. Judges 1:1–22, which begins after the death of Joshua, documents the nearly complete* victory of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin in conquering its portions of the land. These two tribes had

Joshua and Caleb as tribal leaders. Due to the faith of these men who persisted in faith for over forty years, these tribes walked more consistently by faith when it came time to enter into battle. This resulted in almost complete victory for these tribes.

The other tribes, however, fell short of total victory. They failed to conquer some of the territory that was promised to them. The tribe of Dan failed completely. Judges 1:23–36 documents the failures of various tribes to take the land. The result of this failure is that foreign nations continued to occupy parts of the Promised Land.

Judges 2:1–5 tells that God’s messenger appeared to tell them that, because they were not fully faithful, that God would no longer drive out all of the nations from the land. This would remain the case until the reign of King David. Judges 2:6–11 is a flashback to the great assembly of Joshua in Shechem (Joshua 24). The Israelites followed the Lord during the days of Joshua and the elders that served with him, but revolted against the Lord afterward. The ever so quick tendency of Israelites to rebel explains why God left these nation in the land.

The continued existence of these nations in the Promised Land had a two-fold purpose. Israel would first be tested to see if she would follow God. She would also be taught war. She would also learn of the cycle of timeout–conflict–victory that brings Fatherly discipline to the children of the Heavenly Father.

“Now these are the nations which the Lord left, to prove Israel by them, even as many of Israel as had not known all the wars of Canaan; Only that the generations of the children of Israel might know, to teach them war, at the least such as before knew nothing thereof; Namely, five lords of the Philistines, and all the Canaanites, and the Sidonians, and the

Hivites that dwelt in mount Lebanon, from mount Baalhermon unto the entering in of Hamath. And they were to prove Israel by them, to know whether they would hearken unto the commandments of the Lord, which he commanded their fathers by the hand of Moses.”

- Judges 3:1-4

Israel would undergo seven cycles of bondage followed by crying out to God, followed by God appointing Judges to deliver them (Judges 2:13-19). Judges Chapters 3-16 documents these cycles. I have placed a summary of these cycles below:

Timeline of Judges				
Judges 3:7-11	Mesopotamia	8	Othniel	40
Judges 3:12-30	Ammon and Moab	18	Ehud	80
Judges 4-5	Jabin of Canaan	20	Deborah	40
Judges 6-8	Midian	7	Gideon	40
			Ruth and Boaz?	
Judges 9-10:5	Jerubaal/Abimilek	3	Tola	23
			Jair	22
Judges 10:6-12:13	Philistines/Ammon	18	Jephtah	6
			Ibzan	7
			Elon	10
Judges 13-16	Philistines/Ammon	40	Abdon	8
			Samson/Samuel ?	20
Finished after Samson's death				

Time in bondage:	114 (29.2%)
Time in liberty:	276 (70.8%)
Total time of judges:	390 (100%)

Judges 17–21 as an epilogue

Judges 17–21 refer to two events that are off of the main timeline. Judges 17–18 document apostasy of the tribe of Dan and Judges 19–21 document a civil war between the tribe of Benjamin and the rest of Israel.

Chapter 17 begins with someone named Micah creating a graven image, prohibited by the Law of Moses and the Ten Commandments. Micah hires a Levite to be priest to his homemade god. The narrative continues in chapter 18 where the tribe of Dan takes away from Micah both his priest and his home-made god (18:18–20). According to verses 30–31, The Danites set up these idols and perpetrated this idolatry the entire time the Mosaic Temple was in Shiloh*.

Judges 18:1 indicates that this during a time when the tribe of Dan did not yet get its inheritance. This would place this rebellion at about the time of the first backsliding of Israel (Judges 2:11).

Judges 19–21 records both perversion and civil war. This narrative begins when the secondary wife* of a Levite flees him to her father's house. The Levite pursues her. After an extended layover at her father house, they travel back home. They make a stop in Gibeah and spend the night in the house of an old man. Thugs from the town surround the house and desire to know the Levite homosexually. The Levite throws his wife to these wolves to be raped and abused all night long. The rape was so savage that she died the following morning.

When the Levite sees his wife dead on the porch the next morning, he chops her into twelve pieces and sends a piece to each tribe of Israel. The Israelites demand that Benjamin hand over the thug. Benjamin responds by attacking the Israelites, starting a civil war.

Conclusion of Judges

Four times in Judges 17–21, the phrase “there was no king in Israel” appears (17:6, 18:1, 19:1, 21:25). The first and last occurrences of this phrase in the epilogue also add everyone did “what was right in their own eyes.” In both of these final stories in the book of Judges, there were no heroes; everybody was a bad guy. The conclusion of the book of Judges is that the system of elders and judges was a complete failure. The people of God showed that, at this time in history, they were simply not mature enough for self-governance. The last judge in the timeline of the book of Judges, Samson, was not the only judge at the end of this period. Another judge, Samuel, was his contemporary. After Samson’s death Samuel would be confronted with the epic failure of this system on both a personal and professional level.

Israel asks for a King.

The last major occupation in the main timeline of the book of judges was that of the Philistines. This occupation lasted forty years. Judges 13–16 documents this occupation and indicates that God appointed Samson to be judge; he judged Israel twenty years. The text, however, give no indication that Samson succeeded in ending the occupation.

Samuel begins his ministry during this occupation. Samuel was the last of the judges and the first of the prophets. God used Samuel to inaugurate a new chapter in the history of God’s people. Samuel’s ministry affected both the ecclesiastical and civil governance of God’s people.

Samuel's first word of knowledge was confirm a previous prophetic word that Eli's priestly line was going to go extinct because his sons were taking unauthorized portions of offerings and committing sexual immorality with women coming into the temple(2:27–3:18). While Eli rebuked them, he did not use his high priestly authority to remove these evil shepherds from the priesthood.

Traditional Jewish understanding asserts that this is *, but the text is actually an indictment of the whole Aaronic priesthood. Aaron was, after all, Eli's "father" in Egypt (2:27–28) who was ordained priest. In this word of judgment, there is a promise that God will **"raise me up a faithful priest, that shall do according to that which is in mine heart and in my mind: and I will build him a sure house; and he shall walk before mine anointed for ever"**(2:35). This was fulfilled in Christ.

Samuel finished what Samson started. Sometimes after Samson crashed the temple of Dagan and killed off most of the Philistine government, Samuel led the people first in repentance; he then led them into battle, driving them out and ending the forty year occupation.

Sometime after this victory, when Samuel ***"was old, that he made his sons judges over Israel"*** (1 Sam 8:1). Samuel would experience the epic failure of the system of judges firsthand. His sons were not righteous judges, but **"turned aside after dishonest gain, took bribes, and perverted justice"**(1 Sam 8:3 NKJV).

In response to this, the elders of Israel approached Samuel and asked him to give them a king, pointing out the epic failure of his sons as their argument. He was distressed and went before the Lord

“Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel unto Ramah, And said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations. But the thing displeased Samuel, when they said, Give us a king to judge us. And Samuel prayed unto the Lord.

And the Lord said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them. According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt even unto this day, wherewith they have forsaken me, and served other gods, so do they also unto thee. Now therefore hearken unto their voice: howbeit yet protest solemnly unto them, and shew them the manner of the king that shall reign over them.”

– 1 Samuel 8:4–9

God instructs Samuel to give them what they wish. The Lord says that their request is the latest in a long pattern of rebellion that has been going on “*since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt even unto this day.*” God then instructs Samuel using the words “*Now therefore.*” These words signify “because.” It is because of this pattern of rebellion that Samuel was to give them a king. God had concluded what the book of Judges had alluded: the system of judges was an epic failure.

Everybody but Samuel agreed that the system of judges was a failure. Although the text does not specify this, there is no doubt that the elders of Israel were thinking about the pattern of epic failure in the 390 year history of Israel under the judges. The elders thought that the format of the system of judges was flawed. What they did not understand was that the system of judges was designed to fail when the people ceased to be

faithful to God. Deuteronomy 28 and other places in the Mosaic Law promised that a curse would fall on them if they forsook the covenant.

When the elders asked for a king, they failed to realize that the root problem with the system of judges would simply be replicated in a system of kings. The root problem was that human nature was corrupted by sin (Gen 3, Rom 5). What this corruption of human nature did was translate “doing whatever was right in his own eyes” to following his selfish desires. Setting up a king did not do away with selfish ethical reasoning, but only gave a monopoly to a single person. Doing what was right in the king’s eyes quickly degraded into kings fulfilling their selfish desires at the expense of the people (1 Sam 8:11–18).

In chapter 9, I will show how government by kings ended up as a colossal failure. In the midst of this failure, God moves to create a dynasty that will result in the emergence of perfectly just and incorruptible King. It is to this work that we now turn our attention.

1 King 6:1

Ch 8 The Covenant of David – God’s vision of the body politic

Israel’s first king, Saul, fell short of pleasing God. With the exception of the affair with the witch of Endor, Saul avoided engaging in idolatry (1 Sam 28:4–25).

Saul made two major mistakes as king. The result of these mistakes was that he was rejected from being king. These mistakes revealed that Saul was extremely self-willed. He wanted to do God’s will on his own terms, and it didn’t work.

One of these mistakes was that he made unauthorized sacrifices (1 Sam 13:9–14). Samuel promptly rebuked him, saying “*Thou hast done foolishly: thou hast not kept the commandment of the Lord thy God, which he commanded thee: for now would the Lord have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever. But now thy kingdom shall not continue: the Lord hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the Lord hath commanded him to be captain over his people, because thou hast not kept that which the Lord commanded thee*”(vs 13–14). Saul lost the opportunity for a dynasty, because his heart sought self-will rather God’s heart. The Lord then sought out a man who truly was seeking God’s heart.

When Samuel spoke of the “*man after his own*[God’s] *heart,*” he was referring to David. The system of judges was an epic fail because the people, and for the most part the judges, did not have God’s heart. The kingdom would also fall short because most of the kings would seek their own self interests rather than God’s interests. The only answer for effective governance of God’s people is for both the government and the

governed to seek God's heart. God found in David such a man and made a covenant with him.

Because David sought God's heart, it bothered his conscience that he had a fine mansion made of cedar, while the Presence of God dwelt in a tent. He decided to build for God a fine mansion, but God had greater plans.

"And it came to pass, when the king sat in his house, and the Lord had given him rest round about from all his enemies; That the king said unto Nathan the prophet, See now, I dwell in an house of cedar, but the ark of God dwelleth within curtains. And Nathan said to the king, Go, do all that is in thine heart; for the Lord is with thee.

And it came to pass that night, that the word of the Lord came unto Nathan, saying, Go and tell my servant David, Thus saith the Lord, Shalt thou build me an house for me to dwell in? Whereas I have not dwelt in any house since the time that I brought up the children of Israel out of Egypt, even to this day, but have walked in a tent and in a tabernacle. In all the places wherein I have walked with all the children of Israel spake I a word with any of the tribes of Israel, whom I commanded to feed my people Israel, saying, Why build ye not me an house of cedar?

Now therefore so shalt thou say unto my servant David, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, I took thee from the sheepcote, from following the sheep, to be ruler over my people, over Israel: And I was with thee whithersoever thou wentest, and have cut off all thine enemies out of thy sight, and have made thee a great name, like unto the name of the great men that are in the earth. Moreover I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own,

and move no more; neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more, as beforetime, And as since the time that I commanded judges to be over my people Israel, and have caused thee to rest from all thine enemies. Also the Lord telleth thee that he will make thee an house.

And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men: But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee. And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever.” 2 Sam 7:1-16

There are three key features to this passage. David's throne was to be an everlasting throne (key#1). If his children disobey, then they would be chastised with stripes, indicating there would be times when the throne of David would be in exile as God's judgment (key#2). The covenant, however, was unbreakable: God would never take His love away from David, and therefore the throne of David would never be destroyed.

Ch 9 True Prophets vs the Profitable Prophets– Part 1

The advent of kings in Israel proved to be a colossal failure in terms of faithfulness to the Covenant. While there were a few righteous monarchs, most were corrupt. The people reached unprecedented levels of corruption, becoming more corrupted than the nations God evicted from the Promised Land.

There were four paths that this corruption took: The monarchy corrupted the people, Monarchy was ineffective in keeping people just, the priesthood forgot God's Laws and worshiped idols, pernicious priests and profitable prophets ruin the people, and Israel was corrupted by foreign alliances instead of trusting God. The end result of this was God's just judgment in removing the people from the land He promised to Abraham.

The Monarchy corrupted the people.

Starting with Solomon, the kings of Israel re-introduced idolatry to the people. While Solomon started out with the right heart, asking God for wisdom rather than riches, he soon became corrupted by his power and wealth. 1 Kings 6:37–7:5 reveal that, while Solomon spent seven years building God's house, he spent thirteen years building **his own** house.

While Solomon's fall began with valuing his own interests more than God's, it did not end there. He began to marry many foreign women. These women turned him away from the one true God to worship of false gods.

'King Solomon, however, loved many foreign women besides Pharaoh's daughter—Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians and

Hittites.² They were from nations about which the *Lord* had told the Israelites, “You must not intermarry with them, because they will surely turn your hearts after their gods.” Nevertheless, Solomon held fast to them in love. He had seven hundred wives of royal birth and three hundred concubines, and his wives led him astray. As Solomon grew old, his wives turned his heart after other gods, and his heart was not fully devoted to the *Lord* his God, as the heart of David his father had been.”

- 1 Kings 11:1-4 NIV

Solomon created shrines for idol worship for “all his wives” (11:8). As Solomon had 700 wives, this was a major project that was executed on a colossal scale. Two specific false gods are mentioned. These are Chemosh and Molek (sometimes spelled Molech, Moloch), which according to Easton are equivalent deities*. These gods are gods of child sacrifice.* (also Leviticus 18:21; 20:2-5). Solomon introduced large-scale child sacrifice, the equivalent an abortion holocaust*, to Israel. For over 400 years, children were burned alive as sacrifices. Needless to say, this triggered the anger of the Lord.

Solomon’s affect on him was so profound that it permanently changed the course of the monarchy. The heir to his throne, Rehoboam, was only half-Israelite. His mother was Ammonitess (1 Kings 14:21). It was for Rehoboam’s mother that Solomon built the shrine for [Molek](#) where children were slaughtered.

God punished Solomon by splitting the kingdom during the reign of his son, Rehoboam, into two kingdoms. From Rehoboam onward, there would be two kingdoms: Israel and Judah. Israel revolted from the House of David to follow Jeroboam. The house of David, however, continued to rule over the tribe of Judah.

Jeroboam failed to trust God, but created his own schemes. He reasoned that, if the Israelites went to the temple in Jerusalem that they would revert to Rehoboam and that he would be killed. He set up two golden calves. Jeroboam committed the same sin, even using the same proclamation that Aaron did when he set up the golden calf in the wilderness (Ex 32:8).

“And Jeroboam said in his heart, Now shall the kingdom return to the house of David: If this people go up to do sacrifice in the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of this people turn again unto their lord, even unto Rehoboam king of Judah, and they shall kill me, and go again to Rehoboam king of Judah. Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold, and said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.”

- 1 Kings 12:26-28

The people of Israel who were led by Jeroboam flocked to idolatry. Jeroboam's sin shaped cultural life on such a deep level that every successor monarch continued the idolatry. Jehu was the only possible exception to this rule. He destroyed the Baal worship of Ahab but continued the idolatry of Jeroboam (2 Kings 10:18-32).

The monarchy was intended to restrain evil by not letting everyone do *“what was right in his own eyes.”* The monarchy was to know the law and enforce the legal standard (Deut 17:14-19). Once the monarchy became corrupt, however, it became more dangerous to morals than anarchy. This is because Satan now had the opportunity to use state power to enforce wickedness. There are a number of examples of this in the books of the Kings, with three that are particularly relevant: Jezebel, Athaliah, and Manasseh.

Jezebel was the daughter of the King of Tyre who married Ahab, King of Israel. She sought to eradicate the true religion of Yahweh God and replace it with a Phoenician version of Mystery Babylon Paganism. To this end she tried to kill off all of the prophets of Yahweh God. Things got so bad that Obadiah, a prophet himself, hid 100 of the Lord's prophets in a cave and fed them (1 Kings 18:3-14). She then proceeded to hire 850 Pagan prophets who were paid from the royal treasury (1 Kings 18:19).

Athaliah was a relative of Ahab and granddaughter of Omri (2 Kings 8:25-27). She sought to destroy the Davidic covenant from within. When her son Ahaziah was dead, she proceeded to wipe out the entire royal line (2 Kings 11). But Jehosheba, sister of Ahaziah, took his infant son and hid them from Athaliah as the royal family was about to be murdered. The infant son, named Joash, was hidden with Jehioada the High Priest for six years. During the seventh year, Jehioada arranged for Joash to be crowned King and Athaliah to be executed.

Manasseh did the most harm to Israel of anyone in the monarchy. His father, Hezekiah, was considered the most righteous king out of "*all the Kings of Judah*" (2 Kings 18:5). The son does not follow the father in this case, but rebels against both his father and the Lord. Manasseh's twofold program of evil succeeded where Jezebel and Athaliah failed. He **almost** completely annihilates Judaism as a living religion. Manasseh goes where no one has gone before: He desecrates the Temple.

"And he set a graven image of the grove that he had made in the house, of which the Lord said to David, and to Solomon his son, In this house, and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all tribes of Israel, will I put my name for ever: Neither will I make the feet of Israel move any more out of the land which I gave their fathers; only if they will observe to do

according to all that I have commanded them, and according to all the law that my servant Moses commanded them. But they hearkened not: and Manasseh seduced them to do more evil than did the nations whom the Lord destroyed before the children of Israel.”

- 2 Kings 21:7-9

Manasseh was so successful that Israel, even the priests forgot that the books of the law even existed until they were rediscovered in the 18th year of Josiah (2 King 22:8-11). Judaism was extinguished from public life and the temple services were subverted into Pagan worship and child sacrifice.

Manasseh caused Israel to sin more than the nations that God evicted. Divine justice required that God evict the Israelites from the land. God would, however, initiate one more revival so that His light would not be extinguished from the earth.

“And the Lord spake by his servants the prophets, saying, Because Manasseh king of Judah hath done these abominations, and hath done wickedly above all that the Amorites did, which were before him, and hath made Judah also to sin with his idols: Therefore thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Behold, I am bringing such evil upon Jerusalem and Judah, that whosoever heareth of it, both his ears shall tingle. And I will stretch over Jerusalem the line of Samaria, and the plummet of the house of Ahab: and I will wipe Jerusalem as a man wipeth a dish, wiping it, and turning it upside down. And I will forsake the remnant of mine inheritance, and deliver them into the hand of their enemies; and they shall become a prey and a spoil to all their enemies; Because they have done that which was evil in my sight, and have provoked me to anger, since the day their fathers came forth out of Egypt, even unto this day.

Moreover Manasseh shed innocent blood very much, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another; beside his sin wherewith he made Judah to sin, in doing that which was evil in the sight of the Lord.”

-1 Kings 21:10-16

Monarchy was ineffective in keeping the people just.

Once Solomon and Jeroboam re-introduced the people to idolatry and murder, the people never quit. For the next 400 years, they pursued idolatry, sexual immorality and child sacrifice. In post-Solomon Israel, 19 out of 19 kings were wicked pursuers of idolatry, sexual immorality, and child murder. In Judah, about 12 of 24 were wicked pursuers of idolatry, sexual immorality, and child murder. Of the 12 good kings of Judah, 10 allowed the people to pursue their villainy. Only two of these kings made proactive efforts to systematically eradicate the practice of idolatry and child murder on the part of the people: Hezekiah (2 Kings 18:1-6) and Josiah (2 Kings 23:1-20).

Priesthood forgot God’s Laws, but worshiped idols.

Where was the priesthood while the kings were leading the people into oblivion? With just a few exceptions, they were joining the kings in leading the people down the pathway to Hell.

Pernicious Priests and Profitable Prophets ruin the people.

“Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth; and I will pardon it. And though they say, The Lord liveth; surely they swear falsely. O Lord, are not thine eyes upon the truth? thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved; thou hast consumed them, but they have refused to receive correction: they have made their faces harder than a rock; they have refused to return.

Therefore I said, Surely these are poor; they are foolish: for they know not the way of the Lord, nor the judgment of their God. I will get me unto the great men, and will speak unto them; for they have known the way of the Lord, and the judgment of their God: but these have altogether broken the yoke, and burst the bonds.

Wherefore a lion out of the forest shall slay them, and a wolf of the evenings shall spoil them, a leopard shall watch over their cities: every one that goeth out thence shall be torn in pieces: because their transgressions are many, and their backslidings are increased.”

– Jere miah 5:1–6

In one instance, Jeremiah came into direct conflict with the Deputy High Priest, which was second only to High Priest in authority in the priesthood (<http://gill.biblecommenter.com/jeremiah/20.htm>). When Pashur heard that Jeremiah was prophesying judgment upon Israel, he hit him and had him arrested. Jeremiah responded by pronouncing God’s judgment on Pashur.

“Now Pashur the son of Immer the priest, who was also chief governor in the house of the Lord, heard that Jeremiah prophesied these things. Then Pashur smote Jeremiah the prophet, and put him in the stocks that were in the high gate of Benjamin, which was by the house of the Lord. And it came to pass on the morrow, that Pashur brought forth Jeremiah out of the stocks. Then said Jeremiah unto him, The Lord hath not called thy name Pashur, but Magormissabib.

For thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will make thee a terror to thyself, and to all thy friends: and they shall fall by the sword of their enemies, and thine eyes shall behold it: and I will give all Judah into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall carry them captive into Babylon, and shall slay them with the sword. Moreover I will deliver all the strength of this

city, and all the labours thereof, and all the precious things thereof, and all the treasures of the kings of Judah will I give into the hand of their enemies, which shall spoil them, and take them, and carry them to Babylon. And thou, Pashur, and all that dwell in thine house shall go into captivity: and thou shalt come to Babylon, and there thou shalt die, and shalt be buried there, thou, and all thy friends, to whom thou hast prophesied lies.”

- Jeremiah 20:1-6

The Priesthood not only deceived the people through corrupt theology, but conducted scheme of treachery to manipulate people. People would be manipulated into transgressing the law so that the law could then be used as a weapon to control or annihilate them. On numerous occasions, the Pharisees tried unsuccessfully to use this tactic frequently against Jesus.

(Matt 12:10;19:3;22:15-46;Mark 3:2;8:11;10:2;12:13-15;
Luke 10:25;11:16;11:54;20:23; John 8:6)

“O Lord, thou hast deceived me, and I was deceived; thou art stronger than I, and hast prevailed: I am in derision daily, every one mocketh me. For since I spake, I cried out, I cried violence and spoil; because the word of the Lord was made a reproach unto me, and a derision, daily. Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay.

“For I heard the defaming of many, fear on every side. Report, say they, and we will report it. All my familiars watched for my halting [Stumbling

or moral failure], *saying, Peradventure he will be enticed, and we shall prevail against him, and we shall take our revenge on him..*

“But the Lord is with me as a mighty terrible one: therefore my persecutors shall stumble, and they shall not prevail: they shall be greatly ashamed; for they shall not prosper: their everlasting confusion shall never be forgotten. But, O Lord of hosts, that triest the righteous, and seest the reins and the heart, let me see thy vengeance on them: for unto thee have I opened my cause. Sing unto the Lord, praise ye the Lord: for he hath delivered the soul of the poor from the hand of evildoers.”

- Jeremiah 20:7-13

Profane Prophets and Priests have scattered the people of God as a consequence of their false teaching and treachery. They have fed on the flock rather than feeding the flock. God promises that he will remove the bad shepherds and replace them with faithful shepherds. As we shall see in chapter **, he replaced apostate Judaism with the Gospel of Christ, He has also displaced religious authorities on several occasions during “the church age” when they became too corrupt.

“Woe be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! saith the Lord. Therefore thus saith the Lord God of Israel against the pastors that feed my people; Ye have scattered my flock, and driven them away, and have not visited them: behold, I will visit upon you the evil of your doings, saith the Lord. And I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all countries whither I have driven them, and will bring them again to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase. And I will set up shepherds over them which shall feed them: and they shall

fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall they be lacking, saith the Lord.

“Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, The Lord Our Righteousness. Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that they shall no more say, The Lordliveth, which brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; But, The Lordliveth, which brought up and which led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country, and from all countries whither I had driven them; and they shall dwell in their own land.

“Mine heart within me is broken because of the prophets; all my bones shake; I am like a drunken man, and like a man whom wine hath overcome, because of the Lord, and because of the words of his holiness. For the land is full of adulterers; for because of swearing the land mourneth; the pleasant places of the wilderness are dried up, and their course is evil, and their force is not right. For both prophet and priest are profane; yea, in my house have I found their wickedness, saith the Lord.

“Wherefore their way shall be unto them as slippery ways in the darkness: they shall be driven on, and fall therein: for I will bring evil upon them, even the year of their visitation, saith the Lord. And I have seen folly in the prophets of Samaria; they prophesied in Baal, and caused my people Israel to err. I have seen also in the prophets of Jerusalem an horrible thing: they commit adultery, and walk in lies: they strengthen also the hands of evildoers, that none doth return from his

wickedness; they are all of them unto me as Sodom, and the inhabitants thereof as Gomorrah.”

– Jeremiah 23:1–14 see also Ezekiel 34

Israel trusted foreign alliances instead of trusting God.

This was really where a lot of the corruption started. Solomon’s many marriages to foreign wives likely started as statecraft marriages, but over time his wives corrupted his heart away from the true God towards the false gods they served. On several occasions, foreign alliances brought forth rebuke from the Lord.

On one occasion, while Asa was king of Judah, Israel waged war against Judah (2 Chr 16:1). Asa, instead of trusting God like he did when he fought against the Ethiopians, decided to trust in foreign alliances (2 Chr 16:2–6). The scheme was successful in getting Israel to back off from warfare with Judah.

This, however, did not please God. He sent a prophet to Asa to rebuke him for failing to trust God (2 Chr 16:7–9). Because Asa failed to trust God, he lost an opportunity to defeat Syria. Judah could have both greatly strengthened her political position in the balance of power in the region and achieve peace through a stable balance of power. The political reality Asa created was to weaken Israel by strengthening Syria. Asa’s actions altered the balance of power in the region, leading to Syrian aggression that weakened both Israel and Judah, making that entire region ultimately more vulnerable to Assyrian domination.

There is a promise in 2 Chronicles 16:9 : *“For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him.”* God is looking for people

who trust Him so that He can show His power. God wants us to trust Him, not corrupting political alliances.

Asa's foolishness did indeed lead to Syrian aggression in the region, resulting in war. **His 7th-great-grandson*, Ahaz, was invaded by a joint force of Syria and Israel.** Ahaz was given explicit opportunity to call upon God, but he refused (Isaiah 7). When Ahaz refused a sign that God was going to deliver, Isaiah warned that Assyria would end up devastating Judah.

2 Kings 16 records what Ahaz actually did. It was the worst possible action from a foreign policy perspective, as it removed the buffers between Judah and the most powerful and aggressive nation in the region at that time – Assyria. Ahaz set the state for the fulfillment of Isaiah's chapter 7 prophecy when Assyria sacks Judah.

Ahaz puts his trust in Assyria to solve his problems. He shows an eagerness to make whatever compromises necessary to get Assyria's help. He makes Judah a vassal state to Assyria (2 Kings 16:7–8). Assyria then conquers Syria and deports the Syrians. A few years later he wipes Israel as well, leaving only Judah.

In addition to making Judah a vassal state, he takes gold and silver from the house of the Lord and has Urijah the priest fashion them into an altar patterned after an altar in Damascus; this was done as an act of appeasement to the king of Assyria. Ahaz rejected trust in God and gave both political worship to the king of Assyria and spiritual worship to a false god.

Yet another instance of Judah trusting in political alliances to their shame occurred when Babylon deported the Israelites to Babylon. The remnant that remained in the land asked Jeremiah to inquire of God for

direction (Jeremiah 42). Jeremiah came back with God's command to stay in Judah under the rule of the Babylonians, saying that it would be well for them in Judah but disastrous to them if they went to Egypt.

The remnant of Judah, however, rebelled against the Lord's command and decided to go to Egypt in spite of the warning of disaster. They forcibly took Jeremiah and Baruch with them (Jeremiah 43). It ended up a colossal, three-fold disaster for the remnant of Judah. They suffered apostasy, destruction, and infamy.

Their backsliding went full course to full blown **apostasy**: They had become fully committed pagans. They totally rejected the worship of God to worship "The Queen of Heaven." They began to argue with Jeremiah, saying it was faithlessness to the Queen of Heaven rather than faithlessness to God that brought on them the disaster they were experiencing. Jeremiah boldly proclaimed that it was faithlessness to the one True God that resulted in the disaster.

Jeremiah then offered up another word from the Lord as proof of his first word: he proclaimed that God was going to send Nebuchadnezzar to Egypt to enslave the Egyptians and **destroy them**. They had brought judgment on themselves and the Egyptians. The few who survive this judgment would know that the Lord had truly spoken to Jeremiah.

The dragging up of Egypt into God's judgment on Judah would result in Judah living in **infamy**: "**They will become a curse and an object of horror, a curse and an object of reproach**"(44:12).

We are admonished to trust God rather than political alliances (Psalm 20; 44:6; 118:8-10; 146:3; Isaiah 30:1-9; Jeremiah 17). Politics had a way of

corrupting itself into everything it touches. Jeremiah 17:5–10 contrasts the person who trusts in God to the one who trusts in man.

“Thus saith the Lord; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord. For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited.

Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is. For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit.

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.”

– Jeremiah 17:5–10

The one who trusts in man or in social or political alliances is cursed: he will wither even in times of prosperity. The one who trusts in God, however, is blessed: he will bear abundant fruit even during times of famine.

Verse 9–10 address the heart condition that determines where one places his trust. The Lord searches the “reins” of the heart. God both sees past the outward appearance and ignores beliefs that are merely creedal. He searches for those beliefs that shape our destiny, and rewards accordingly.

Jeremiah 17:10 is a cross reference to Rev 2:23, which is a part of the letter to the church of Thyatira. In this letter Jesus threatens judgment the church for tolerating Jezebel; He is about to cast her and those who commit “sexual immorality*” with her into a “bed of tribulation” (Rev 2:22). Jezebel in this passage is, without doubt, a cross reference to the historical Jezebel who was married to Ahab king of Israel. She was a schemer who stole Naboth’s vineyard through craftiness (1 Kings 21). Those who trust in schemes are cursed, but those who trust in God are blessed.

Ch 10 True Prophets vs the Profitable Prophets – Part 2

In the last chapter, I showed the colossal failure of the monarchy. The monarchy corrupted the people, the priests, and the prophets. The end result was the people of God were deported from the Promised Land.

In this chapter, I will show the work that God did in the midst of this failure to both preserve them and prepare them for the coming of the Messiah, Christ Jesus.

God acts according to the Elijah Principle

In 1 Kings 18, which records the great contest between Elijah and the prophets of Baal, Elijah demonstrates a vital principle. The “god of this world”* operates by manipulating the cultural trends and passing it off as God acting culturally. God, however, often acts counter-culturally. In the case of Elijah, God told him to stack the deck against himself in the showdown with the prophets of Baal. Elijah started the contest outnumbered 850 to 1. He then drowned the sacrifice with water so that it could not burn through any natural means available to one living in that time*. God demonstrated his power by burning the sacrifice supernaturally.

God did this to prove His power. It is more common in history for God to move “against the grain” to prove His power. In the Old Testament, God moves to preserve both his word and his people.

Psalm 12 provides an excellent teaching on divine preservation. There is a battle between crafty words of deception and the word of God

Verses 1–4 documents the dangers to God’s people posed by evil words: “flattering words” and tongues that speak “proud things.” People boast that through the use of crafty language they can prevail, even throw off God’s rule. Words are used to deceive and oppress people. This danger is so acute that the very existence of a faithful remnant of God’s people is endangered.

God, however, has a plan to deliver His people (Psalm 12:5–7). The Lord is going to cut off crafty language (verse 3). He shall preserve them by preserving His Word. The Lord signals in verses 5 that “now will I arise; I will set him in safety from him that puffeth at him.” Verses 6–7 gives the two-fold plan. He is going to preserve a pure word, and He is going to preserve a faithful people.

“Help, Lord; for the godly man ceaseth; for the faithful fail from among the children of men.² They speak vanity every one with his neighbour: with flattering lips and with a double heart do they speak. The Lord shall cut off all flattering lips, and the tongue that speaketh proud things: Who have said, With our tongue will we prevail; our lips are our own: who is lord over us?

“For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the Lord; I will set him in safety from him that puffeth at him.⁶ The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.⁷ Thou shalt keep them, O Lord, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever.”

– Psalm 12: 1–7

God preserves his Word

There are three major instances in the Old Testament in which God preserved His Word. Rediscovery of the Mosaic Covenant during Josiah's reign, Jehiochin's surrender, and the ministry of Ezra.

During the fifty-five year reign of Manasseh, the conversion of Judah to idolatry was so complete that the priests forgot that the Mosaic covenant even existed. The document containing the Mosaic covenant was rediscovered during the 18th year of Josiah's reign when Josiah asked Hilkiah, the High Priest, to count the silver that had been placed in the house of the Lord. Hilkiah re-discovered the book of the law:

“⁸ And Hilkiah the high priest said unto Shaphan the scribe, I have found the book of the law in the house of the Lord. And Hilkiah gave the book to Shaphan, and he read it. And Shaphan the scribe came to the king, and brought the king word again, and said, Thy servants have gathered the money that was found in the house, and have delivered it into the hand of them that do the work, that have the oversight of the house of the Lord. And Shaphan the scribe shewed the king, saying, Hilkiah the priest hath delivered me a book. And Shaphan read it before the king.

¹¹ And it came to pass, when the king had heard the words of the book of the law, that he rent his clothes. And the king commanded Hilkiah the priest, and Ahikam the son of Shaphan, and Achbor the son of Michaiah, and Shaphan the scribe, and Asahiah a servant of the king's, saying, Go ye, enquire of the Lord for me, and for the people, and for all Judah, concerning the words of this book that is found: for great is the wrath of the Lord that is kindled against us, because our fathers have not hearkened unto the words of this book, to do according unto all that which is written concerning us.”

Josiah proceeded to jump start a national revival to try to turn the nation back to God. While the revival was short-lived, it spurred renewed interest in not only the books of the law but other important documents in the history of Israel.

It is politically correct in a number of circles to speak of Hebrew roots and Jewish traditions. According to this text, Manasseh wiped out from Jewish culture the knowledge of God and subverted the temple into pagan worship (2 Kings 21). There was an absolutely minimal level of knowledge that Josiah would have had prior to discovery of the book of the law. He would likely have had the memory of Manasseh's testimony of how God judged him for idolatry and his subsequent repentance (2 Chronicles 33). Josiah would likely be aware of the proclamation of the prophets that the Lord sent (2 Kings 21:10). Josiah would also have a minimal level of general revelation to his conscience (Rom2). **While this started his search for God, the successful revival of Judah would depend of the recovery of the documents and application of its principles. Everything we know about Jewish life prior to this time is known solely on the basis of the recovered historical documents.**

When Nebuchadnezzar deported Judah to Babylon, there were actually two waves of deportation. One occurred during Jehoiachin's reign (2 Kings 24:10-16) and the other during Zedekiah's reign (2 Kings 25:8-11).

When Jerusalem was besieged during Jehoiachin's reign, the king of Judah peacefully surrendered to the king of Babylon (2 Kings 24:12). Both the royal family and the skilled labor was deported to Babylon (2 Kings 24:14). This included the intellectual classes.

Zedekiah was installed as king over those who remained. Zedekiah rebelled and Jerusalem was once again besieged. This time, instead of peaceful surrender, Zedekiah attempts an escape. Zedekiah is captured; his sons are killed and his eyes are gouged out. Zedekiah is bound in chains, the temple is plundered, and all great buildings are destroyed (2 Kings 25:1–11).

A comparison of the two deportations shows that Zedekiah's deportation was accompanied by much more violence than Jehioachin's. While Jehioachin's deportation was **not** a voluntary one, there is no evidence from the narrative to support the idea that violence was used as the means to forcibly relocate people. Since Jehoiachin peacefully surrendered, the implication would be that his government cooperated with and complied to demands made by Nebuchadnezzar's officers. Nebuchadnezzar's officers told Jehioachin that the skilled laborers and intellectuals were required to relocate to Babylon; in response, these people packed their bags and followed Nebuchadnezzar's officers to the place that was assigned for them to live.

The significance of this forced, but otherwise relatively peaceful, deportation is that the documents necessary to preserve the light God gave to Israel traveled to Babylon and survived the deportation. These documents would include copies or originals of the books of the Mosaic Covenant, copies or originals of the books of history documenting Israel's history during the rule of the judges, and copies or originals of the official accounts of the reign of the kings of Israel and Judah. These documents would later be used to reconstruct the spiritual life of Israel.

Proof that numerous documents survive the deportation can be found in Ezra. Ezra 2 shows that most of the priestly families kept detailed

documentation of their genealogies. Ezra 7:1–5 shows Ezra’s genealogy. God raised up Ezra for a very important mission described in 7:6–10

“This Ezra went up from Babylon; and he was a ready scribe in the law of Moses, which the Lord God of Israel had given: and the king granted him all his request, according to the hand of the Lord his God upon him...”

“For upon the first day of the first month began he to go up from Babylon, and on the first day of the fifth month came he to Jerusalem, according to the good hand of his God upon him. For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments.”

– Ezra 7:6,9–10

Ezra is classified as a “Scribe.” Scribes were literary experts. Scribes were the precursor to modern textual scholars. Ezra’s job, as a scribe, was to handle texts. Verse 6 says he was *“a ready scribe in the law of Moses, which the Lord God of Israel had given.”* This meant two things: he had access to the source documents of the law of Moses and also the skills necessary to properly handle those documents. Verse 11 describes Ezra as a scribe of **“of the words of the commandments of the Lord”** The phrase **“of the words of the commandments”** is a reference to the diverse manuscripts, the words themselves, and not to the concepts or legal principles of the law. Nehemiah 8:1–2, in particular, describes Ezra as having possession of the books of the Law of Moses.

Additional evidence that Ezra had access to numerous manuscript evidence is provided in a letter King Artaxerxes of Persia sent to Ezra authorized him to return to Jerusalem (Ezra 7:12–26). Artaxerxes authorized Ezra to **“enquire concerning Judah and Jerusalem, according to the law of thy God which is in thine hand.”** The **“law of thy God which**

is in thine hand” no doubt refers to the various manuscripts that were in Ezra’s possession.

Ezra’s task was to seek the law. He would study the ancient manuscripts and then present them in a systematic form to Israel. Ezra compiled much of the Old Testament. Ezra painstakingly pieced together sources into an easy to understand narrative. In the book of Kings*, for example, Ezra cross-references reigns of different royal administrations from diverse official documents* to weave a single narrative. Ezra also meticulously cites from source, assuming the reader to be familiar with the source documents.

There are those who believe that Ezra’s role in compiling Old Testament books means he was engaging in revisionist history. These theological modernists argue that Israel was a polytheist pagan nation from the beginning and that they did not embrace monotheism until Israel’s return from the Babylonian captivity. They would argue that Ezra and his contemporaries manufactured the history that has been handed down. The modernist theory, however fails.

There are three reasons why the Modernists claim that Ezekiel’s history is manufactured is not plausible: The abundant use of sources known to his readers, the negativity and counter-cultural perspective of the narrative, and the early consensus within the Jewish community of Ezra’s work.

Ezra made abundant use of sources known to his readers, particularly in the books of the Kings. We frequently see the following formula “**Now the rest of the acts of... ..are they not written in**” throughout the books (1 Kings 11:41; 14:19; 14:29; 15:7; 15:23; 15:31; 16:5; 16:14; 16:20; 16:27; 22:39; 22:45; 2 Kings 1:18; 8:23; 10:34;12:19; 13:8; 13:12;

14:15; 14:18; 14:28; 15:6; 15:11; 15:15; 15:21; 15:26; 15:31; 15:36;
16:19; 20:20; 21:17; 21:25; 23:28; 24:5;1 **Chronicles** 29:29;2
Chronicles 9:29; 13:22; 20:34; 25:26; 26:22; 27:7; 28:26; 32:32; 33:18;
35:26; 36:8).

Ezra cites at least twelve previously existing sources [*](#).

(The Book of Samuel the seer, and in
The Book of Nathan the prophet, and in
The Book of Gad the seer,
Chronicles of the kings of Judah,
Chronicles of the kings of Israel;
The Vision of Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz;
Book of the kings of Judah and Israel,
Book of Jehu the son of Hanani,
The Book of Nathan the prophet, and in
The Prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite, and in
The Visions of Iddo the seer against Jeroboam the son of Nebat,
The Story of Iddo the seer)

Ezra cited these sources as questions, obviously assuming that the reader would be familiar with these sources. If these sources were either non-existent or communicated a narrative that contradicted the narrative Ezra was putting forth, then Ezra's version of Israel's history would not likely have been received as historical.

Most revisionist histories tend to be overly optimistic, glossing over the negatives of a nation's past. For example, American history emphasizes the narrative of liberty while glossing over atrocities committed against blacks and Indians. This is rather typical of national histories, which are

often used as apologetics of the ideals of the nation. The narrative of Israel's history, however, is filled with negative and dark images that paint the people of Israel in a very bad light. The negativity and counter-cultural perspective of the narrative of Israel is very rare in national histories. Israel's history, reflecting a sober introspection of the true nature of the nation, is the least likely of all nations of antiquity to be revisionist.

Ezra's work was well received with the community of Israel. Consensus within the Jewish community of Ezra's work would be unlikely if Ezra was trying to replace a pro-pagan narrative of Israel's history with a monotheistic narrative, citing sources that either did not exist or contradicted him. Ezra's narrative was well received because his contemporaries, many of whom have access to their own copies of the manuscripts, saw that his scholarship was impeccable.

Ezra's renown as scholar positioned him to exert a profound influence as a teacher of Israel. Ezra, along with the priests, both taught the people and helped them understand the Law of Moses. This set the stage for national revival in Israel.

“And all the people gathered themselves together as one man into the street that was before the water gate; and they spake unto Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the Lord had commanded to Israel. And Ezra the priest brought the law before the congregation both of men and women, and all that could hear with understanding, upon the first day of the seventh month...

“...And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people; (for he was above all the people;) and when he opened it, all the people stood up: And Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God. And all the people

answered, Amen, Amen, with lifting up their hands: and they bowed their heads, and worshipped the Lord with their faces to the ground.

“Also Jeshua, and Bani, and Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodijah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, Pelaiah, and the Levites, caused the people to understand the law: and the people stood in their place. So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading.”

- Nehemiah 8:1–2,5–8

God preserves His People

The imprisonment of Manasseh by Assyria was a low point of the spiritual life of Judah. Previously, he subverted the nation and the temple into pagan worship. He was so successful that Judah forgot the Law of Moses. In the eighteenth year of Josiah’s reign, Hilkiah rediscovered the book of the Law of Moses in the temple while counting silver. When this book was delivered to and read to Josiah, the king rent his clothes. He sent messengers to Huldah the prophetess, who confirmed that God was going to remove Judah from the Promised Land (2 Kings 22:8–17).

Josiah escalated a campaign to jump-start national revival (2 Kings 23; 2 Chronicles 34). He went on a campaign to annihilate idolatry and turn Judah back to God. He not only destroyed altars but killed those who did sacrifices. He read the law to the people and led Judah in recommitment to the Mosaic Covenant. This revival was successful in the short term.

“And the king went up into the house of the Lord, and all the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and the priests, and the Levites, and all the people, great and small: and he read in their ears all the words of the book of the covenant that was found in the house of the

Lord. And the king stood in his place, and made a covenant before the Lord, to walk after the Lord, and to keep his commandments, and his testimonies, and his statutes, with all his heart, and with all his soul, to perform the words of the covenant which are written in this book. And he caused all that were present in Jerusalem and Benjamin to stand to it. And the inhabitants of Jerusalem did according to the covenant of God, the God of their fathers.

And Josiah took away all the abominations out of all the countries that pertained to the children of Israel, and made all that were present in Israel to serve, even to serve the Lord their God. And all his days they departed not from following the Lord, the God of their fathers.”

- 2 Chronicles 34:30-33

While Josiah's revival was successful short term, it failed to stop the idolatry long-term and it failed to stop judgment from falling on Judah. It did have long term fruit: It renewed interest in the Mosaic Covenant. This renewed interest would have also sparked interest other documents pertinent to the histories of Israel and Judah. **This interest meant that steps would be taken to make sure that important documents survived the deportation into Babylon; the survival of these documents was essential for both maintaining the light God had given and restoring the national life of Israel after she returned from her exile.**

God did not abandon Israel during her captivity. He sent Hosea, Micah, Zephaniah, and Jeremiah beforehand to warn the people of the impending Babylonian Captivity*. Ezekiel, Daniel, and Habakkuk~ were prophets who ministered during the captivity*. Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi~ were prophets who ministered post-captivity.

God restores Israel in time for the Messiah

Jeremiah prophesied that all of the nation in the region of Judah would be captive in Babylon 70 years (Jeremiah 25:9–12). This seventy years began when Babylon conquered Assyria in 609 BC. It ended when Cyrus the Great of Persia conquered Babylon in 539 BC.

After the fall of Babylon, there were three decrees given by the new occupiers of Judah that would allow for the Israelites to resettle the Promised Land: Decrees from Cyrus, Darius I, and Artaxerxes.

Within the first year after Cyrus conquered Babylon, he gave the decree for the Israelites to return to Judah and rebuild the temple. This is the decree, which was proclaimed in about 538 BC:

“Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, ‘Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The Lord God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah.

“Who is there among you of all his people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the Lord God of Israel, (he is the God,) which is in Jerusalem. And whosoever remaineth in any place where he sojourneth, let the men of his place help him with silver, and with gold, and with goods, and with beasts, beside the freewill offering for the house of God that is in Jerusalem.’

Then rose up the chief of the fathers of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests, and the Levites, with all them whose spirit God had raised, to go up to build the house of the Lord which is in Jerusalem.”

– Ezra 1:1–5

A number of people who returned to Israel was 42,360 free people and 7337 servants (Nehemiah 7:66–67; Ezra 2:64–65).

The people would begin to rebuild the temple according to the decree of Cyrus, but during the reign of his son Cambyses* the enemies of Israel accused them of being a seditious people. They succeeded in getting an injunction to stop building that remained in force until the reign of Darius 1 (Ezra 4).

During the reign of Darius 1, Israel petitioned him to allow the rebuilding of the Temple to resume rebuilding. They appealed to the original decree by Cyrus authorizing the rebuilding. Darius authorized the building to resume and issued an injunction against the enemies of Israel barring them from interference.

Darius' grandson, Artaxerxes, sent Ezra and Nehemiah to Israel and gave them authority (Ezra 7; Neh 1). These two would rebuild not only the city and the wall but the cultural and spiritual life of the nation. Nehemiah was the governor who supervised the building program and Ezra supervised the restoration of the worship.

After the temple was rebuilt, Ezra led a push to promote understanding the Laws of God. Ezra was accompanied by 13 other leaders, including Nehemiah, and a host of Levites. They called Israel to a solemn assembly (Nehemiah 7:73–8:18). The solemn assembly began with intensive teaching from the Scripture, followed by seeking God for seven days and

solemn assembly on the eighth. Each day during this eight day festival there was public Scriptural teaching. This eight-day festival-solemn assembly occurred during the feast of tabernacles (Lev 23:34-36; Joel 1:14, 2:13-15; Acts 1-2 see chapter 26).

Ezra used a grammatical-historical hermeneutic to restore spiritual life. Nehemiah 8:8 reveals their task of not only telling the scripture, but also of explaining: **“So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading.”** The prevalence of idolatry under Manasseh, the Israelites quick return to idolatry after the death of Josiah, and seventy years of living in a foreign, Pagan land all but destroyed any antebellum Israelite culture of devotion to Yahweh God. It is only by **“*reading distinctly,*”** using a grammatical-historical method to recover information about the antebellum Israelite culture can the spiritual life of the Israelite community be reconstructed.

Ch 11 Jesus Christ – the Author and Finisher of God’s work

Jesus Christ is the center of the entire Biblical meta-narrative. The entire Old Testament testifies forward to Him by both the covenants and Messianic prophecies. The New Testament testifies backwards to His first appearance, documenting the historical roots of Christ, his unique existence as the God-Man, his showdown with corrupt religious leaders, and His work of redemption.

Fulfillment of Law and Prophecies

Christ fulfilled the Abrahamic, Mosaic, and Davidic covenants. He fulfills numerous Old Testament roles. He is the seed of the woman, the seed of Abraham, High Priest after the order of Melchizedek, The Prophet Like unto Moses, Heir to the covenant of Moses, the Heir to the throne of David, and the Lamb of God.

The very first Messianic prophecy is found in Gen3:15. After Adam sinned, the Lord said that there would be war between the seed of the serpent and “*the seed of the woman.*” Seed is generally produced by a man rather than a woman. There would come an offspring that would have Eve’s mitochondrial DNA but lacks Adam’s Y-chromosome. He would be the seed of a woman.

The New Testament Accounts of the birth of Jesus clearly portray it as the product of a virgin conception. Mary contributed the mother’s portion of His DNA, including Eve’s mitochondrial DNA. Christ, however, did not receive Joseph’s DNA. God directly created DNA out of raw organic material in a fashion similar to Adam. This is why Christ is called the Second Adam.

Because the father's portion of Jesus' DNA was created directly by God, He was conceived with a communion with God that Adam lost through rebellion.

God promised Abraham that through his seed "all the families of the earth will be blessed. "From the perspective of Genesis, all this requires is that from Abraham descends the people who bring forth the Messiah. Paul, however, informs us that God's intentions are more narrowly focused. Paul points out that the promise is to seed rather than seeds*.The covenant is focused on a specific person who is the seed of Abraham.

The first referencetothe priesthood of God in the Bible is o the priesthood of Melchizedek (Genesis 14). After Abraham successfully rescued Lot, he is visited by Melchizedek. Melchizedek is King of Salem and High Priest of the Most High God. Melchizedek functioned as mediator in the Abrahamic Covenant by administering the promised blessing. The Levitical priesthood depends on Abraham's standing in the covenant and the Abrahamic Covenant is established through mediation of the priesthood of Melchizedek. The Levitical priesthood ist herefore subordinate to, and dependent on, the priesthood of Melchizedek.

The New Testament declares Christ High Priest forever after the order of Melchizidek. The New Covenant bypasses the Levitical priesthood and relies on the original priesthood God ordained.

Exodus19:5-6provides a method for making the Levitical priesthood obsolete within the Mosaic Covenant*. "***Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure***

unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation..."The Levitical priesthood could be replaced by "*kingdom of priests*" within the Mosaic covenant. This opened the door for the administration of the priesthood of Melchisedek.

Because Christ is the first and only person to faithfully keep the Mosaic Covenant, he is installed as High Priest after the order of Melchizedek. Because He is the High Priest, he can mediate the entrance of others into this priesthood, thus creating a kingdom of priests.

Christ's standing as a High Priest of the order of Melchizedek enables Him to be the Prophet Like unto Moses (Deuteronomy 18:15–16; Acts 3:22–23). Hebrews tells us that "*Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after; But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end*" (Heb 3:5–6). Christ is a prophet "like unto Moses" because both Christ and Moses were administrators in the house of God. God used Moses to administer the Mosaic Covenant. Christ administered the New Covenant. Christ.

Christ is the Heir to the throne of David. The genealogies of both Matthew and Luke trace His genealogy to King David.

Matthew 1:1–16 shows the genealogy from Abraham to Jesus. It goes from "*Abraham begat Isaac*" to "*Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.*" The term "*begat*" indicates biological parentage. Matthew 1 is Jesus genealogy through Joseph. As Joseph was Jesus legal father, the Law allows for substitution/adoption*, and the Davidic covenant does not put any restrictive definitions on who counts as a son of David, Christ can legally

claim rights under the Davidic covenant through his relationship to Joseph.

Luke's genealogy, however, lists Joseph's father as the son of Heli (3:23). Luke genealogy is not biologically constrained with the term "begat," so other types of parentage, such as adoption and in-law relations, can be considered. Luke genealogy (Luke 3:23–38) is that of Christ through Mary*. Jesus is not only legally related to David through Joseph as a descendant of Solomon (Matthew 1: 6), but is biologically related to David through Mary as a descendant of Nathan (Luke 3:31).

The Davidic Covenant (2 Sam 7) provides no criteria for discriminating which descendant of David can sit on his throne, so God can place any certifiable descendant of David upon the throne of David and still keep the covenant. As a descendant of David, Christ is qualified to sit on David's throne.

The Heir to the Throne of David is also the God-Man

Subsequent prophecies concerning God's promise made to David anticipated a descendant who would perfectly follow God's heart. Because of the taint of sin that plagues all descendants of Adam, it became necessary to bring forth a God-Man. There are three passages in the Old Testament that predict the coming of the God-Man.

"Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies; whereby the people fall under thee. Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre. Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows."

– Psalm 45:5–7

This is a Psalm of David. He is extolling the virtues of a King who perfectly seeks God's heart. This King "*lovest righteousness, and hateth wickedness.*"

In this passage, David is obviously giving praise to God as the King, but he uses some interesting language to describe God. The phrase "*therefore God, thy God,*" is suggestive of a second person, who is the God of God. The Hebrew word for 'God' in both occurrences in verse 7 is Elohiym. While this passage does not specifically prove the Trinity, it suggests that there is a diversity of personalities within the unity of God's Being.

We are also instructed that God has anointed this King above his fellows, suggesting fellowship with humanity. Should this be taken as a reference to a God-Man.

Some would object that Elohiym, while generally used to refer to deity, is sometimes used to refer to princes and magistrates (Exodus 22:28–29; Psalm 82). They would suggest that the word 'Elohiym' in Psalm 45 refers to princes and magistrates. In Exodus 22:28, God calls the elders of Israel 'gods.' In Psalm 82, however; He condemns these princes of Israel who are called gods. Judgment is pronounced upon them. They "**shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes**" (82:7). The chapter ends with the proclamation that God, and not mortal man, will inherit the nations. Other passages indicate divine kingship over the earth, favoring the view that Psalm 45:7 is truly referring to the God-Man.

Consider Psalm 2. In this prophecy the Lord's anointed is clearly referred to as a "begotten" Son in verse 7. God has installed His Only begotten Son as King in Zion, which is in Jerusalem*. Zion is therefore David's throne and the Only Begotten Son of God is also a son of David. Verse 8

declares that God will give the entire earth to His Only Begotten Son. Begotten implies actual metaphysical son-ship and inheritance of the essence of the Father. David was to have a descendant who is both God and man.

Isaiah 9:6-7 is a major messianic prophecy. It uses language that implies both divine nature and eternal reign. In verse 6, the words “mighty God” and “everlasting Father” imply divine nature. Verse 7 says His government shall never end. He will never die. This is no mere man.

“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.”

- Isaiah 9:6-7

These prophecies establish that there is a son of David who is also the only begotten Son of God. This God-Man, because He has no sin nature, will follow perfectly God’s heart and establish justice.

The Revelation of the God-Man occurs in Jesus Christ.

When God created Adam, he breathed into him the breath of life (Genesis 2:8). The Hebrew word translated breath means ‘puff*.’ God puffed life into man. Comparing Scripture with Scripture, We read in Genesis 1:26-27 that God created man “in His image.” The life of Adam was created as a finite copy of the infinite life of God. Adam was just a puff.

H5301 נפח *nâphach naw-fakh'* A primitive root; to *puff*, in various applications (literally, to *inflate, blow hard, scatter, kindle, expire*; figuratively, to *disesteem*): – blow, breath, give up, cause to lose [life], seething, snuff.

H5397 נשמה *shâmâh nesh-aw-maw'* From H5395; a *puff*, that is, *wind*, angry or vital *breath*, divine *inspiration, intellect* or (concretely) an *animal*: – blast, (that) breath (-eth), inspiration, soul, spirit.

G1720 ἐμφυσάω *emphusaō em-foo-sah'-o* From G1722 and *φυσάω phusaō* (to *puff*, compare G5453); to *blow at* or *on*: – breathe on.

G4157 πνοή *pnoē pno-ay'* From G4154; *respiration, a breeze*: – breath, wind.

The ancient Greek translation of the Old testament, the Septuagint, uses the word πνοή [*pnoe pno-ay'*] that means puff. This is related to the same word that is used for spirit. When God created man, he gave us this puff.

According to the text in Genesis 2:8, Adam **became** a living soul the day he was created. The spiritual became integrated with the physical. Adam didn't have a spirit; he became a spiritual being who had a material body. This spiritual nature could be replicated to future generation. Psalm 139 confirms this.

“For you created my inmost being; you knit me together^{H5526} in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was

woven together^{H7551} in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.”

- Psalms 139:13-16 NIV

The Hebrew word translated “knit together” means to entwine, and the Hebrew word translated “woven together” means embroider. This is a description of the unformed body; this is a good description of the genetics of fertilization. This weaving together involves both the physical and spiritual attributes of the newly created person. The puff of the breath of life from is interwoven into the newly created person. A human individual is defined as a person from the moment of conception.

H5526 סכך שִׂכַךְ *sâkaksâkaksaw-kak', saw-kak'* A primitive root; properly to *entwine* as a screen; by implication to *fence in, cover over, (figuratively) protect*: - cover, defence, defend, hedge in, join together, set, shut up.

H7551 רָקַם *râqamraw-kam'* A primitive root; to *variegate* color, that is, *embroider*; by implication to *fabricate*: - embroiderer, needlework, curiously work.

When Adam was created, he received the original puff of the breath of life from God. When he rebelled, the puff of the breath of life became separated from God. Adam passed disconnected condition on to all of his descendants.

When Christ was conceived, the father's DNA was created miraculously by God and then supernaturally joined to Mary's DNA without need for sex (). God breathed a new breath of life into the father's DNA. Jesus was

conceived with a breath of life that was connected to the life of God. Jesus was conceived without a sin nature.

When Jesus was conceived as the second Adam, God did something different than with the first Adam: instead of breathing into a mere puff of the breath of life, God breathed into Christ His own Holy Spirit.

The Hebrew roots of Jesus

Jesus was manifested in space–time history as a Jew living in first–century Judea. The gospels document in the biography of Jesus many issues that serve no Gentile purpose. Christ’s identity is tethered to the fulfillment of Hebrew prophecies. Christ’s theological discussion can be mapped to Jewish debates.

Jesus was manifested in space–time history as a Jew living in first–century Judea. There is both an abundance of external evidence () and a consensus among scholars () supporting the conclusion that the historical Jesus lived in first century Judea.

The gospels document in the biography of Jesus many issues that serve no Gentile purpose. Issues such as Sabbath observance, ritual cleanliness, and the fulfillment of Hebrew Messianic prophecies would have no meaning to a non–Jew or as part of an essentially non–Jewish story.

Christ’s identity is tethered to the fulfillment of Hebrew prophecies. Over 300 Messianic prophecies are cited in the four gospels as fulfillment of Messianic Prophecies. Christ is clearly presented as the goal of Hebrew Jewish history rather than a Pagan monotheism*.

Christ's theological discussions can be mapped to Jewish debates. Among first century Pharisees, there emerged two camps based on the differences of two major Rabbis: followers of Shammai and followers of Hillel. Christ is often viewed as a follower of Hillel

Christ's theology, however, cannot be defined exclusively in terms of Hillel. His views on divorce bear greater similarity to Shammai than to Hillel*. Concerning which command was the greatest, Christ integrated the views of both Shammai and Hillel. Christ agreed with Shammai that the greatest command was to "love the Lord your God with all of your heart and all of your soul and your entire mind and all of your strength." Christ went beyond Shammai and integrated Hillel's view: He said that the Second great command is "to love your neighbor as yourself." Christ viewed both of these together as the foundation of all of the law and the prophets. A comparison of the theology of Jesus Christ with great Jewish Rabbis of first century Judea demonstrates that He was clearly a man of His times who interacted with his contemporaries.

Showdown with corrupt authority

Because Christ was sent on a mission to reconcile Israel to God and the existing leadership was committing political adultery with the Romans, it was inevitable that conflict between Christ and the corrupt leaders would come.

Christ took issue with the Pharisaic elevation of rabbinic commentaries to the level of law. While there is no doubt that Christ studied these commentaries, He flatly rejected the doctrine that they comprised a secret, oral Torah.

“Then the Pharisees and scribes asked him, Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashen hands?”

He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do.

And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition. For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother; and, Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death: But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, It is Corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; he shall be free. And ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father or his mother; Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye.”

- Mark 7:5-13

The “*tradition of the elders*” refers to the commentaries that the Pharisees regarded as the oral Torah - commentaries that were later compiled into the Mishna and the Talmud. The Lord Jesus flatly rejected the idea that these were the commands of God and then proceeded to accuse them of using traditional precepts to reject the clear commands of God in the Torah. (Read chapter 12 for more information of the flaws in the Pharisees doctrine of the oral Torah).

At the core of Christ's conflict with the Pharisees is the claim that He is God. Christ communicated powerfully that He is God when he said **"Before Abraham was, I am (John 8:58)."** The Greeks understood this to be the eternal present, indicating that Christ has an eternal, unchanging nature (Hebrews 13:8). The Jews would have seen this as a claim to be the Great I AM (Exodus 3:14). Christ backed up His claim to be God through both Biblical argument and demonstrations of power; furthermore, He declared war against their hypocritical scheme.

On numerous occasions Jesus debated with the religious leaders. Christ Jesus won the debate each and every single time. Matt 22 documents several debates. One in particular concerns His core claim to be God. Jesus asked them whom they believed the Messiah (Christ) is?

"While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, Saying, What think ye of Christ? whose son is he? They say unto him, The son of David.

"He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David then call him Lord, how is he his son?"

- Matthew 22:41-45

The **"Son,"** in this Psalm, rules from Zion, which is in Jerusalem. This prophecy is, without doubt, about a future ruler descended from David. This much they all agreed upon. Jesus then asks a question that completely destroys their argument against Jesus Christ's deity, that He can't be God because He is a mere man. He asks **"If David then call him Lord, how is he his son?"** There is only one answer: The Messiah is a

God-Man. As man, He is a descendant of David. As God, He is David's Lord.

Christ was not only successful in defending Himself against the schemes of the Pharisees to discredit Him, but He went on an offensive campaign to expose their religious scam. On seventeen occasions he called them hypocrites ([Matthew 6:2](#); [6:5](#); [6:16](#); [15:7](#); [16:3](#); [22:18](#); [23:13](#); [23:14](#); [23:15](#); [23:23](#); [23:25](#); [23:27](#); [23:29](#); [24:51](#); [Mark 7:6](#); [Luke 11:44](#); [12:56](#)). The Greek word translated *hypocrite* ([G5273](#)), means an actor who acts "under an assumed character." The Pharisees were politicians in bed with Rome who were pretending to be men of God. They were dissemblers (<https://www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/dissembler>).

G5273 ὑποκριτής *hupokritēs* *hoop-ok-ree-tace* From [G5271](#); an actor under an assumed character (*stageplayer*), that is, (figuratively) a *dissembler* ("hypocrite"): - hypocrite.

Jesus documents a devastating case against them in Matthew 23. Seven of these references are to be found in Matthew 23, which is His expose of the religious leaders' scam;

Introduction

"Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples,² Saying The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat:³ All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not.⁴ For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.

Jesus first accusation against the Pharisees was that **they loved power**. They were primarily motivated by the desire for power, position, and

privilege. It was this desire to tempt them to enter into spiritual and political adultery with Rome and Herod. Jesus' answer was to rebuke their love of positional authority and point to the rational basis of authority that should underlie genuine ministry (vss 11–12, see ch *). Jesus both rebuked the Jewish tendency and anticipated the rise of Roman Catholicism when He said not to call anyone “**Rabbi**” or “**father**” (vss 9–10).

“**But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments, And love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, And greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi.**

“**But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ. But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.**

–Matthew 23:5–12

What angered Jesus the most about the Pharisees was that **they usurped the place between man and God**. They invented the doctrine of the secret, oral Torah as a scheme to control people by tricking them into thinking they were the only ones who had the key to understanding God’s word. The Pharisees positioned themselves as a barrier between man and God, a tactic that would be later employed by the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches. In verse 13, Jesus describes the impact of their false doctrine of the oral Torah. Jesus cited the issue of

the temple and the gold (vss 16–21) as an example of how they used the so-called oral torah to manipulate people.

“But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows’ houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.

“Woe unto you, ye blind guides, which say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor! Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifieth the gold? And, Whosoever shall swear by the altar, it is nothing; but whosoever sweareth by the gift that is upon it, he is guilty. Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift? Whoso therefore shall swear by the altar, sweareth by it, and by all things thereon. And whoso shall swear by the temple, sweareth by it, and by him that dwelleth therein. And he that shall swear by heaven, sweareth by the throne of God, and by him that sitteth thereon.”

– Matthew 23:13–22

Because the Pharisees were only pretending to be men of God, they had to **resort to theatrics** to appear righteous. They would put undue emphasis on minor points of the law to divert attention away from the

fact that they were wicked and worldly. They had to put on a big show. Had they been truly focused on the truly important matters of the law, their sham would have been apparent to everyone.

²³ **Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. ²⁴ Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel. ²⁵ Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. ²⁶ Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also. ²⁷ Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whitedsepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. ²⁸ Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.**

- Matthew 23:23-28

Jesus outed the religious leaders as persecutors of the righteous, specifically **foretelling the persecution of the Church**. His description of their persecution of the **“prophets, and wise men, and scribes”** is future tense, describing the persecution of the apostolic church.

Jesus singles out the Pharisees use of religion to dominate people as the most heinous sin: He considered it the root sin. When Christ said that **“upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias (vs 35), ”** He was not saying that the Pharisees were specifically guilty of righteous bloodshed prior to the establishment of the ancient

Jewish state; He was saying that the use of religion as a tool of political oppression is the root sin. This is the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which Christ singles out in Rev 2:6,15 as the thing “**which I hate.**” Nicolaitanes comes from a compound Greek word meaning “conqueror of the people.” Jesus absolutely hated the use of religion to commit political oppression.

“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous, And say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets. Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers. Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?

“Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city: That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation.”

- Matthew 23: 29-36

Because of these sins and the refusal of the religious leader to repent, there is no recourse but for **Jesus to pronounce God’s Judgment upon them: God was done with Israel for a season.** Jesus, with great sorrow, pronounces the following judgment:

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

– Matthew 23:37–39

Jesus Christ essentially pronounced the death penalty for Israel. God is simply done with Israel for a season. In the parable of the vineyard (Matthew 21:33–45), Jesus warned the Jewish religious leaders that their position as overseers in the household of God was in jeopardy. They were about to be fired.

“Hear another parable: There was a certain householder, which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country: And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it. And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. Again, he sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them likewise. But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son.

“But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him.

“When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen? They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons. Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord’s doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.

“And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them.”

– Matthew 21: 33–45

The vineyard is the kingdom of God on earth, God is the landowner, and the leaders of Israel are the husbandmen or gardeners. God sent His servants the prophets to receive the fruits of Israel, but they were persecuted. God finally decides to send His only begotten Son, which is Jesus Christ. They murdered Him. **The message of this parable is quite simple: if you kill the Son, you are going to be fired!!! They killed the son, and they got fired.**

Contrary to the claims of replacement theology, God was not permanently done with Israel, but only until Israel says **“Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord(Matthew 23:39).”** This is a reference to Psalm 118, which indicate that Israel will genuinely seek her Messiah in the last days as she is surrounded by armies (see chapters 25–26). Israel will once again be part of God’s story(also Ezekiel 36).

Jesus not only refuted the Pharisees in logical argument, but also demonstrated supernatural, sovereign control over nature that backed up His claims. Christ performed numerous miracles. Jesus conflict with the Pharisees came to a head after the resurrection of Lazarus. The religious leaders feel extremely threatened, fearing that their scheme with Rome is about to go up in smoke (John 11:48). They plot to murder Christ after the resurrection of Lazarus.

“But some of them went their ways to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done. Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many miracles. If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation.

“And one of them, named Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all, Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not. And this spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation; And not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad.

“Then from that day forth they took counsel together for to put him to death. Jesus therefore walked no more openly among the Jews; but went thence unto a country near to the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim, and there continued with his disciples.”

-John 11:46-54

In the midst of this murderous treachery, a word of prophecy goes forth: Caiaphas utterance that it is more expedient for one man to die for the

people was a prophetic word. It is without a doubt Caiaphas' motivation was bad for saying that; nevertheless, God was at work even in these bad circumstances. Just as God subverted the bad intentions of Joseph's jealous brothers sixteen centuries earlier into a plan for great deliverance (Genesis 50:15–22), He was turn the murderous plotting of the Jewish religious leaders into the administration of the one sacrifice that would truly take away our sins.

Jesus Christ died on the Cross*(Basic Training, Basic doctrinept1 -ch5)

The Pharisees succeeded in their scheme to have Christ put to death. What was murder on their part was, on God's part, His plan to redeem us. Christ was crucified on a Roman Cross. This was prophesy (Psalm 22; Isaiah 53) which was fulfilled (Matthew 27–28;Mark 14–16;Luke 22–24;John 18–21). Jesus' death fulfills all covenants and fulfills all righteousness. The death of Jesus saves us from wrath on our particular crimes against God;the death of Jesus destroys the embodiment of all sin; the death of Jesus brings us into covenant with God; the death of Jesus destroys the works of the devil; and the death of Jesus unites us into His body.

The death of Jesus saves us from wrath on our particular crimes against God.He takes away both the guilt of our sins and the power of those sins. In Col 2:11–15 He takes way the criminal charges that are lodged against us both of our crimes against God. The term “ *handwriting of requirements*” literally means criminal charges.

“In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off THE BODY of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, BURIED WITH HIM IN BAPTISM, in which you also

were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross”

- Colossians 2:11-1

The death of Jesus destroys the embodiment of all sin and unites us with Christ. Col 2:11-14 also mentions destroying the “*THE BODY of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ*” by his death on the cross. The Cross not only destroys sins but the sin nature. This is also conformed in Rom 6:3-6.

“Or do you not know that as many of us as were BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST JESUS WERE BAPTIZED INTO HIS DEATH? 4 Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, 6 knowing this, that OUR OLD MAN WAS CRUCIFIED WITH HIM, THAT THE BODY OF SIN MIGHT BE DONE AWAY WITH, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.”

- Romans 6:3-6

If we are united with Christ in his death, then we are also united in his resurrection. Because Christ is raised, we are raised with a new nature. There will be more information on the power of Christ's resurrection in chapter 14.

The death of Jesus brings us into covenant with God. The blood of Jesus brings us into the covenants of God. It is through union with Christ that we inherit the covenant rights that Christ has. It is by being His and of His household that we are counted among the children of the covenant. Through Christ we are now fellow citizens with Israel as God's chosen.

*“Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh—who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands— that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been **BROUGHT NEAR BY THE BLOOD OF CHRIST...***

*“...For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father. Now, therefore, you are **NO LONGER STRANGERS AND FOREIGNERS, BUT FELLOW CITIZENS** with the saints and members of the household of God.”*

-Ephesians 2:11-13,18-19

The death of Jesus destroys the works of the devil. This is why Jesus came (Hebrews 2:14; 1 John 3:8). The first Messianic prophecy was that of Christ crushing Satan's head (Genesis 3:15, Revelation 12:9).

Revelation 12:7-11 gives us a detailed description of Satan's defeat. Satan is defeated by **“by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony.”** Spiritual Warfare takes place as a legal battle in the court of God. The results of the legal battle are enforced in the universe. The Blood of Jesus is the weapon in this battle, and our testimony is the means of applying in our fight against Satan*.

Scripture references

1 Peter 3:20–21; Colossians 2:11–14; 3:11–12; Romans 6:3–6; 1 Corinthians 10:1–2

Ch 12 Jewish Apostasy and the Fall of Judaism

The seeds of Jewish apostasy were sewn during their captivity. When Cyrus the Great gave the decree for Jews to return to the Promised Land, many chose to stay behind. They were comfortable in the Pagan culture and were much more secular in perspective than the ones who returned. We see in Esther a portrayal of the very beginnings of apostasy. The diaspora Jews, when they were in mortal danger, trusted in schemes rather than God for deliverance.

Esther and the Machinations of Marduk-ai

In the days when the Persian Empire was ruling over Israel, during the rule of Xerxes Haman the Agagite* stirred up the kingdom against Israel. Haman, through treachery, tricked the king into issuing a verdict mandating genocide against the Jewish people. This episode happened after faithful Israelites returned from the exile*. There was a beautiful Jewish woman who entered the royal palace and gave her favor with the king. Her name was Haddassah in Hebrew, but Esther in Persian (Esther 2:7). When she found out about Haman's plot, she risked her life to enter the throne room. She revealed that Haman's plot means the death of her people. Haman is subsequently executed.

She petitions the king to issue a decree authorizing the Jews to use force to defend themselves. The result of this turnaround is that fear of the Jews falls upon their enemies.

This entire narrative portrays the deliverance of Israel as the result of scheming and machination. Mordecai [Marduk-ai *] talks his beautiful niece, Esther, into entering a contest to gain membership in the King's

wives club. Sometime later, Haman the Agagite poses a mortal threat to the Jews of the Babylonian diaspora by persuading the king to issue an order legalizing genocide of the Jews. Marduk-ai then talks Esther into using her feminine ways to convene a private dinner with King Xerxes and Haman so she can outmaneuver Haman. The result is Haman is killed and Mordechai is promoted to the position in the royal court that Haman held.

Compare Marduk-ai and Esther's machinations to Ezra's attitude when he asked for the king's military help. Ezra knew, as a faithful Jew and scholar in the law and history, that God frowned on trusting in schemes. He was likely thinking of God's rebuke to Asa for trusting in foreign alliances (2 Chronicles 16:7-9) when he wrote the following:

"Then I proclaimed a fast there, at the river of Ahava, that we might afflict ourselves before our God, to seek of him a right way for us, and for our little ones, and for all our substance. For I was ashamed to require of the king a band of soldiers and horsemen to help us against the enemy in the way: because we had spoken unto the king, saying, The hand of our God is upon all them for good that seek him; but his power and his wrath is against all them that forsake him. So we fasted and besought our God for this: and he was intreated of us." – Ezra 8:21-23

The growing apostasy of Jews of Persia and Babylonia would later contribute heavily to the fall of Judaism.

Antiochus, the Maccabean revolt, and the Rise of the Pharisees

While the Jews who returned were faithful during the administrations of Ezra and Nehemiah, they do not remain that way. When the Persian Empire falls to Alexander the Great, the occasion is set up for the Jews to face great trial.

After Alexander's death, his empire is split into at least four successor empires. One of them, the Seleucid Empire*, would control the Promised Land. An evil king knew as Antiochus Epiphanes would arise who would seek to destroy Judaism. When Antiochus Epiphanes waged war on Jewish religion, some of the Jewish people revolted while others were prone to his influence.

When Antiochus began to commence his program to convert the religion of the temple into Paganism, he had the High Priest as an ally. This High Priest, who took on the Greek name Jason, was more than willing to help. (<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/encyc05.h.iii.html> Col 2, para 2)

About 40% of the Jews and the majority of the upper classes, which would have included much of the Levitical Priesthood, supported Hellenism. (<http://www.jewishhistory.org/review-of-the-hasmonean-era/> table row six)

The faithful Jews resisted. The members of the resistance party became known as the Hasideans. (<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/256567/Hasidean>)

The resistance escalated into war when "***When a Greek official tried to force a priest named Mattathias[Maccabeaus] to make a sacrifice to a pagan god, the Jew murdered the man. Predictably, Antiochus began reprisals, but in 167 BCE the Jews rose up behind Mattathias and his five sons and fought for their liberation.***" (<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/History/Maccabees.html>)

While the Maccabean revolt started out as glorious, it soon became corrupted

http://www.myjewishlearning.com/holidays/Jewish_Holidays/Hanukkah/History/Maccabean_Revolt/Hasmonean_Dynasty.shtml).

Simon, the last of the Maccabee brothers and the only one to survive the revolt, was crowned both king and high priest. This violated both the Mosaic

<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/History/Maccabees.html>)

and

Davidic

Covenants* (http://www.myjewishlearning.com/holidays/Jewish_Holidays/Hanukkah/History/Maccabean_Revolt/Hasmonean_Dynasty.shtml).

These usurpations begin a pattern of corruption that split Jewish society into three factions: The **Pharisees**, the **Sadducees**, and the **Essenes**.

The **Essenes** rejected Jewish leadership because it violated the Mosaic and Davidic Covenants and withdrew from society to live reclusively in the mountains*. Although Christ rejected the Essenes isolationism, Many of their doctrines resonated with Him. The sect of the Essenes died out when Rome raped Judea following the Kochba Rebellion*.

The **Sadducees** favored the priestly classes and leaned more to Hellenistic tendencies than either the Essenes or the Pharisees. Although the Sadducees had an oral tradition, they rejected the Pharisees elevation of it into a secret second law or secret oral Torah. The Sadducees also rejected resurrection from the dead. The Sadducees died out when the temple was destroyed by Titus in 70 AD.

Of the groups that emerged out of the Hasideans, the **Pharisees** were the only one to survive the devastation of Judea (AD 70–135) by Rome*. The doctrine of the Pharisees forms the backbone of Rabbinic Judaism. The Pharisees developed and promoted belief that there was a second law

revealed only to the priests. They asserted that there existed an oral Torah that dated from the time of Moses and was passed down through Aaron and his sons. The doctrine of the oral torah led them straight into apostasy.

The Lord Jesus said to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees (Matt. 15:32–16:12; Mark 8:1–21). Immediately after Jesus fed the five thousand and gather a quantity of leftovers greater than the original contribution*, the Pharisees start an argument with Him and demand a sign. The Lord Jesus had just finished giving a sign of His power and authority by creating food out of nothing; why do the Pharisees need a sign. They had plenty of information to form a rational basis for accepting Jesus as the Christ, but they had already pre-decided that they would not. They were simply scheming for a pretext to make their rejection appear to have a rational, legal basis. They were scheming

Jesus declared that the Pharisees were hypocrites. The word ‘hypocrite’ is translated from the Greek word for actor. The Pharisees were simply pretending to be men of God. They were acting a part in a scheme. How did they get that way?

The roots of the Pharisees apostasy were sewn almost immediately following the Maccabean Revolt. Simon Maccbeaus committed two errors that would doom Judaism to apostasy. He combined the priestly office with the kingship, resulting the intrigues of politics corrupted organized religion (<http://www.jewishhistory.org/review-of-the-hasmonean-era/> table row twelve). In addition to merging organized religion with politics, he went to bed politically with Rome, trusting Rome to give them leverage against the Seleucids instead of the Lord to deliver them. This double adultery of religion with politics would destroy Judaism.

Eventually the Hasmonean dynasty fell. The Hasmoneans were replaced by the Herods. Herod “*controlled the sacrificial cult by placing a lackey in the position of High Priest*”

(<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/biography/Herod.html>).

By the time Jesus came the religious leaders were merely playing a game based on adultery with Rome and with Herod as Caesar’s puppet ruler. Rome gives them wealth and power; in return they manipulate the people to keep them subservient to Rome. This use of religion to dominate people is also called the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which Jesus hates more than any other sin.

The leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees is the subversion of religion to dominate people. The Sadducees used a blunt instrument: they simply declared that the priesthood was dominant. They were very unpopular and died out when Rome sacked Judea. The Pharisees, however, used sophisticated instruments to dominate the people by subtle manipulation. These instruments were similar to instruments later employed by the Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, and some Protestant Churches. The peculiar leaven of the Pharisees, then, merits a more detailed analysis.

Leaven of the Pharisees – the so-called “Oral Torah”

The Pharisees developed a doctrine that there existed a second law that was known only to the priests and transmitted orally. This oral law, or Oral Torah, is regarded as the key to understanding the written Torah. Since only the priests knew the oral torah, then people were dependent on the priest to authoritatively tell them what the Law said. This doctrine of the Oral Torah was devised to deny people access to the Scripture.

The main argument used to support the idea of an oral torah is appeal to ambiguity of sections of the written law

(http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Judaism/Oral_Law.html)

(<http://www.torah.org/learning/basics/primer/torah/oraltorah.html>).

Several examples are given that are supposed to illustrate the necessity of an oral law. Proponents of an oral law argue that the written law does not provide sufficient details on how to observe the Sabbath, perform marriage ceremonies, or how to bind the Torah to the front of the head.

The Pharisees argued that the oral law was equal to the written law; some argued that it was even greater than the written law. They sought to exalt the so-called oral law twofold: they would often use the oral law to overthrow clear injunctions of the written law (1), and they would expand the scope of the law to micro-manage every minute detail of life (2).

“Through their endeavor to regulate the whole of human life, down to every detail, by means of the law, the Pharisees were led to lay great stress on enlarging the scope of the same by tradition, even to ascribe a paramount importance to the latter in comparison with the less exactly defined law (Mishnah, Sanhedrin, xi. 3). Ultimately, therefore, tradition, like the law, came to be traced back to Moses (PirkeAboth, i. 11 sqq.), and so came the possibility of invalidating a legal provision by virtue of a traditional precept (Mark 7:11)”

(<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/encyc09.html?term=Pharisees%20and%20Saducees#p-p77.401&2>)

This oral law was written down in the Talmud, which is by the admission of Rabbinic Judaism *“confused collection of scattered ideas and disjointed reasoning”*

(<http://www.torah.org/learning/basics/primer/torah/oraltorah.html>). A Talmudist will explain away the contradictions by telling you “*it’s nearly impossible to master the logic and style of the Talmud without a real, live teacher.*” Talmudic Judaism locks away the word of God from the people. The Talmud, however, is simply a collection of commentaries and debates of various Rabbis from the Maccabean period.

“Given this chain of authority, one might wonder why the [Mishna and Talmud](#) are filled with debates between rabbis; shouldn’t they have all been recipients of the same, unambiguous tradition? Orthodox teachers respond that the debates came about either because students forgot some of the details transmitted by their teachers, or because the Oral Law lacks specific teachings on the issue being discussed.”

http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Judaism/Oral_Law.html

The so-called oral law, in practice, was often reduced to whatever the Rabbi wanted it to be. When Jesus condemned the religious leaders for replacing the Word of God through the traditions of men, He was condemning the Pharisees passing off their commentaries as the law of God. **In other words, Christ denied their claims concerning the existence of an oral Torah.**

There are five difficulties facing the prospect of a secret, oral law: ambiguities in the written law can be explained without reference to an oral law; there are passages in the law that imply that people know the whole law; the existence of passages that condemn the sealing up of God’s Word in the way that the Pharisaic doctrine does, there is the absence of any reference to a second oral law during the Old Testament period; and how could an oral law have survived the reign of Manasseh.

Ambiguities in the written law can be explained without reference to an oral law. Most of the ambiguities cited in these sources are only problematic if one takes a hyper-legalistic interpretation of the law. For example, does God really care about the physical means one uses to bind copies of the law on your forehead? I doubt that it make any difference; focusing on such minutiae obscures the main point of Deuteronomy 6: 5, which is that we are to meditate on the law using every conceivable means until we know it.

Most ambiguities are resolved by the fact that, within the law, there is freedom on how it is applied. This is certainly the case concerning personal decisions and beliefs. The only cases where such ambiguity matters are community matters, such as civil rights claims and temple regulations. The social nature of such matters requires a tribunal to issue authoritative decisions; it does not require a separate law but spiritual discernment on how to interpret existing law. The history of these adjudications, while valuable, do not carry the same authority as the law, neither can they trump the law.

There are passages in the law that imply that the people know, or are capable of knowing, the whole law. In chapter 6, page 42, I write in detail concerning how the people know the will of God. There are three passages in Deuteronomy that indicate that the people are capable of knowing the whole law; there is no secret law known only to the enlightened elite. Below is a quote from chapter 6 that is worth repeating here:

Deuteronomy 6:4–9 tells us that the Word of God is in the hearts of the people; teaching authority is vested in the parents, not the priests and not the elders. Ch 30:11–14 tells the people that they do not need to call on someone in the enlightened elite to fetch it for us; it is in the heart

upon people hearing and meditating upon it. Deuteronomy 31:9–13 teaches us that Moses wrote down all of the law to make knowledge of the law available to everyone. There is no secret law known to only a few people.

There are passages that condemn the sealing up of God's Word in the way that the Pharisaic doctrine does. In Mark 7:11, Jesus cites Isaiah 29:13 as an argument against the so-called oral law.

Isaiah 29:10–16 describes a scheme to block access to God's Word. In this case, the prophets and the priests are in a stupor of their own making. Because they were seduced or otherwise suborned into political adultery with the Herodians and the Romans, they sought to suppress the knowledge of God (Rom 1:18–32). They devised schemes to dupe people into thinking they cannot access the knowledge of God. **They argued that access to God is limited to the enlightened elite.** When asked about law, the "unlearned" would say "***I cannot read***" and the "learned" would reply "***it is sealed.***"

"For the Lord hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes: the prophets and your rulers, the seers hath he covered. And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I cannot; for it is sealed: And the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I am not learned." – Isaiah 29:10–12

This scheme would be the template for numerous schemes that would be employed throughout history that would use religion to put people in bondage. The basic argument is that, because only a select few are permitted to access the knowledge of God, the rest of us must blindly

follow their every whim. This template is used in Rabbinic or Talmudic Judaism in the form of the so-called “Oral Torah.”* It is also seen in every form of esotericism and occultism, particularly in Gnosticism/Hermeticism. Claims of Episcopal infallibility in Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy also follow this evil template.

This template is a stench in the “Lord’s nostrils.” God promises, through Isaiah, to destroy this evil system. The Lord sternly warns the people not to heed these false prophets and false priests.

“Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men: Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, even a marvellous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid...

“...Thus saith the *Lord* of hosts, Harken not unto the words of the prophets that prophesy unto you: they make you vain: they speak a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the *Lord*.”

- Isaiah 29:13-14,16

Paul the Apostle also cites from Isaiah 29. He cites Isaiah 29:14 to proclaim God’s judgment. Paul proclaims that the establishment of the New Covenant is God’s judgment against worldly wisdom.

“For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written:

“ I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, And bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.’

“Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks^[b] foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. ”

- 1 Corinthians 1:18-24 NKJV

Paul quotes from the same prophecy in Isaiah that both predicts and condemns the Pharisaic doctrine of the oral torah. It is apparent that this passage groups both this pharisaic doctrine in with Greek philosophy as foolishness. The gospel is clearly presented as the wisdom and power of God which overthrows these flawed systems. More on this in ch 13

The absence of any reference to a second oral law during the Old Testament period raises doubts as to its existence. There is simply no reference anywhere in Old Testament where people went to the priests to ask them to apply any secret law. In fact, extra-Biblical enquiries to God were always seen as prophetic instances where God would deliver a fresh word. While some of the prophets were also priests, others were not. If the oral law was as absolutely essential to understanding the written law as the Rabbis say, then it should be considered very strange that there are no clear Old Testament references to this oral law.

How could an oral law have survived the reign of Manasseh? The reign of Manasseh wreaked havoc on Judaism during the monarchy. Manasseh converted the temple religion into paganism. He was so successful that the priesthood forgot that the Law even existed until the 18th year of

Josiah (2 King 22:8–11 see ch 9). If the priesthood forgot that the written law existed, how can an oral tradition survive? *“Is it reasonable to think, that this would remain uninjured through successive ages of idolatry, when the written law was so entirely forgotten? If they had lost the knowledge of what was in their written law, would they be likely to retain that which was oral? If the written law was lost, would the traditional law be preserved? And if this was at any time lost, how could it be recovered? Not from the written law, for this does not contain it; not from the memory of man, for the supposition is, that it was thence obliterated. If, then, this law, by any chance, was once lost, it is manifest that it could never be recovered, but by divine revelation. ([#2](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/alexander_a/canon.iii.viii.html)) ”*

Any oral law would have been lost forever. Everything we know about Jewish life prior to Manasseh was recovered using extant documents interpreted using the plain meaning of the text.

Rejection of Christ and the apostasy into Talmudic Judaism

While many of the Jews became followers of Christ, the religious leadership rejected Him as the Messiah and had Him crucified by means of a Roman cross. This rejection spilled over into persecution of the young church.

Many of the early Christians were Jews, some of which still retained some degree of relationship with the broader Jewish community. While most of the growth was among the gentiles, the history of the church ran parallel until ad 66. The Kochba rebellion changed all of that.

There was a Rabbi named Kochba who proclaimed himself the Messiah. The Jewish leaders accepted him as their Messiah and organized a revolt

against Rome. Those Jewish who believed that Jesus Christ is the Messiah could not in good conscience join this revolt, as it would involve rejection of Christ and the embrace of Kochba as the Messiah. The revolt failed miserably, resulting in the destruction of the Temple and the scattering of the Jews throughout the world. Jewish believers in Jesus Christ were blamed for the failure and excommunicated from Judaism.

The excommunication of Christians from Jewish fellowship became a matter of law in the Talmud. In subsequent years, Christian leaders would argue that the church replaced Israel as the heir to God's promises.

The spiritual children of Abraham and the natural children of Abraham would be enemies for a season. This would not be permanent, but only for a season. While God would resume His plans for Israel at a future date*, The story of God will now unfold in the history of the church.

Ch 13 The Rise of Christianity and the Elijah Principle

The church was born into a hostile environment. Christianity was started as a highly persecuted sect of Judaism. Later she suffered persecution from the might of the Roman Empire. God stacked the deck against her so that He can prove His power. The Lord was going to use once again the Elijah Principle to prove Himself.

The Church was born into Jewish and Roman Persecution.

Jewish persecution of the early church is recorded in the book of Acts, which is the narrative of the early church. The narrative is filled with instances of one of three methods of persecution:

The unbelieving Jews first would use the authority the Sanhedrin to punish Jewish believers regardless of their territory. The Roman legal doctrine of Jus Gentium*,** meant that the Sanhedrin had authority over all Jews living in the Roman Empire. It was on the basis of Jus Gentium that Paul was able to get arrest warrants to capture Jewish believers living in Damascus(Acts 9:1-3).

* The Law of the Nations is viewed as the body of law common to all nation or inherent attribute in the existence of any nation.<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/308654/jus-gentium>

** It is an inherent power of every nation that its body politic has power over individual citizens. The Sanhedrin would be viewed by the Romans as having authority over all Jews, so long as they remained Jews. § 2http://www.constitution.org/vattel/vattel_01.htm

The unbelieving Jews also sought to persecute the church beyond the boundaries of the authority of the Sanhedrin by stirring up hostility from Gentile authorities. When the gospel started to grow phenomenally among the Gentiles (Acts 13:46–49), the unbelieving Jews conspired to poison the minds of Gentiles against faith in Christ wherever the gospel was presented. On at least four occasions they sought to prevent the gospel from being presented to the Gentiles (Acts 14:1–7, 19–20; 17:5–9, 13–15).

The third attack was from unbelieving Jews who pretended to have faith in Christ. They sought to destroy faith in Christ from within. They argued that faith in Christ was not enough. They argued that one must observe all of the laws of Moses in order to be saved. Given that the unbelieving Jews of that time believed in the dominance of the priesthood, this was a scheme to draw people away from Christ and put them back into bondage to corrupt men. Acts 15 records this controversy and the decision of the apostles. Paul, in the book of Galatians clearly portrays this as heresy that denies faith in Christ.

There was also persecution from Romans. Whereas the Jewish persecution was religious, Rome simply did not care what one's religious beliefs were. Roman persecution of Christians was **political** in nature. Rome was interested in making sure that the supreme allegiance of each person in the Roman Empire was to Caesar. Rome didn't care who people worshipped as long as they regarded Caesar as King of kings and Lord of lords. Rome decided to establish mandatory emperor worship throughout the empire. It was not that Rome demanded that people actually believed Caesar was divine; the educated classes did not have any faith in the deity of Caesar, at least not in the way Christians have faith in the deity of Christ. The purpose of the emperor cult was political.

This was a problem for the early Christians as they regard Jesus Christ as King of Kings and Lord of lords. Christians regarded Christ as Lord of all, including Caesar. Pliny the Younger, who was the Roman Governor in Asia Minor, wrote a letter to Hadrian in AD 112 concerning what to do with Christians. Hadrian responded by instructing him to ***“They are not to be sought out; if they are denounced and proved guilty, they are to be punished, with this reservation, that whoever denies that he is a Christian and really proves it—that is, by worshiping our gods—even though he was under suspicion in the past, shall obtain pardon through repentance.”***<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/pliny1.asp>)”

The intensity of persecution the Christians suffered varied during the first 280 years. It varied from being merely illegal under Hadrian to the target of extensive pogroms under emperors like Diocletian(). While there was persecution before Hadrian, there was no clear policy: Hadrian’s response made it imperial policy to mandate emperor worship and pagan worship.

While Christians suffered severe government restrictions during the first 280 years of propagating the gospel, the social hostility was even worse: Romans viewed their welfare as being tied to the stability of the Roman state, and the welfare of the state being tied to “the peace of the gods” Paxdeorum(). Refusal to worship the emperor, as Pontifex Maximus of the state religion, or to refuse worship of the Pagan gods was seen as a threat to peace and stability. Not only did Rome as a state persecute Christians, but Romans persecuted Christians:

“The paxdeorum, the gods’ peace, the natural order of things, was very important to the Roman mind. If the gods were angry, the results were civil wars, natural disasters and diseases. The official cult had to ensure

the paxdeorum, the peace of gods through the so-called ius augurium.⁵⁰ Augustus as pontifexmaximus, through the ius augurium⁵¹ could restore the paxdeorum, the peace and stability of the state. The AraPacisAugustae shows that Pax, as a divinity, was a part of the divine essence of Augustus.⁵² Thepaxwas the symbol of stability, which Augustus brought to the world. In connection with this peace a new age had been initiated, the golden age, the saeculum aureum,⁵³ an age when 'cities flourish with good government, concord, and prosperity and the flower and harvest of all good'."*

http://www.academia.edu/250713/Imperial_Cult_and_Christianity_How_and_to_What_Extent_Were_the_Imperial_Cult_and_Emperor_Worship_thought_to_Preserve_Stability_in_the_Roman_World *page391*

The Roman emperor was seen as the high priest or PontifexMaximus of the religious order through which the state had spiritual intercourse with the gods. This evil religious system promoted the Roman state as god on earth. This is the heart of Mystery Babylon.(See Mystery Babylon Rising for more information.)

*<http://wp.chs.harvard.edu/sunoikisis/files/2011/04/Crawford.pdf>

**http://www.academia.edu/250713/Imperial_Cult_and_Christianity_How_and_to_What_Extent_Were_the_Imperial_Cult_and_Emperor_Worship_thought_to_Preserve_Stability_in_the_Roman_World

Built on an Indestructible Foundation

Those of us who have come to Christ have been born again; we have been born of an indestructible seed. God, in his plan for the church,

both gives instruction for the growth of this indestructible seed and proves its indestructibility through trials

Those of us who have been born again (John 3:16–19) have been born of the indestructible seed whose genetic information is the Word of God. As Peter instructs under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, we are born again *“not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you (1 Peter 1:23–25).”* The true believer in Christ has the indestructible Word of God as his spiritual genetics.

When one places faith in Christ, God credits righteousness to him in the same way that He credited it to Abraham(). God puts His righteousness – in seed form – within the believer. First John 3:9 instructs us that *“No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God’s seed remains in them; they cannot go on sinning, because they have been born of God (1 John 3:9 NIV).”* God’s seed, which is the word that was received through faith, works to produce righteous fruit. Because God’s word is working to produce righteousness, it diminishes the impulses to sin.

God has a three-pronged plan to grow his Word. The word is accompanied by the Holy Spirit who makes available the resources of God. The word is purified by going through the fire, which destroys everything else. Thirdly, resurrection power is unleashed.

Jesus says that this Word “is spirit and life...;” therefore being born of the Word means being born of the Holy Spirit. Whereas the Word is our spiritual genetics, the Spirit is our life force. We must be born again,

born of the Holy Spirit in the same way one is originally born of water (John 3:1–19). The Holy Spirit administers the word to our lives.

We are instructed how to be faithful to the word while going through the fire. Romans 12:1–2 gives us two-fold instruction on how to unleash the power of the Word of God. First, we are to present our bodies as a living sacrifice; we must be prepared to endure persecution. Secondly – most importantly – we are not to be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of the mind.

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

“And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”

– Romans 12:1–2

The mind is renewed as one meditates and studies the Word of God. As one bases his world-view, meta-narrative, and thought process on the Word of God, his thought and life become transformed. While all things based on upon human philosophies wane, the Word remains (Col 2:8, 9; 1 John 2:17; Isaiah 40:6–17). As the Word transforms the mind, spiritual life is made available to the believer. This life empowers the believer to produce fruit and reproduce the seed of the Word in others. The book of Acts describes the Word of God as growing (Acts 12:24; 19:20).

God uses the Elijah principle using a two phase process of death and resurrection that result in victory for the child of God. The Word of God,

which grows in and through the believer, survives the persecution and then prevails through resurrection power – demonstrating God’s power. (Schaff History of the Christian Church, vol2, page113)

The Power of the Cross is manifested through suffering.

During times of prosperity, false versions of the gospel, heresies, and other departures from the pure word of God can flourish and compete against the gospel. Faith in the Word of God becomes bogged down and starts to atrophy. This is why the church is largely moribund in many places in America and Europe. In times of persecution, the church is purged of elements that dilute the Word of God.

For those whose faith is grounded in Christ, persecution can be an opportunity to draw near to God. Peter instructs us that when we suffer for Christ, we partake in the suffering of Christ.

“Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.”

– 1 Peter 4:12–14

If we participate in the sufferings of Christ by suffering for Christ, then we become intimately identified or connected to Christ through suffering. The text tell us that the “***the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you.***” This is the Presence of the Holy Spirit. Suffering brings about an increased presence of the Holy Spirit in the life of the one who suffers for Christ. The key is that one suffers for Christ. Verses 15–16 make it

clear that suffering has value only if one suffers as a Christian. One must be suffering for the faith itself or for Christ's sake.

The path to suffering for Christ starts the moment one puts faith in Christ. He passes from death to life because he is immersed in Christ's death (Romans 6:3–6). The sin nature is put to death through Christ on the Cross; and a new nature, with life from the Holy Spirit and the Word of God as spiritual genetics, arises. The child of God becomes separated from the world. Subsequent suffering should be seen as a logical extension of, rather than a subsequent work to, Christ's finished work upon the cross.

Jesus prepared His followers for persecution. He told them it would be necessary to suffer persecution during this life. Christ told His followers to take up their cross and follow him. The Bible both reveals the power of suffering for Christ and instructs us to partake of that suffering.

Christ told His followers to take up their cross and follow him (Matthew 10:17–39; Matthew 16; Mark 8:34–38; Luke 9:22–26; John 12:23–26). We are to boldly honor and proclaim the words of Jesus in whatever situation we find ourselves:

“And when he had called the people unto him with his disciples also, he said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it. For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall

the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels”

- Mark 8:43-38

Why would Christ instruct us to endure persecution? The New Testament reveals a two-phase process of personal and cultural transformation. These phases are death and resurrection, which are intimately related. Consider John 12:23-26

“And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour.”

- John 12:23-26

What Christ is saying is that for a kernel of wheat to bear fruit, it must fall to the ground and die. It must cease its life as a kernel through germination in the ground. When it ceases its life as a kernel, two transformations happen. It receives its own life back, but now as a wheat plant and it produces many seeds. Each seed carries genetic information that is to be passed to the next generation.

The unlimited endurance of the word means we are transformed individually as things based on fleshly power fade away; things based on the word of God remain while fleshly or humanistic things decrease.

Whether the church prevails or is destroyed by persecution depends on whether there is a sufficient anointing of the word of God in those that

remain. For the early church, the revelation of the resurrection of Christ supplied the needed power to jump-start the church.

Christ declared to be the Son of God through the Resurrection.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is central to the Christian faith. The Bible teaches that we are united with Christ in His death and resurrection. Our sins are killed in Christ's death, and His bodily resurrection enables Him to give life to us.

If Christ is not raised from the dead He has not cannot conquer the power of death that operates in the body. We would still be separated from God, and without divine resources to deal with sin and do the work of God. 1 Corinthians 15 presents several proofs of the resurrection.

But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.

-1 Corinthians 15:13-14 KJV

The resurrection is so fundamental to the gospel that any preaching of Christ is useless if He has not risen. If Christ cannot exercise power in His dead body, raising it, then He cannot exercise power in our bodies to empower our faith or preaching. His power in our lives is linked to His power that raised His body from the dead.

Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not.

-1 Corinthians 15:15 KJV

Notice the text does not say only that they are false witnesses, but that they are FOUND false witnesses. If Jesus body was still in the tomb, they would have been found to be false witnesses. If Jesus was still in the tomb, then when the apostles preached that God raised Jesus from the dead – the preaching have been quickly exposed as a hoax. The enemies of the gospel would have said something like this:

“He has not risen. He was buried in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea. Go there and see that His body is still there.”

The Jews came up with their own version of a 911 conspiracy theory to cover up the resurrection. They had the Roman guards say that the disciples stole the body while they slept. How would the Romans know who stole the body if they were sleeping? Why would a Roman soldier commit suicide by saying they were sleeping on duty? (Sleeping at the post was a capital offense that would result in the entire troop being executed.) If a Roman troop was vigilantly guarding the tomb how could the disciples have entered to take the body without staging an armed rebellion, which would have drawn the wrath of Rome?. The Jews conspiracy theory designed to cover up the resurrection falls apart.

For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.

-1 Cor 15:16-17 KJV

Man's basic sin problem is that he is separated from God. This forces man to [trust in the arm of the flesh](#), bring sin and a curse. Christ got rid of our sins by killing those sins on the cross. This opened the way for the life of God to enter man, eliminating the need to trust in the arm of the flesh. We can now trust God. If Christ has not risen from the dead, the life of God cannot enter us. We are then still forced to trust in the arm of the flesh—and still in our sins and bad habits reinforced by the action of our flesh. If Christ is not raised, then no one would miraculously overcome the habits of the flesh.

Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.

- 1 Cor 15:18–19KJV

If Christ is not raised from the dead, then everyone is ultimately doomed to die. Nobody alive at that time would have anything to gain from perpetrating that hoax. The preaching of Christ drew deadly persecution from both the Jews and the Romans. There are two scenarios here, depending on whether the apostles were lunatics or liars. Both lead to impossible conclusions

Lunatic Scenario: If the early eyewitnesses of Christ's resurrection were experiencing delusions and hallucinations and the rest were gullible enough to follow them in spite of persecution, then that would prove that the early church was an insane asylum. The early Christians would have been, in fact, the nuttiest, most unstable group of people on the planet. It is absurd to think that such a group of people could have

overcome all the persecution and eventually displace the existing culture.

Liar Scenario: If the early eyewitnesses of Christ's resurrection were simply lying –attempting to perpetrate a hoax, then the preaching of Christ would involve people dying for a lie, knowing it was a lie, with absolutely nothing to gain on an level by telling the lie. This alone is absurd, but this is not the end of the absurdity. While the liars were telling the lie, they would tell it in such a way that would cause the believers in the lie to become the most honest and passionate lovers of truth to ever walk the face of the earth. The early Christian stuck to their story even in the face of torture and death.

Jesus is Indeed Risen.If the early eyewitnesses weren't liars or lunatics, then there is only one other logical possibility. They were really eyewitnesses of the resurrection. Not only did Jesus rise from the dead, but the experience of witnessing the resurrected Christ brought a glimpse of His resurrection power into the Church. This power energized the life, faith and preaching of the early Church. Because Christ was alive again His tomb was empty, and because the tomb was empty the enemies of Christ could not point to the dead body of Christ as an argument against the gospel. God's witnesses are not found false witnesses but true witnesses.

Questions

What kind of argument does Paul give to prove the resurrection of Christ?

What things would be necessarily true of the church, if Christ is not raised from the dead?

Could a church whose faith was based upon lie or delusion, entrusted to a group mostly in the social underclass, overcome the persecution by one of the strongest empires of all time at the peak of its power?

Bible Passages

1 Corinthians 15; Jer17:5–8

The Resurrection of Christ – an application of the Elijah Principle.

The church prevailed because Christ rose from the dead. The church was placed in a hostile environment with the deck heavily stacked against them. The church survived and ultimately prevailed because Christ's resurrection was more than His personal victory over death; Christ made this power available to the Church. Just as the church is united with Christ in His death (Rom 6:3–6), she is united with Him in His resurrection.

Our connection with Christ is set up so that, as He reveals Himself, we are transformed into the image of Christ. The glory of Christ is compared to Moses in 2 Cor 3. This passage was referring to Moses experience on the mountain. When he came down from the mountain, his face was literally shining like a lamp(Exodus 34:29–35). Christ's glory, and continues to be, greater than that of Moses.

“We are not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face to prevent the Israelites from seeing the end of what was passing away. But their minds were made dull, for to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read. It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away. Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their

hearts. But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit."

- 2 Corinthians 3:13-18 NIV

Verse 18 instructs us that, as God's people see or contemplate the Lord's glory, we are transformed into His image "ever-increasing glory." As people see more and more of the glory of God, their lives become increasingly transformed. The first believers saw both the resurrected Christ and the pillar of fire (Acts 1-2). Furthermore, apostles, by the very nature of their calling, have seen Christ in His resurrection glory regardless of whether they knew Christ during His earthly ministry. The vision of Christ in His resurrection glory delivered into the church an extremely high level of spiritual empowerment - empowerment that was freely distributed to the disciples of the apostles and first believers. This heightened state of supernatural power was the critical factor in the victory of the early church.

Ch 14: The Apostolic Age – the Gospel preached through Eye-witnesses.

The revelation of Christ in His resurrection glory was critical in giving the early church the power to overcome the obstacles that were against her. The act of receiving this revelation is called witnessing. Eye-witness testimony not only has the power to transform lives, but it was also the rational-basis of authority in the church. This rational-basis authority is manifested first in Christ, then His apostles, then secondarily in those who witnessed or benefited from apostolic ministry. Rational-basis authority; as exercised through Christ and His apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastor-teachers; is the foundation of the church.

Rational basis authority is simply authority that has a logical basis in epistemology* or metaphysics*. For example, the sovereign authority of God has the rational basis in the fact that He is absolute truth and the foundation for all reality. Because God is the Creator, it is logical that He makes the rules.

Rational basis means that Christ is Head of the Church.

In the government of the church, Christ has supreme authority because He created her. Membership in the church is based on membership in Christ. Since Christ is the basis of the church, He has all of the rights to govern her as He wishes. Furthermore, the brutal suffering He endured to save sinners and establish a community of redeemed individuals makes Him worthy. Since the act of salvation involves Christ taking legal responsibility for our sins, then the act of redemption involves

acknowledging His legal power over us, then the only rational basis for authority in the church is Christ.

Rational Basis Authority the foundation of the visible church

The New Testament church was built on the priesthood of believers (Exodus 19:6; 1 Peter 2:5; 1 Peter 2:9; 1 Peter 5:3; Revelation 1:6; Revelation 5:10; Revelation 20:6 also Matthew 23:8–12). This priesthood is based on our connection to Christ as the one and only High Priest (Matthew 23:8–12; 1 Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 4–10). Because we are in Christ, we have the Holy Spirit living inside of us who produces the necessary spiritual empowerment and discernment to form a rational basis for governance of the church. The prevalence of rational-basis authority in the church was reflected in the selection of people for the visible offices of authority: elders and deacons. The Biblical criteria for selection of elders and deacons (1 Timothy 3; Titus 1:5–9) clearly indicate that these offices were to be occupied only by those individuals who have the necessary spiritual empowerment and godly character.

Rational-basis authority means Christ appointed offices based on spiritual gifts.

The ascension of Christ into heaven poses an issue for the Church: In Christ physical absence, how is the church governed. When the mother of James and John asks Jesus to make sure that her sons sit His right and left hand when he sets up his Kingdom (Matthew 20:20–28), the Lord compares bureaucratic, positional authority to rational basis authority.

“...You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your

servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.” – [Matthew 20:25–28 NKJV](#)

Worldly authorities use positional authority on a regular basis. The governing officials of the Gentiles “*lord it over*” their subjects. Lords lord it over their subjects... because they are lords. The position of lordship alone is the basis of their authority.

Jesus Christ straightly warned the disciple against this arbitrary authority. “*It shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant.*” Service defines authority and functions as its rational basis. Services or functions such as that of apostleship, prophesy, evangelism and pastor-teaching define the authority of the offices of apostle, prophet, evangelist, and pastor-teacher described in Ephesians 4:11–13. The rational basis for the authority of these services is the spiritual empowerment of grace of God that supports these services.

In the New Testament church, then, the rational basis for authority is spiritual empowerment. [Romans 12:3–8](#), [1 Corinthians 12](#), and [Eph 4:11–16](#) instruct us that God, through the Holy Spirit has given grace in various forms to the church as spiritual empowerment to the church. Romans 12:3–8 and 1 Corinthians describe gifting given to every believers, and Eph 4:11–16 describe the offices of spiritual authority: apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastor-teachers.

“So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith

and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.” – [Eph 4:11–13 NIV](#)

This is often called the “five–fold ministry,” but it is actually four offices as the text identifies the same group of people as “*pastors and teachers.*” These people are anointed by God to perform functions essential for equipping the church to attain maturity in Christ*.

Christ appointed Apostles as eye–witness to the resurrection.

Christ appointed eye–witnesses to bear witness to his His resurrection glory. This supernatural experience of witnessing this resurrection glory with their physical senses both super–charged them with spiritual power and was the basis for granting them extraordinary authority to put forward the gospel.

Numbers 12:4–8 provides the template for the apostolic office

“And the Lord spake suddenly unto Moses, and unto Aaron, and unto Miriam, Come out ye three unto the tabernacle of the congregation. And they three came out. And the Lord came down in the pillar of the cloud, and stood in the door of the tabernacle, and called Aaron and Miriam: and they both came forth.

“And he said, Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream. My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine house. With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the Lord shall he behold: wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?”

– [Numbers 12:4–8](#)

The ministry of Moses was distinguished from that of the prophets in that God spoke with him face to face. “With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the Lord shall he behold (Numbers 12:8) .” While the term apostle was not used to describe Moses ministry, the experience described is that of an apostle.

The New Testament describes an apostle as one who has literally seen the resurrection glory of Christ. In Acts 1:16–22, Peter gives instruction for the replacement of Judas as apostle. This instruction lists standing as a witness to Christ’s resurrection as the criteria for membership in the fellowship of the apostles.

***“Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus. For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry. Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out. And it was known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem; insomuch as that field is called in their proper tongue, Aceldama, that is to say, The field of blood. For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and his bishoprick let another take.*”**

“Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection.” **[- Acts 1:16–22](#)**

The definition of the apostolic office given by Peter in verse 22 is that it is one that is “***ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection.***” The

rational-basis for the selection of Judas' replacement to the apostolic was to select the replacement from those who actually saw Christ in His resurrection glory.

If Acts 1:16–22 was the only New Testament passage that addresses prerequisites for the apostolic office, then one might conclude that “the Twelve” were the only apostles that existed in the early church. However, Paul had an apostolic experience on the road to Damascus .When Paul makes a defense of his apostolic credential in Galatians, he points out that ***“I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that the gospel I preached is not of human origin. I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ.*** (Galatians 1:11–12 NIV).” Paul was also a witness of the resurrected Christ, who taught him the gospel. After 14 years of ministry, Paul consulted with the apostles who ***“seemed to be pillars”*** and shared his gospel with them to make sure they were teaching the same gospel (Galatians 2). The other apostles recognize that Jesus Christ had installed Paul and Barnabas in the apostolic office.

“But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter;(For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:)And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision.” – Galatians 2:7–9

Paul's standing as an apostle means that the office of apostle was not limited to The Twelve. Barnabas was also recognized as an apostle. Romans 16:7 records that there were at least two other apostles besides

Paul and Barnabas who were not of The Twelve, of which one was female: Andronicus and Junia. 'Junia' is a female name. Jesus commends the church that is in Ephesus for testing apostolic claims (Revelation 2:2). If only the Twelve were to be numbered among the apostles, testing apostolic claims would be pointless. Christ can install anyone from anywhere and anytime as an apostle, provided that they literally see Him in His resurrection glory.

Christ, and only Christ, can make apostles. No precedent exists in Scripture for apostles creating apostles. No one became an apostle by seeing Peter or Paul in resurrection glory. There is no apostolic succession; apostles are appointed by, and answer to, Christ.

The New Testament as apostolic testimony

As specially appointed representatives of Christ, apostles' testimony of the Words of God carries infallible weight as **eye-witness testimony**. The authority of the apostles is based on their knowledge of the divine mysteries. These mysteries were not revealed to the apostles so that they can boast of their high position; they were revealed so that others may be enlightened:

"How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ)⁵ Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel: Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power."

- Ephesians 3:3-7

The apostles' words were viewed as authoritative because they are the Lord's commands. In the New Testament church, all authority is based on the Lord's commands. The apostles are seen as the critical link – authoritative eye-witnesses; to ignore apostolic instruction was to ignore God's commands. Early on, during the apostolic age, the rule was laid down that recognition of prophetic gifts was contingent on recognizing genuinely attested apostolic authority; those who were eye-witnesses to Christ's resurrection glory and produced fruit consistent with that reality*. Those who rejected those who were proven to be apostles of Christ would have their claims to authority rejected.

“If anyone thinks they are a prophet or otherwise gifted by the Spirit, let them acknowledge that what I am writing to you is the Lord's command. But if anyone ignores this, they will themselves be ignored.”

- 1 Corinthians 14:37-38 NIV

It should be noted by the reader that the authority of the apostles is not based on his position, but on his possession of, and faithfulness to, the very words of God. The New Testament, in multiple places, describes apostles as master builders. The New Testament places particular emphasis on apostles as foundation builders. Paul proclaims, in his first letter to the Corinthians that God has appointed him to be a master builder who “*laid the foundation.*” While the apostles build, Christ IS the foundation.

“For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building. According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.”

- 1 Corinthians 3:9-11

The authority of the apostle is in the role in constructing the foundation; it is the foundation that is authoritative, and not the person or position of the apostle. The substance of the foundation is foundational, not the personage of the apostle. Ephesians 2:19–20 speaks of us being built on a foundation. The apostles are but builders, Christ, however, is the foundation.

“Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God;²⁰ 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:”

– Ephesians 2:19–21

Revelation 21:14 confirms that the apostles are only the builders of the foundation. The City of God described here has twelve foundations. These foundations have the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb inscribed therein. Why the names of the apostles would be inscribed on the foundations. That is what builders do. Names are inscribed to reveal who built the building, not the composition of the foundation.

“And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.”

– Revelation 21:14

There is only one foundation that for the church. It is Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 3:11). What does Christ’s role as foundation mean for us? If Christ is our foundation, He is the basis for all that pertains to the Christian life – our thoughts and our decisions are to be based on Christ.

We have instruction from Jesus Himself concerning how He functions as our foundation. We can't, with any authenticity, claim that Jesus is foundational to our decisions – that He is Lord – if we are not willingly to do what He says to do.

“And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say? Whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them, I will shew you to whom he is like: He is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it: for it was founded upon a rock. But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that without a foundation built an house upon the earth; against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell; and the ruin of that house was great.” – Luke 6:46–49

Basing our lives on Jesus Christ as our foundation means basing our lives on his words. It is the Words of Jesus that are authoritative. The authority of the apostles of Jesus Christ is bound up in their faithful witness to His words. What happens if an apostle stops being faithful to the words of Jesus? Paul, in Galatians 1, issues stern warnings against anyone who teaches any gospel that departs from the faith that was originally revealed by Jesus Christ.

“I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.” – Galatians 1:6–9

Paul pronounces a curse on anyone who would change the gospel. The Greek word is anathema [ἀνάθεμα] which means that the offender is excommunicated from the body of Christ – cut off from salvation. Paul, through the use of the Greek word translated “WE,” binds himself to this curse. He even binds the angels in heaven. Apostolic authority is dependent on faithfulness to the original message; the primary purpose of the apostolic office is authentication of the message. While oral teaching of the apostles was authoritative, the enduring legacy of the apostles would be in their writings. As early as the apostolic age, the apostles recognized each other writings as part of the canon of Scripture. Peter, in his second epistle, recognizes Paul’s writings as part of the canon of Scripture.

“G331 ἀνάθεμα anathema *an-ath’-em-ah*

From G394; a (religious) *ban* or (concretely) *excommunicated* (thing or person): – accursed, anathema, curse, X great.”

“As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction. Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness.” – 2 Peter 3:16–17

Authentication of His Word given by the apostles:

There are three major classes of testimony to the gospel: Hardwired knowledge of God, the inward witness of the Holy Spirit, and eye-witness testimony of the Acts of the Apostles. All three methods of authentication are referred to in 1 John 2:18–24

¹⁸ Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.¹⁹ They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.

²⁰ But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.²¹ I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth.²² Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son.²³ Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also.²⁴ Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father. – 1 John 2:18–24

Testimony of the Conscience

God has given man a minimal amount of hardwired knowledge. This knowledge is embedded in the cognitive structure of the brain and manifest in man's rationality. In 1 John 2:21, the law of non-contradiction is cited as a foundational belief. The law of non-contradiction is truly fundamental to many other beliefs (*"How do We know"*).

Romans 1:18–23 describes the knowledge of God that is hardwired, or *"manifest in them"* (Romans 1:19). This fundamental knowledge is manifest in both the universal grammar* and hardwired belief in a God** that people are born with. This hard-wired knowledge gives some parameters for knowledge. Any religion that is true must fit certain

logical and philosophic parameters. Out of the major religions and philosophies today, only Biblical Christianity fits these parameters*.

*http://web.mit.edu/linguistics/people/faculty/pesetsky/Pesetsky_MITECS_Universals_UG.pdf

A child's linguistic system is shaped to a significant degree by the utterances to which that child has been exposed. That is why a child speaks the language and dialect of his family and community. Nonetheless, there are aspects of the linguistic system acquired by the child that do not depend on input data in this way. Some cases of this type, it has been argued, reflect the influence of a genetically prespecified body of knowledge about human language. In the literature on GENERATIVE GRAMMAR, the term Universal Grammar — commonly abbreviated UG — refers to this body of “hard-wired” knowledge...

“...The existence of “Universal Grammar” (uppercase) does not necessarily entail the existence of a “universal grammar” (lowercase) — in the sense of a usable linguistic system wholly determined by genetic factors. UG must allow for language variation, though by its very nature it restricts the range of variation. This is why certain nonuniversal properties of language nonetheless recur in widely scattered, unrelated languages, while other equally imaginable properties are never found. For example, the placement of the finite verb in “second” position characteristic of the Germanic languages (see HEAD MOVEMENT) is also found in Vata (Ivory Coast; Koopman 1983), Kashmiri (Bhatt 1995), and Karitiana (Brazil; Storto 1996). By contrast, in no known language are verbs obligatorily placed in third position. In other words, UG allows languages to vary — but only up to a point.”

** <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/religion/3512686/Children-are-born-believers-in-God-academic-claims.html>

“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:

“Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things”

- Romans 1:18-23

In addition to hard-wired knowledge, God gives to people the inward witness of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit performs three functions: Leads sinners to the truth of God, both shares the depths of Christ, and leads us into all truth (John 16:7-15)

“Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.⁸ And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:⁹ Of sin, because they believe not on me;¹⁰ Of righteousness, because I go to my

Father, and ye see me no more;¹¹ Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.

¹² I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.¹³ Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.¹⁴ He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.¹⁵ All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you.”

– John 16:7–15

The Holy Spirit enlightens sinners concerning sin, righteousness, and God’s judgment in order to lead them to repentance. The corruption of human nature by Adam’s sin biases people against God; it is through the Holy Spirit that people are drawn to God (John 6:44–45).

The Holy Spirit teaches the truth of Christ to the church. It is the Holy Spirit that enables to apostles to see Christ in his resurrection glory. Both Paul and John testify that they have seen vision of heaven, with John specifying that he was “*in the Spirit on the Lord’s day* (2 Corinthians 12:1–7; Revelation 1:10–20).”

The Holy Spirit enables us to understand the things of God, including the ability to discern that they are indeed of God. The Holy Spirit provides the “*unction from the Holy One* (1 John 2:21)” that enables us to know whether something is from God (1 Corinthians 2:11–12). When Jesus said of the good Shepherd “*the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they*

know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers (John 10:3–5),” He is referring to the inner voice of the Holy Spirit.

The witness of the community

The first two witnesses to the gospel are internal to the conscience of the individual. The third witness appeals to a broader base. When Jesus uses the imagery of sheep hearing His voice to communicate that the inner voice of the Holy Spirit authenticates the Word of God, He is speaking of the sheep **as a community**. An important principle that differentiates the true message of God from the Gnostic heresies is that there was a historic fingerprint that the true revelation has left. While there may be particulars in the understanding of the gospel by an individual, if multiple individuals are receiving the same gospel, a clear and specific commonality of knowledge will emerge.

First John 2:18–24, which talks extensively about the inner witness that authenticates the divine Word, ends by appealing to “**which ye have heard from the beginning.**” The commonality of the internal witness of the conscience is connected to the historical event of the initial revelation. Theologians refer to this as the rule of faith (Regula Fidei). The core of the gospel is that which is universally believed from the beginning.

This core teaching was not a creed, but a shared worldview. The earliest witnesses of the gospel were those who were both witnesses to Christ in his resurrection glory and the glory that had been given to the apostles. As the church grew, people entered into the church who were not witnesses of Christ but were witnesses to those who knew Christ and the glory of the apostles. The result of this would be that a clear stream of

thought would emerge in the early church whose headwaters would be the words of Jesus and the apostolic testimony to Jesus.

As more people entered the church, it was only a matter of time before attempts would be made to insert elements alien to the gospel. People would bring in element from their previous world-views and try to graft them into the Christian church. Heresies and division started to creep in during the latter half of the first century. After the apostles died out, the spread of heresy escalated. During the second and third centuries, the early church appealed to the well defined stream of doctrine and practice that was both rooted in apostolic testimony and normative to the church. The New Testament makes appeal to the tradition of the apostles. Paul, in two places in his second letter to the Thessalonians, appeals to people to hold to this body of tradition.

“Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle...

“...Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.”

- 2 Thessalonians 2:15; 3:6

Note that this tradition is NOT the ever-growing and ever-evolving tradition that is propagated by the Roman Catholic Churches, but the tradition of transmission of the apostolic testimony. The use of this tradition would yield three trends, two of which would be beneficial in the providential preservation of the original gospel message the other detrimental: The recognition of the New Testament canon, the transmission of a large body of New Testament manuscripts, and the Rise of Nicolaitanism.

God would providentially preserve His authenticated Word – this deposit of faith through recognition of the New Testament Canon and transmission of thousands of copies. Some would object that God must do this miraculously or not at all. They believe that because there are variants in the various manuscripts that the message is lost; they believe that John should have attached a canon list to the end of Revelation to simplify the process of recognition of the canon. There are two reasons why God preserved providentially and not miraculously.

The first reason is practical. If God acted miraculously to insure that there were no variants and that there were absolutely no discrepancies in canon lists or anything else, then the gospel would be open to the charge of collusion; if things looked too smooth, then people would be justified to believe that there was a conspiracy to smooth over and cover up loose ends. The gospel would be seen as a colossal cover up and a work of conspiracy. The variants in the manuscripts testify against conspiracy.

The second reason relates to the limits on the level of precision on human knowledge. Paul write in 1 Corinthians 13:12 “...***now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known*** (NIV).” The mirror described here was an ancient mirror, which was polished brass. A person could see the general outline of his image with these mirrors, but the fine details were fuzzy. The following section describes how the authenticated message that Christ delivered through the first apostles was preserved. While some details may be fuzzy to us, a very clear picture emerges: We have the books that the apostle wrote, and the content of the books is sufficiently preserved so that we can know with certainty the message that they wrote.

If the purpose of the apostolic office was to deliver an authoritative message **as a witness**, the logical conclusion would be to recognize these messages as authoritative; the focus of apostolic authority would be found in the preservation and distribution of these messages. The apostolic message would be preserved by recognition of the New Testament Canon. The message would also be preserved and distributed through thousands of early manuscripts.

There were two major criteria that were used in the recognition of the Canon: apostolic authorship or approval and consensus of the church as witness to the apostolic origin of the writings. Both of these attributes follow from the original delivery of God's Word to apostolic witnesses. The apostles' write of what they hear*, producing the apostolic origins; those who read or hear the apostles' word bear witness that it has apostolic origin. Soon there emerges a fairly consistent chain of manuscript evidence pointing back to the apostles as witnesses of Christ.

The historical record concerning the Canon shows a remarkable degree of agreement. Twenty-one out of twenty-seven books; including the fourfold gospel of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John had **universal acceptance***. Hebrews, James, 2 Peter, and Jude were widely accepted, but listed as disputed books.*,** Revelation, and epistles 2 and 3 of John were later questioned because of their use by Montanists, but there is no reason to doubt that they originally enjoyed universal acceptance. The Canon, as we know have it, had universal acceptance about AD 380, but was established as the majority report much earlier. A comparison of once disputed books that made the canon to those that did not shows a very wide discrepancy. Those that made it had wide acceptance whereas those that failed to make it have little attestation of acceptance.

(<http://www.bible-researcher.com/canon5.html>) There is no doubt that we have the correct books. B.B. Warfield puts it this way:

“The Canon of the New Testament was completed when the last authoritative book was given to any church by the apostles, and that was when John wrote the Apocalypse, about A.D. 98. Whether the church of Ephesus, however, had a completed Canon when it received the Apocalypse, or not, would depend on whether there was any epistle, say that of Jude, which had not yet reached it with authenticating proof of its apostolicity. There is room for historical investigation here. Certainly the whole Canon was not universally received by the churches till somewhat later. The Latin church of the second and third centuries did not quite know what to do with the Epistle to the Hebrews. The Syrian churches for some centuries may have lacked the lesser of the Catholic Epistles and Revelation. But from the time of Ireanaeus down, the church at large had the whole Canon as we now possess it. And though a section of the church may not yet have been satisfied of the apostolicity of a certain book or of certain books; and though afterwards doubts may have arisen in sections of the church as to the apostolicity of certain books (as e.g. of Revelation): yet in no case was it more than a respectable minority of the church which was slow in receiving, or which came afterward to doubt, the credentials of any of the books that then as now constituted the Canon of the New Testament accepted by the church at large. And in every case the principle on which a book was accepted, or doubts against it laid aside, was the historical tradition of apostolicity. (<http://www.bible-researcher.com/warfield2.html>)”

God also both preserved and distributed His Word through the dissemination of thousands of manuscripts. The New Testament has more extant manuscripts than any other ancient work by a wide margin:

Author	Date Written	Earliest Copy	Approximate Time between original & copy	Span Number of Copies	Accuracy of Copies
Lucretius	died 55 or 53 B.C.		1100 yrs	2	---
Pliny	61-113 A.D.	850 A.D.	750 yrs	7	---
Plato	427-347 B.C.	900 A.D.	1200 yrs	7	---
Demosthenes	4th Cent. B.C.	1100 A.D.	800 yrs	8	---
Herodotus	480-425 B.C.	900 A.D.	1300 yrs	8	---
Suetonius	75-160 A.D.	950 A.D.	800 yrs	8	---
Thucydides	460-400 B.C.	900 A.D.	1300 yrs	8	---
Euripides	480-406 B.C.	1100 A.D.	1300 yrs	9	---

Aristophanes	450– 385 B.C.	900 A.D.	1200	10	---
Caesar	100– 44 B.C.	900 A.D.	1000	10	---
Livy	59 BC– 17 AD	---	???	20	---
Tacitus	circa 100 A.D.	1100 A.D.	1000 yrs	20	---
Aristotle	384– 322 B.C.	1100 A.D.	1400	49	---
Sophocles	496– 406 B.C.	1000 A.D.	1400 yrs	193	---
Homer (Iliad)	900 B.C.	400 B.C.	500 yrs	643 (1,757)*	95%
New Testament	1st Cent. A.D. (50– 100 A.D.)	2nd Cent. A.D. (c. 130 A.D. f.)	less than 100 years	100 5600	99.5%

The result of this mammoth amount of textual attestation is that the Scriptures are providentially preserved with amazing accuracy

(<http://carm.org/manuscript-evidence> *<http://www.clayjones.net/2012/07/the-bibliographical-test-updated/>).

Ch 15 The Rise of Nicolaitanism

The authority upon which the office of apostle stood had a rational basis. Apostles have the authority of apostles because they are the eye-witnesses of Christ. The church, however, was vulnerable to the temptations of worldly authority that is based on bureaucratic position rather than the rational basis that is laid out in the New Testament.

The Waning of the Supernatural gifts

During the apostolic age, the church burned white hot with resurrection power. The paradigm began to shift around AD 100. It was around this time that the last of those who actually saw Christ in His resurrected glory died. The church began to experience something similar to what Israel did after the death of Joshua. When the last of those who saw the mighty deeds of the Lord – and especially the pillar of fire and the cloud – died, the community began to fall away from following the Lord.

“And the people served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the Lord, that he did for Israel. And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died, being an hundred and ten years old. And they buried him in the border of his inheritance in Timnathheres, in the mount of Ephraim, on the north side of the hill Gaash. And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers: ...

“...and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel. And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and served Baalim: And they forsook the Lord God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, of the gods of the people that

were round about them, and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked the Lord to anger.”

- Judges 2:7-12

Following the death of the apostles, the supernatural manifestations of the Holy Spirit began to diminish. They did not suddenly cease, nor did they completely cease (page 111); there have always been intermittent moves of God that involved supernatural manifestations.

“It is remarkable that the genuine writings of the ante-Nicene church are more free from miraculous and superstitious elements than the annals of the Nicene age and the middle ages. The history of monasticism teems with miracles even greater than those of the New Testament. Most of the statements of the apologists are couched in general terms, and refer to extraordinary cures from demoniacal possession (which probably includes, in the language of that age, cases of madness, deep melancholy, and epilepsy) and other diseases, by the invocation of the name of Jesus. Justin Martyr speaks of such cures as a frequent occurrence in Rome and all over the world, and Origen appeals to his own personal observation, but speaks in another place of the growing scarcity of miracles, so as to suggest the gradual cessation theory as held by Dr. Neander, Bishop Kaye, and others. Tertullian attributes many if not most of the conversions of his day to supernatural dreams and visions, as does also Origen, although with more caution.”

- Schaff History of the Christian Church, vol2, page 112

All of this came to a head with the Montanist controversy. Montanism was a movement that started in the latter part of the second century. Montanists were doctrinally orthodox (page 381), but they differed from the emerging polity of the Roman Catholic Church in two ways: They

insisted in the continuance of prophecy and the insisted in the priesthood of believers.

The Montanist mode of prophecy was problematic to the larger church. Montanist would get into a trance and prophesy in that mode. The method of Montanist prophesying bore more similarity of the Satanic prophesying of the Pagans than to the mode of prophesying of the Old Testament prophets. (<http://www.tms.edu/FacultyDocuments/BIBSAC-1.pdf> page 292 Bibliotheca Sacra July–Sept 1992 Is the gift of Prophecy for today F. David Farnell) On that basis, they were judged to be false prophets.

Montanists also asserted, at least in theory, the priesthood of the believer*(page 381–2).

A shift in the balance of power in the church from the five-fold ministry regime where everybody was empowered with some gift to one dominated by the elite, “was demanded by the diminution of spiritual gifts(page 116, last para).” The church never denied the continuance of the supernatural gifts, but moved increasingly to give the emerging church hierarchy a monopoly of the ministry of the Holy Spirit –Dreams, Visions, and Spiritual Authority in Merovingian Gaul By Isabel Moreira, page 13.

The Replacement of Christ’s rule with church authority

The New Testament church knew nothing of the chasm between clergy and laity that we have known for hundreds of years. *“In the apostolic church preaching and teaching were not confined to a particular class, but every convert could proclaim the gospel to unbelievers, and every Christian who had the gift could pray and teach and exhort in the congregation.(page 118, last para).”* The New Testament church was

built on the priesthood of believers (Exodus 19:6; 1 Peter 2:5; 1 Peter 2:9; 1 Peter 5:3; Revelation 1:6; Revelation 5:10; Revelation 20:6 also Matthew 23:8-12).

Apostles issued dire warnings that false teachers would arise after their departure. On at least five occasions the apostles warned that false teachers would successfully infiltrate the church. Peter, Jude, John, and Paul warned the early church about the onslaught that was to plague them.

Paul's warning was the saddest of all. Paul warns of a two pronged attack. The first prong involves false teacher slipping in and subverting people from the faith originally delivered. The second prong is even more pernicious. Paul warns the Ephesian elders that "***of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.***" He was warning that there would be elders that would be appointed because they were faithful to the gospel, but would turn away from the gospel.

A century and a half later, church fathers would appeal to the succession of bishops as a bulwark against the encroachment of false teaching. While such an appeal would be effective defense against infiltration from outsiders, it would prove useless against inside attempts to rob people of the freedom they enjoyed in Christ during the apostolic age and place them in bondage. It would be those leaders who could cite an impeccable pedigree of succession that would prove most dangerous in the long run Paul saw, by means of divinely revealed visions, the horrors and bondage that would emerge in the Roman Catholic Church; these horrors would also emerge, albeit to a lesser extent, in the various Eastern Orthodox Churches. He saw the suffering that the people of God would endure through the atrocities of religious tyrants. This vision

broke his heart; he mixes his warnings with great tears day and night. Consider this warning which was directed to the Ephesian elders:

“Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed 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.”

- Acts 20:28-31

Peter echoes this danger, saying that, just as false prophets plagued the children of Israel; false teachers would soon plague the Christian church. They would bring forth heresies that would deny the Lordship of Christ. Centuries later, starting with Ireneaus and Cyprian, churches would begin to make statements that put the church in place of Christ; instead of saying that *“without Christ, there is no salvation,”* they began to say that *“without the church, there is no salvation.”*

“But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.”

- 2 Peter 2:1-2

While the warnings in 2 Peter 2:1-2 could be applied to a wide array of heresies, the following warning is against those who would replace the government of Christ with the government where some men claim

dominance over other men. Peter admonishes church leaders to refrain from using the ministry from dominating or exploit others. Church leaders were not to Lord it over God's people, but to lead by example. Peter's instructions, given by command from God, are a far cry from later church-men who would claim that they hold people's eternal destiny in their hands.

“The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.”

- 1 Peter 5:1-5

John, the apostle, wrote a third letter to someone named Gaius. It appears that people were already using religion as a weapon to dominate people. There was someone named Diotrephes who wanted to be top dog. This Diotrephes evidently had some power in the local congregation, as he not only succeeds in rejecting John's emissaries but also puts out of the church those who do receive them.

Some scholars believe that Diotrephes was the first monarchical bishop to emerge (The letters of John, Colin G Kruse, Eerdman, 2000, pgs 44-47). The polity of the local congregation in the New Testament church had been predominantly plurality of elders. Diotrephes ability to

unilaterally excommunicate people would suggest that he ruled as a lone bishop in a monarchy. This would, sadly, be a harbinger of things to come.

“I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not. Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church.”

– 3 John 1:9–10

Jude wrote with extreme urgency concerning the threat of false teachers: according to Jude, they were already there. He warns them to “***earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.***” They are admonished to defend the core faith, not the church. Jude appealed to the deposit of faith that is shared universally by all who heard the apostolic message and confirmed in the consciousness of those who believe (covered in last chapter).

“Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.”

– Jude 1:3–4

There are also two extra-biblical sources that confirm the polity of the New Testament: The Didache and Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians.

In the New Testament, both authority in the church and the teaching ministry were based on spiritual gifting. Great freedom was allowed for God-ordained ministries to emerge. Church leadership exercised control by using procedures that allowed them to sift true teachers from false teachers.

The Didache defines the church as existing wherever the saints meet under the authority of Christ; the church is defined in terms of recognizance of Christ's authority, not the authority of popes and bishops. In saying that "*For where the Lord's nature is discussed, there the Lord is,*" they are echoing Jesus' words when he said "*For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them* (Matthew 18:20)." The church is wherever believers in Christ gather to discuss the things of Christ:

"My child, day and night "you should remember him who preaches God's word to you,"⁴⁸⁷ and honor him as you would the Lord. For where the Lord's nature is discussed, there the Lord is. ²Every day you should seek the company of saints to enjoy their refreshing conversation. ³You must not start a schism, but reconcile those at strife. "Your judgments must be fair."⁴⁸⁸ You must not play favorites when reproofing transgressions. ⁴You must not be of two minds about your decision."⁴⁸⁹

The Didache, in chapter 11, confirms that there was freedom in the New Testament church. People were given freedom to exercise their gifts. Even teachers and prophets were given freedom to minister. Accountability was not enforced by giving certified "clergy" a monopoly on the teaching ministry, but by testing teaching and prophetic

ministries against the revealed faith that was once for all communicated to the saints through apostolic ministry:

“11 Now, you should welcome anyone who comes your way and teaches you all we have been saying. ² But if the teacher proves himself a renegade and by teaching otherwise contradicts all this, pay no attention to him. But if his teaching furthers the Lord’s righteousness and knowledge, welcome him as the Lord...”

-The

Didache

11:1-4

<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/richardson/fathers.viii.i.iii.html>

If teachers taught in accordance to the revealed faith and “*furthers the Lord’s righteousness and knowledge,*” or increases the “*edifying of the body of Christ* (Eph 4:12),” then they were recognized as teachers sent from God. If they contradicted sound doctrine they were rejected as false teachers. The remainder of chapter 11 of the Didache advocates a similar method of treatment to prophetic ministries, presenting tests specific to the offices of prophet and apostle.

Clement was a leader in the church in Philippi (Philippians 4:3) during the days of Paul’s apostolic ministry. He was later appointed a bishop in Rome. (<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/121001/Saint-Clement-I>) While he was bishop in Rome he wrote a letter to the church in of Corinth. A controversy had raged because some presbyter or elders had been removed. He issued warning against the political subversion of the ministerial office. He warned against the temptation for people to use the ministry to exalt themselves over others:

“16 It is to the humble that Christ belongs, not to those who exalt themselves above his flock. ² The scepter of God’s majesty, the 51 Lord Jesus Christ, did not come with the pomp of pride or arrogance, though he could have done so. But he came in humility just as the Holy Spirit said of him...”

Throughout his letter, Clement warned against pride. He also made a connection between spiritual authority and the grace of God. In chapter 30, Clement expounds on the Biblical connection between humility and the grace of God. In verse 3, he confirms the New Testament principle that authority is based on spiritual empowerment.

“...30:²“For God,” says Scripture, “resists the arrogant, but gives grace to the humble.”⁸⁵ ³We should attach ourselves to those to whom God’s grace has been given...

–First letter of Clement, Ch 30
<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/richardson/fathers.vi.i.iii.html#vi.i.iii-p35>

37 Really in earnest, then, brothers, we must march under his irreproachable orders. ²Let us note with what discipline, readiness, and obedience those who serve under our generals carry out orders. ³Not everybody is a general, colonel, captain, sergeant, and so on. But ‘each in his own rank,¹⁰³ carries out the 61 orders of the emperor and of the generals. ⁴The great cannot exist without the small; neither can the small exist without the great. All are linked together; and this has an advantage. ⁵Take our body, for instance. The head cannot get along without the feet. Nor, similarly, can the feet get along without the head. “The tiniest parts of our body are essential to it,”¹⁰⁴ and are valuable to the total body. Yes, they all act in concord, and are united in a single obedience to preserve the whole body.

–First letter of Clement, Ch 37
<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/richardson/fathers.vi.i.iii.html#vi.i.iii-p42>

38 Following this out, we must preserve our Christian body too in its entirety. Each must be subject to his neighbor, according to his special gifts. ”

–First letter of Clement, Ch 38
<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/richardson/fathers.vi.i.iii.html#vi.i.iii-p43>

Starting in chapter 42
(<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/richardson/fathers.vi.i.iii.html#vi.i.iii-p43>), Clement gives his analysis of the proper order for the church. Christ appointed faithful men to be apostles, the apostles appointed faithful men to be elders [Presbyters/bishops] and deacons with instruction that these men appoint faithful men to succeed them.

“42 The apostles received the gospel for us from the Lord Jesus Christ; Jesus, the Christ, was sent from God. ²Thus Christ is from God and the apostles from Christ. In both instances the orderly procedure depends on God’s will. ³And so the apostles, after receiving their orders and being fully convinced by the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ and assured by God’s word, went out in the confidence of the Holy Spirit to preach the good news that God’s Kingdom was about to come. ⁴They preached in country and city, and appointed their first converts, after testing them by the Spirit, to be the bishops and deacons of future believers. ⁵Nor was this any novelty, for Scripture had mentioned bishops and deacons long before. For this is what [63](#)Scripture says somewhere: “I will appoint their bishops in righteousness and their deacons in faith.”¹⁰⁷”

–First letter of Clement, Ch 42
<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/richardson/fathers.vi.i.iii.html#vi.i.iii-p47>

Clement did not advocate, as some suppose, for any sort of apostolic succession. He did not claim that these leaders were successors to the apostolic office. He asserted that the apostles appointed faithful men to govern the newly established churches and gave instructions that these men appoint faithful men to be **their** successors.

Clement's charge against those who removed the elders in Corinth was that there was no just basis for removing faithful leaders who were appointed by faithful men.

“44 Now our apostles, thanks to our Lord Jesus Christ, knew that there was going to be strife over the title of bishop. ²It was for this reason and because they had been given an accurate knowledge of the future, that they appointed the officers we have mentioned. Furthermore, they later added a codicil to the effect that, should these die, other approved men should succeed to their ministry.¹⁰⁹ ³In the light of this, we view it as a 64breach of justice to remove from their ministry those who were appointed either by them [i.e., the apostles] or later on and with the whole church's consent, by others of the proper standing, and who, long enjoying everybody's approval, have ministered to Christ's flock faultlessly, humbly, quietly, and unassumingly. ⁴For we shall be guilty of no slight sin if we eject from the episcopate men who have offered the sacrifices with innocence and holiness. ⁵Happy, indeed, are those presbyters who have already passed on, and who ended a life of fruitfulness with their task complete. For they need not fear that anyone will remove them from their secure positions. ⁶But you, we observe, have removed a number of people, despite their good conduct, from a ministry they have fulfilled with honor and integrity.”

–First letter of Clement, Ch 44

<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/richardson/fathers.vi.i.iii.html#vi.i.iii-p49>

Clement, in chapter 45, argues that righteous people are never “disowned by holy men,” but only by the wicked. These warnings and these rebukes that were administered by Clement are evidence that, even as early as the latter part of the first century, there were people who were scheming to subvert the offices of the church so that they could use them to dominate the people.

Beginning in the second century, a three phase paradigm shifts from an apostolic to and Episcopal form of government occurred. The first phase involves shifting from a presbytery (plurality leadership governance to a single leadership of a bishop on a congregational level. The second phase involved the establishment of independent episcopates based on a concocted scheme of apostolic succession. The third phase involves consolidating episcopates under the dominance of Roman primacy.

–First letter of Clement, Ch 44

<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/richardson/fathers.vi.i.iii.html#vi.i.iii-p50>

The shift from a plurality leadership to a single leadership of a bishop was allegedly the work of Ignatius. According to Ignatius, the bishop was an imitator of the mind of Christ as Christ imitated the mind of God:

“3 I do not give you orders as if I were somebody important. For even if I am a prisoner for the Name, I have not yet reached Christian perfection. I am only beginning to be a disciple, so I address you as my fellow students. I needed your coaching in faith, encouragement, endurance, and patience. ² But since love forbids me to keep silent about you, I hasten to urge you to harmonize your actions with God’s mind. For Jesus Christ—that life from which we can’t be torn—is the Father’s mind, as the bishops too, appointed the world over, reflect the mind of Jesus Christ.

“Hence you should act in accord with the bishop’s mind, as you surely do. Your presbytery, indeed, which deserves its name and is a credit to God, is as closely tied to the bishop as the strings to a harp. Wherefore your accord and harmonious love is a hymn to Jesus Christ.”

–Ignatius, To The Ephesians, ch 3–4

<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/richardson/fathers.vi.ii.iii.i.html>

Ignatius still retained the rational basis for obedience to bishops to their obedience to Christ and unity of the church. He argued that since Christ did nothing without the Father, that God’s people should do nothing with the bishop and presbyters ([#7](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/richardson/fathers.vi.ii.iii.ii.html)).

Ignatius’s instructions, however, are a small step removed from the polity of the New Testament. Without a doubt, Ignatius was arguing for a monarchical episcopate or bishoprick where a singular bishop is lord over the elders rather than serving amongst them. Ignatius also gave the bishop monopoly control over the life of the congregation. Ignatius instructed *“neither presbyter, nor deacon, nor layman, do anything without the bishop. Nor let anything appear commendable to you which is destitute of his approval.⁶⁷⁵ For every such thing is sinful, and opposed [to the will of] God. Do ye all come together into the same place for prayer. Let there be one common supplication, one mind, one hope, with faith unblameable in Christ Jesus, than which nothing is more excellent. Do ye all, as one man, run together into the temple of God, as unto one altar, to one Jesus Christ, the High Priest of the unbegotten God* (http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/anf01.v.iii.vii.html#fna_v.iii.vii-p2.3).” Ignatius defined unity, not on the basis of the common faith and common allegiance to Christ’s Lordship as the Apostles, Clement and the Didache do, but on the bishop; this creates a small layer of separation between man and Christ. This layer, though small in Ignatius

formulation, would open the door for future generations to become far removed.

Ignatius operated in the spirit of advocating that people imitate the bishop as he imitated Christ (1 Corinthians 11:1). In making the office of bishop central rather than the common core faith, he opens the door for other to replace Christ with mere popes, patriarchs, and prelates as the standard. Ignatius cracked open a dangerous door – a door that Irenaeus and Cyprian pried the rest of the way open.

The second phase involved the establishment of independent episcopates based on a concocted scheme of apostolic succession. Irenaeus led this charge. In chapter 3, he makes the argument against the heretics that they cannot answer: the true faith is authenticated through historical links to the apostles. The bishops of the churches that the apostles founded have stronger historical links to the apostles than the speculators who appeared out of nowhere. At this point in his treatise, he is still in the same place as Ignatius. **His historical point is valid, but by making the succession of bishop rather than the authenticated message the center, he opens the door for the bishops to replace the message as the standard.**

“It is within the power of all, therefore, in every Church, who may wish to see the truth, to contemplate clearly the tradition of the apostles manifested throughout the whole world; and we are in a position to reckon up those who were by the apostles instituted bishops in the Churches, and [to demonstrate] the succession of these men to our own times; those who neither taught nor knew of anything like what these [heretics] rave about. For if the apostles had known hidden mysteries, which they were in the habit of imparting to “the perfect” apart and privily from the rest, they would have delivered them especially to those

to whom they were also committing the Churches themselves. For they were desirous that these men should be very perfect and blameless in all things, whom also they were leaving behind as their successors, delivering up their own place of government to these men; which men, if they discharged their functions honestly, would be a great boon [to the Church], but if they should fall away, the direst calamity.”

–Irenaeus, Against Heresies, Ch 3, verse 1
<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/anf01.ix.iv.iv.html#ix.iv.iv-p1>

Irenaeus' goal was simple: He was pointing to the succession of bishops in churches founded by apostles as the historical link to the message Christ delivered to the apostles. Irenaeus, however, built his house upon the bishops rather than the foundation that the apostles laid. It was the succession of bishops rather than their authentication of the message of the apostles that was critical to Irenaeus.

Irenaeus makes an argument against claims by Gnostic heretics, who claimed access to secret knowledge. Irenaeus argued that “*if the apostles had known hidden mysteries, which they were in the habit of imparting to ‘the perfect’ apart and privily from the rest, they would have delivered them especially to those to whom they were also committing the Churches themselves.*” Irenaeus argued that, if Gnosticism is true, then the succession of bishops appointed by the apostles would be the guardians of those mysteries rather than the Gnostic heretics.

Irenaeus was not asserting that the church was the heir to the mysteries of Gnosticism – he opposed the teaching of Gnosticism vehemently. His assertion that the succession of bishops could have been the owners of Gnostic mysteries had they existed led to a Gnostic view of the churches epistemological authority. Irenaeus was up playing the role of bishops while downplaying the role of the apostolically authorized books of the

New Testament canon. He asks: “*Suppose there arise a dispute relative to some important question³³¹⁹ among us, should we not have recourse to the most ancient Churches with which the apostles held constant intercourse, and learn from them what is certain and clear in regard to the present question? For how should it be if the apostles themselves had not left us writings? Would it not be necessary, [in that case,] to follow the course of the tradition which they handed down to those to whom they did commit the Churches?*” Irenaeus suggests that, because we would have had no choice but to consult the successors of the apostles had the apostles left no writing then we should simply go to these men anyway. The fallacy in this reasoning is that it assumes that these writings were incidental to the gospel. The apostles did not just happen to leave writings, but God willed that they leave these writings. The apostles writings are Scripture, and “***no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost*** (2 Peter 1:20–21).” God intended for these writings to exist so that they may be the standard for doctrine and practice – sola Scriptura. God intended for these early bishops, along with the rest of the church, to authenticate the books of the New Testament, not replace them.

Irenaeus hints at Roman primacy in chapter 2, but only as a shortcut. He thought it “very tedious” (<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/anf01.ix.iv.iv.html#ix.iv.iv-p2>) to list all of the successions of all of the churches. He lists the succession in Rome as a shortcut for establishing at least one line of succession that could authenticate the original message.

In Book 3, chapter 4, of *Against Heresies* (<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/anf01.ix.iv.v.html>), Irenaeus replaces

Christ with the church. Consider what Jesus says about Himself: “*All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture* (John 10:8–9).” Irenaeus transfers all of the glory of Christ away from Him and to the church, and specifically the apostolic succession: “*she is the entrance to life; all others are thieves and robbers.*” Irenaeus also expressly credits the church, rather than Christ, as the bearer of the water of life.

Irenaeus clearly presented bishops as part of an unbroken chain of apostolic succession. This opened up the possibility of leaders being regarded as witnesses of the resurrection who were not actually witnesses of the resurrection. This doctrine undermined the rational basis for apostolic authority, separated apostolic authority from eye-witness testimony to the reality of the resurrection power of Christ.

The third phase involved consolidating episcopates under the dominance of Roman primacy. Cyprian led this charge, promoting Peter as the basis for unity of the church. Unity in the church, to Cyprian, was not defined in terms of invisible spiritual realities, but was visibly manifest in the “successors to Peter.” Those who were out of agreement with this succession could not appeal to Scripture or primal apostolic teaching; those who were out of agreement with this succession were outside of the church:

“4. If any one consider and examine these things, there is no need for lengthened discussion and arguments. There is easy proof for faith in a short summary of the truth. The Lord speaks to Peter, saying, “I say unto thee, that thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on

earth shall be bound also in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”And again to the same He says, after His resurrection, “Feed my sheep.” And although to all the apostles, after His resurrection, He gives an equal power, and says, ‘As the Father hath sent me, even so send I you: Receive ye the Holy Ghost: Whose soever sins ye remit, they shall be remitted unto him; and whose soever sins ye retain, they shall be retained;’yet, that He might set forth unity, He arranged by His authority the origin of that unity, as beginning from one. Assuredly the rest of the apostles were also the same as was Peter, endowed with a like partnership both of honour and power; but the beginning proceeds from unity. Which one Church, also, the Holy Spirit in the Song of Songs designated in the person of our Lord, and says, ‘My dove, my spotless one, is but one. She is the only one of her mother, elect of her that bare her.’ Does he who does not hold this unity of the Church think that he holds the faith? Does he who strives against and resists the Church trust that he is in the Church, when moreover the blessed Apostle Paul teaches the same thing, and sets forth the sacrament of unity, saying, ‘There is one body and one spirit, one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God?’ ”

–Cyprian, treatise 1, ch 4

<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/anf05.iv.v.i.html#iv.v.i-p18>

While Irenaeus promotes Roman Primary as a shortcut and an honorary distinction, Cyprian promotes it as an essential doctrinal base. In Cyprian’s view, Peter is the origin of the unity of the church. Cyprian further expands on Irenaeus view that the church, and not Christ, is foundational. He promotes three additional points:, the infallibility of the church, and the proclamation that there is no possibility of salvation outside the church.

“6. The spouse of Christ cannot be adulterous; she is uncorrupted and pure. She knows one home; she guards with chaste modesty the sanctity of one couch. She keeps us for God. She appoints the sons whom she has born for the kingdom. Whoever is separated from the Church and is joined to an adulteress, is separated from the promises of the Church; nor can he who forsakes the Church of Christ attain to the rewards of Christ. He is a stranger; he is profane; he is an enemy. He can no longer have God for his Father, who has not the Church for his mother. If any one could escape who was outside the ark of Noah, then he also may escape who shall be outside of the Church. The Lord warns, saying, “He who is not with me is against me, and he who gathereth not with me scattereth.”³¹¹⁶ He who breaks the peace and the concord of Christ, does so in opposition to Christ; he who gathereth elsewhere than in the Church, scatters the Church of Christ. The Lord says, “I and the Father are one;”³¹¹⁷ and again it is written of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, “And these three are one.”³¹¹⁸ And does any one believe that this unity which thus comes from the divine strength and coheres in celestial sacraments, can be divided in the Church, and can be separated by the parting asunder of opposing wills? He who does not hold this unity does not hold God’s law, does not hold the faith of the Father and the Son, does not hold life and salvation.”

–Cyprian, treatise 1, ch 6

<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/anf05.iv.v.i.html#iv.v.i-p30>

During apostolic times, any meeting conducted by believers for the purpose of advancing the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints was an authorized meeting... Jesus said “***For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them*** (Matthew 18:20).” God is present in any meeting of two or more believers

Cyprian, however, turned Jesus' word concerning meetings on its head. He begins well, properly noting that the unity of a few.

"12. Nor let any deceive themselves by a futile interpretation, in respect of the Lord having said, 'Wheresoever two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.'... For the Lord, when He would urge unanimity and peace upon His disciples, said, "I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth touching anything that ye shall ask, it shall be given you by my Father which is in heaven. For wheresoever two or three are gathered together in my name, I am with them;"³¹³⁴ showing that most is given, not to the multitude, but to the unanimity of those that pray. "If," He says, "two of you shall agree on earth:" He placed agreement first; He has made the concord of peace a prerequisite; He taught that we should agree firmly and faithfully...

-Cyprian, treatise 1, ch 12

<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/anf05.iv.v.i.html#iv.v.i-p53>

#Current

Cyprian, however, misses the point of Matthew 18. Matthew 18 does not address doctrinal unity. The wrong addressed here are personal torts, not crimes against public order (Matthew 18:15)*. Matthew 18 addresses issues of forgiveness and wholeness in personal relationships; it is unforgiveness rather than heresy or schism that is seen as the enemy of unity in Christ. Matthew 18 does touch a wee bit on church order here, but gives no specifics on church polity. Matthew 18 also says nothing about bishops and elevates the receiving of a small child in Jesus as equal to receiving Christ Himself. Christ envisioned an organic unity here, not an organizational unity. Cyprian tied unity of a group of believers to unity with the church as an organization, which to him meant the succession of bishops:

... But how can he agree with any one who does not agree with the body of the Church itself, and with the universal brotherhood? How can two or three be assembled together in Christ's name, who, it is evident, are separated from Christ and from His Gospel?"

–Cyprian, treatise 1, ch 12

<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/anf05.iv.v.i.html#iv.v.i-p53>

This doctrinal development had two consequences. It fully separated apostolic authority from witness to Christ resurrection glory, attributing it solely to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. The second is that, when taken to its logical conclusion, denies the priesthood of the believer. During this time, people started thinking in term of a priesthood of the bishops instead of the priesthood of the believer. From these argument sprang arguments for the primacy of Rome – which led to the rise of the Papacy([Germs of the Papacy](#)).

While these poisonous doctrines were constructed very soon after the time of the apostles, it took centuries for its bitter fruit to fully mature. Ignatius, Irenaeus, and others* were, in practice, very godly men who were deeply rooted in Christ. They believed that leaders who have strong historical links to the apostles of Jesus Christ were a more reliable source than teachers who appeared out of nowhere. From a historical perspective, these men of orthodoxy represented the best path for accurately authenticating the message of Christ and His apostles. They were the best witnesses. The men of orthodoxy used the best historical method to authenticate the testimony that God has delivered.

The theological basis from which they based their historical method, however, left much to be desired. They committed two errors: they

conflated the spiritual unity of the church that we have in Christ and they changed eye-witness authority to judicial authority.

They conflated the spiritual unity of the church that we have in Christ. When the Lord Jesus prayed the High Priestly prayer that is recorded in John 17, there is nothing said about elders, deacons and bishops; unity of the church is based on the spiritual union with God. When Paul's writes of the foundational elements of unity in the body of Christ in Eph 4, nothing is said about elders, deacons, and bishops. Unity is based on a shared connection with Christ and not the bishop.

They also changed eye-witness authority to judicial authority. They were correct to urge people to trust leaders who have close historical linkages to the apostles. These leaders were in the strongest position to authenticate the message that Christ gave to the church through the apostles, including certifying the book that were authorized by the apostles as the New Testament Canon. However; they confused eye-witness authority with judicial authority: bishops were made judges over the word of God rather than witnesses to it. This is equivalent to making a witness to a will the judge and executor.

It must be understood that this paradigm shift did not happen overnight. Cyprian, in particular, was not very consistent with his own new paradigm. He spent much of his ministry critical of how the Roman See was handling the issue of the lapsed - something his successors would eventually be unable to do. Cyprian was a schismatic according to his own paradigm. Irenaeus' doctrines of church government comprised only a small part of his polemic against heresies. While they proposed a radically new paradigm made in the image of the false, Pharisaic doctrine of the oral Torah, they very much lived according to the original apostolic paradigm.

The apostolic paradigm would still remain due to the dynamic that Francis Schaeffer describes as cultural memory. This is where there is a time gap between the formal adoption of a new paradigm and the emergence of its consequences in practice. This is because the old paradigm is still supported by cultural reinforcement while the new paradigm is being pushed to its logical conclusions. Consider the modern example of this principle of moral relativism: "***Whatever is done between two or more consenting adults is morally permissible.***" This cliché has been popular since the 1980's, but has exerted change in various stages. In the 80's it was used to justify pre-marital sex. It wasn't until the 90's, via Monicagate, that a big push was on to justify adultery. The first decade of the twenty-first century was the decade of homosexuality: support for so-called same-sex marriage changed from about 30 percent to just a little over 50 percent in the space of a decade.

All of these implications of moral relativism were there at the beginning, but cultural resistance slowed the implementation of this paradigm. The paradigm that includes modern relativism has exerted change over the span of decades; ancient history moved much slower, with the paradigm of Nicolaitanism exerting change over centuries. The apostolic paradigm would still exert strong influence until the time of Constantine.

The result of morphing witness authority into judicial authority is that future generations of leaders would emerge who would be declared witnesses but would not have any of the actual qualifications of witnesses. The memory created by close historical links to the resurrected Christ would act as brake against pushing these new doctrines to their logical conclusions: this is why the "Ante-Nicene Church Fathers" almost universally affirmed the priesthood of all

believers even though their new doctrine concerning bishops denied the priesthood of the believer.

Ch 16: The Political Corruption of the Church

Prior to Constantine, the apostolic paradigm held sway even as ideologies concerning church authority foreign to the gospel began to infiltrate the church. The ascent of Constantine to the imperial throne of the Roman Empire was a huge game-changer. It wiped out much of the cultural memory that propped up the apostolic paradigm, but not before the faith and the New Testament Canon was authenticated.

The risk of martyrdom that hung over the heads of Christians before Constantine provided a check against excessive corruption. Even as the church fathers were straying from the pure apostolic faith, there was no evidence of any attempt to suppress or redact any New Testament book, in spite of the many passages that stand against the novel scheme to puff up the church hierarchy. They kept those books and passages because they were faithfully preserving and authenticating the apostolic message – the faith that was delivered once for all to the saints.

The political situation of the church changed 180 degrees under Constantine. The church went from suffering persecution to enjoying preferred status. This opened the door for political corruption of the church. Constantine opened the door for these three trends: Constantine mixed church with state, he mixed church with paganism, and he divorced the church from her Hebrew roots

Constantine mixed church with state

Upon becoming emperor, the relationship between the church and the Roman state changed. The church suddenly had a much different relationship with the state. This change had both benefits and negative consequences.

Constantine became heavily involved in the affairs of the church. This involvement had three major consequences: confiscated properties were restored to the church, Christians attained high offices in the empire, and Constantine meddled in ecclesiastical affairs.

Constantine gave orders that the properties of the church that were seized be restored. (<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf201.iv.vi.ii.xxxix.html>) Those who purchased properties that were seized from the churches must restore them to the churches (<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf201.iv.vi.ii.xli.html>) .

Constantine preferred Christians over Pagans for appointment to high office. This resulted in Christians taking over the structure of the Roman Empire. This would have long term consequences for both the history of Europe and Roman Catholicism. The Western half of the Roman Empire would collapse. The Roman Catholic Church would step into the power vacuum created by this event.

“After this the emperor continued to address himself to matters of high importance, and first he sent governors to the several provinces, mostly such as were devoted to the saving faith; and if any appeared inclined to adhere to Gentile worship, he forbade them to offer sacrifice. This law applied also to those who surpassed the provincial governors in rank and dignity, and even to those who occupied the highest station, and held the authority of the Prætorian Præfecture. If they were Christians, they were free to act consistently with their profession; if otherwise, the law required them to abstain from idolatrous sacrifices.”

–Eusebius Pamphilius: Church History, Life of Constantine, Oration in Praise of Constantine, Chapter XLIV.(Schaff)
<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf201.iv.vi.ii.xliv.html>

Constantine involved himself in the religious issues of the day. Constantine convened a church council to resolve a thorny theological issue, intervened in several personnel decisions, and gave the Roman Catholic Church an enforceable monopoly on the Church.

There were two major controversies in the fourth century. One such controversy involved claims by one named Arius. Arius claimed that Jesus Christ possesses a different essence than God the Father. The second was over whether to base the dating of Easter on the Passover. Constantine Convened the Council of Nicaea to resolve this issue.

Constantine interferes in ecclesiastical affairs. While churchmen before Constantine were mistaken on some things, those who were orthodox were spiritually minded men. Constantine's involvement in church affairs brought a whole new dynamic. A new kind of church leader would emerge: one who would be a master politician. Eusebius of Nicomedia was one such man. He leaned towards the Arian faction and concocted schemes to unseat orthodoxy and re-established Arianism.

“the anti-Nicene reaction was being skilfully fostered by the strategy of Eusebius of Nicomedia. Within a year of the election of Athanasius we find him restored to imperial favour, and at once the assault upon the Nicene strongholds begins”

–Athanasius, Select Works and Letters, ch4 (Schaff),
Ch 4, pages 328–335.

<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf204.v.ii.v.html#v.ii.v-p7>

Eusebius' strategy was simple: Have Constantine remove orthodox bishops and replace them with Arians until only Arians were left in the bishoprics. Once Arians predominate the bishoprics, they would reconvene a new council that would establish Arianism as the orthodox position.

Eusebius' primary rival in this position was Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria. Eusebius sought to have Athanasius deposed by imperial mandate. Athanasius was threatened with removal from office if he refused to admit Arius into fellowship.

"This brought a letter from the Emperor himself, threatening deposition by an imperial mandate unless he would freely admit 'all who should desire it;'—a somewhat sweeping demand. Athanasius replied firmly and, it would seem, with effect, that 'the Christ-opposing heresy had no fellowship with the Catholic Church.'"

—Athanasius, Select Works and Letters, ch4 (Schaff),
Ch 4, pages 328–335. para 5

http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf204.v.ii.v.html#fna_v.ii.v-p7.1

Athanasius would ultimately prevail against the Arian heresy, but not before he suffered exile three times. God always has a righteous remnant. Athanasius led the counter-attack against the Arian scheming. There were many others who also stood their ground. When Eusebius successfully had Eustathius of Antioch removed, the Christians in Antioch refused to recognize any bishop that appointed during his lifetime.

The political intermingling of church and state would result in centuries of political intrigue that would rob the church of her spiritual power. In

the West, the church would become the political power culminating in the Roman Catholic Pope promoting himself as ruling in the place of God on earth. This is called Papo-caesarism. In the Eastern half of the empire, however, emperors would rule another thousand years. These emperors would continue to meddle at various times in the church, the churches adapted to the political realities of imperial interference. This is called Caesaropapism A symbiotic relation between church and state would result: the state gives the church special privileges, and the church would prop up the regime in return. The church would be used by the state to be an “opiate for the people.()” This relationship would make the area where Eastern Orthodoxy was prevalent, Russia and Eastern Europe, vulnerable to Marxist propaganda.

Constantine divorced the church from her Hebrew roots

Constantine divorced the church from its Hebrew roots. One particular act toward this end was convening the council of Nicaea. Council of Nicaea did two things: it condemned Arianism and divorced the calculation of Easter from the Passover feast.

“And first of all, it appeared an unworthy thing that in the celebration of this most holy feast we should follow the practice of the Jews, who have impiously defiled their hands with enormous sin, and are, therefore, deservedly afflicted with blindness of soul. For we have it in our power, if we abandon their custom, to prolong the due observance of this ordinance to future ages, by a truer order, which we have preserved from the very day of the passion until the present time. Let us then have nothing in common with the detestable Jewish crowd; for we have received from our Saviour a different way. A course at once legitimate and honorable lies open to our most holy religion. Beloved brethren, let us with one consent adopt this course, and withdraw ourselves from all

participation in their baseness.—For their boast is absurd indeed, that it is not in our power without instruction from them to observe these things. For how should they be capable of forming a sound judgment, who, since their parricidal guilt in slaying their Lord, have been subject to the direction, not of reason, but of ungoverned passion, and are swayed by every impulse of the mad spirit that is in them?”

<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf201.iv.vi.iii.xviii.html>

Constantine goes beyond rejecting Jewish apostasy in their rejection of Christ and proceeded in rejecting everything Jewish. He clearly believed that Judaism had nothing to contribute to the Christian faith. As such Constantine was willfully ignorant that the Creation cosmology of the Christian faith was Hebrew cosmology. His divorcing of Christianity from her Jewish context opened the door for heresies that could never exist in a Hebrew cosmology.

One such heresy was Arianism. Arianism was named after Arius, who taught that Christ has a created, finite nature (<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/34124/Arianism>). Arius reasoned that if Christ be God's son, then He is not self-existent, but had a beginning.

(<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf204.v.ii.ii.html#v.ii.ii-p6>).

Athanasius gives numerous rebuttals. First he replies that the Arians have sought to rebuff the finding of an ecumenical council. Athanasius argued that the finding of the council of Nicaea are merely the commitment to writing that which was handed down to them through the apostles.

“See, we are proving that this view has been transmitted from father to father; but ye, O modern Jews and disciples of Caiaphas, how many

fathers can ye assign to your phrases? Not one of the understanding and wise; for all abhor you, but the devil alone⁹⁴²; none but he is your father in this apostasy, who both in the beginning sowed you with the seed of this ¹⁶⁹irreligion, and now persuades you to slander the Ecumenical Council⁹⁴³, for committing to writing, not your doctrines, but that which from the beginning those who were eye-witnesses and ministers of the Word have handed down to us”

<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf204.xiv.ii.vi.html#xiv.ii.vi-p32>

There are good reasons to believe Athanasius. The convening of the council of Nicaea was Constantine's first intervention. He simply did not have the time or opportunity to fix the outcome; Nicaea truly represented the consensus of the church. It was after the council that the intrigues began. Arianism would have died early if it were not for imperial intervention. Constantine sent mixed signals concerning Arianism and was likely leaning Arian himself, as he was baptized by an Arian. His next two successors supported Arianism and paganism respectively. When Arianism lost imperial favor during the reign of Theodosius, it quickly collapsed as it could only survive by being propped up politically.

<<Athanasius also replied that if Arius is right, then Jesus is reduced to a demi-god. As worship of the Son was not abandoned in Arian churches, it amounted to the introduction of polytheism>>

Constantine Viewed Christianity as having Pagan roots

There is much debate over whether Constantine was a Christian or Pagan. The evidence would suggest that Constantine held to a form of religion that was Christian in form but Pagan in substance (<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf201.iv.vi.i.xxxii.html>). While Constantine understood the cross as a symbol of Christianity, he likely

understood it in Pagan terms (http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf201.iv.vi.i.xxxii.html#fnf_iv.vi.i.xxii-p2.2). Constantine was a syncretist, most likely a Hermeticist*.

The major act of Constantine that sought to re-interpret Christianity in a Pagan roots was his Sunday Law. In 321 he decreed that***

Constantine's religious views influenced his policies. He saw Christ as the fulfillment of pagan interpretation of natural law; He saw Christ as the fulfillment of spiritual evolution. This explains why Constantine was tolerant of both Christianity and Paganism; Constantine practiced intolerance against only those things that lie outside this evolutionary process. He opposed manifestations of Christianity that were outside the Catholic Church because he viewed them to be outside this evolutionary process - and therefore its enemy. Constantine issued Edict that gives Catholic Church hierarchy a legally enforceable monopoly on church affairs

<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf201.iv.vi.iii.lxv.html>

Whenever conflict would arise, Constantine tended to be intolerant of those whom he saw as outliers to the natural, evolutionary flow of the church. This is why he would exile Arius for heresy only to later threaten Athanasius for refusing to re-admit Arius when Arius subsequently faked agreement to the council of Nicaea.

Because Constantine believed that religion was a living organism of evolution, he did not attempt to **systematically** strong-arm the bishops into changing the doctrine of the church to fit his image. There are three proofs that there was no systematic conspiracy to apostatize the church: The political gaming on the part of churchmen, the fact that Athanasius canon list agrees with the accepted canon, and subsequent failed attempt at conspiracy by Constantine's sons.

There was political gaming on the part of churchmen, particular Eusebius of Nicomedia. This indicates weaker imperial control as a stronger imperial hand on church affairs would have minimized opportunities for others to game the system.

Athanasius was the first person to compose a canon lists that is identical* with the modern canon. This is significant because Athanasius stood his ground against the emperor when he demanded that he re-admit Arius. Athanasius had both the courage to refuse to be bullied and the intellect to refute his challengers. If Athanasius would not be bullied on a personnel decision, then he certainly would not be bullied concerning the more important issue of which books belong in the canon of Scripture. The fact that his list became universally accepted as the New Testament canon is testimony against conspiracy. Athanasius based his canon list on the pre-existing consensus of the church. This consensus concerning the New Testament canon was confirmed and not altered by subsequent councils*.

There were also subsequent failed attempts at conspiracy by Constantine's sons. Constantius sought to impose Arianism and Julius the apostate sought to return the empire to Paganism (<http://www.christianitytoday.com/ch/2005/issue85/howarianismalmostwon.html>). Orthodox bishops staunchly resisted these efforts. The tide turned when Theodosius took a firm stand in defense of orthodoxy. Arianism collapsed when it was condemned once again by the council of Constantinople.

The Consequences of Constantine's Meddling in the Church

In concluding this chapter, there is no basis to believe that there was a vast conspiracy that successfully changed the gospel. We have the gospel that the apostles handed down in spite of conspiracy. There are three major consequences to Constantine's meddling. The Catholic Church now had a legally enforceable monopoly on church affairs. There also now existed subtle political corruption in the church, and the Christian church was effectively divorced from her Hebrew roots. The result of these three trends was that the church began to drift further from her rational basis in Christ and became increasingly governed by the whims of men. Positional authority replaced rational-basis authority.

Positional authority does not need a rational basis; it is completely arbitrary. For example, in the early church, apostles had rational basis authority because they were eye-witnesses of Christ. Both the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches subverted the authority of the apostolic office into one of positional authority. This was done through a doctrine foreign to Christ, the doctrine of apostolic succession. Apostles choose their successors. In this scheme Christ chose the twelve, the twelve chose their successors, etc. One came to be regarded as an apostle because they were bureaucratically appointed by their predecessor. The Pope is declared a witness of Christ arbitrarily by election of the College of Cardinals under Canon Law regardless of whether he has seen or encountered the living Christ; he need not actually be a witness to wield the authority of a witness. Under Catholic law, it not even necessary for the Pope or priest to be saved in order to have the authority of the office (http://www.ccel.org/ccel/aquinas/summa.TP_Q82_A5.html). Needless to say, this can be a formula for disaster, backsliding, and even apostasy. The church did not instantly become apostate in Constantine's lifetime, but drifted there over the next several centuries.

Ch 17 The Day Satan Sat in Peter's chair

The church maintained a spiritual mission throughout the fourth century in spite of the meddling of the civil power. The spiritual degradation of the church occurred over centuries. There were three trends that would result in a satanic takeover of the ecclesiastical machinery: political adultery of the church, physical adultery of the church, and the occult takeover of the church.

Political adultery of the church

The church became increasingly meshed in political affairs from the time of Constantine until the Reformation. In AD 395, the history of the church took a fork. When the Roman Empire split into two empires, the history of churches in the East took a different direction than those in the West. Geopolitical and cultural differences would lead to philosophical and theological differences would lead to the church formally splitting in 1054.* While the particular histories are different, both churches became enmeshed and corrupted by the political defilements of their respective surrounding cultures.

The Church in the West had only one organization who traces its history to apostolic times, its wandering far afield of the apostles notwithstanding. Rome was the center of official Christianity in the West. Roman supremacy was undisputed in the West.

The fall of the Western Roman Empire in AD 476 created a power vacuum and instability. Soon after Rome fell to the Pagan Germanic tribes, the Merovingian dynasty emerged. During this time, a monastic model of revival arose that maintained vital spirituality. During the days of the Merovingian dynasty, it would have the blessing of the Pope*. The

Merovingian dynasty would not last. By the eighth century, several Popes conspired with Pepin to unseat the Merovingians. The Carolingian dynasty took over. In AD 800 Pope * crown Charlemagne emperor of the Holy Roman Empire. This heavier involvement of the bishop of Rome in political affairs resulted in spiritual decay of the church. While monastic orders continued to exist, they would not continue to have a spiritually robust clergy to support them. The institution of the church would become more vulnerable to the corruption that originates in the political. The political adultery of the papacy with the state would hinder the ability of the church to speak prophetically to the state concerning its sins or ultimate accountability to God.

In the Eastern Orthodox churches, it early become established that the Roman Emperor was the head of the church and appointed her bishops. The political dominance of the state over ecclesiastical affair would hinder the church from prophetically speaking to the state concerning its sins or ultimate accountability to God.

Greed and Physical adultery of the Church

The problem of the ecclesiastical hierarchy becoming excessively enmeshed into the political structure is that the fortunes of the church are tied to the fortunes of the state. When the Carolingian dynasty disintegrated in the latter part of the ninth century, utter chaos consumed Europe (A Manual of Church History: Ancient and medieval church history (to A. D. 1517) By Albert Henry Newman, page 499, #7). From about AD 880 to 1000 AD, the Papacy was in a dark ages. In these dark ages, the Papacy was full of murder, adultery, and prostitution. In the last decade of the ninth century, Popes murdered and were murdered in various schemes to acquire the papacy (A Manual of Church History: Ancient and medieval church history (to A. D. 1517) By Albert Henry Newman, page 499, #7). When Sergius 3 was installed as Pope,

the papacy became dominated by what is now called pornocracy (A Manual of Church History: Ancient and medieval church history (to A. D. 1517) By Albert Henry Newman, page 499, #8).The Papacy fell to whoredom. Harlots, with legs spread wide open, controlled the papacy. Two harlots in particular who were a mother–daughter team, Theodora and Marozia (Christianity Through The Centuries, By Isaac Padinjarekutt, page 58), completely controlled the Papacy until 962.Otho, king of Germany, attempted to restore order to the Papacy on secular grounds, but it only led to another round of murdering and plunder (A Manual of Church History: Ancient and medieval church history (to A. D. 1517) By Albert Henry Newman, page 501, para 2).

During this time bishopricks were also part of the barter for money and power. The monastic movement was thoroughly defiled in Continental Europe. ***“After the breaking up of the Carolingian Empire, Europe lapsed into a state of almost complete anarchy. Italy was rent into fragments by contending factions. Bishoprics and abbeys were seized by warring nobles for their sons or other dependents. Bishops thus appointed were anything rather than pious or learned in theology.***(A Manual of Church History: Ancient and medieval church history (to A. D. 1517) By Albert Henry Newman, page 499, #7).”

Lust and greed dominated the clergy of this period (A Manual of Church History: Ancient and medieval church history (to A. D. 1517) By Albert Henry Newman, page 501–2).” Simony, or the purchasing of bishopricks or clerical privileges with money, was also rampant. Several Popes of this period were deposed for simony (A Manual of Church History: Ancient and medieval church history (to A. D. 1517) By Albert Henry Newman, page 501–2).”

Reformation of The Papacy were not successful until the administration of Gregory 7 [Hildebrand]. Gregory blamed lay control, especially civil political control of the papacy as the root problem: He proposed a series of reforms. The aim of these reforms was to strengthen the papacy. The Pope was promoted as the vicar of Christ on earth, not merely in the Cyprianic sense of ruling the church, but also ruling over secular power. The Papacy was to be re-invented as a global dictatorship. The result would be the slaughter of many thousands of people in religious wars (http://archive.org/stream/hildebrandhisti00step/hildebrandhisti00step_djvu.txt 143,153).

The occult takeover of the Church

Sexual anarchy and lust for political domination were not the only sins of church leadership in the late middle ages. Satan seized control of the church during this period by seducing her leaders into the occult. Whereas the sexual sin was primarily that of Rome, the occult was embraced by both Roman Catholic and Eastern orthodox leaders.

During the 14th century, a mode of prayer took root in the Eastern Orthodox Church that was occult in nature. It was called hesychasm. This mode of prayer involves chanting a simple phrase such as “Lord Jesus have mercy on me” (The Globalization of Hesychasm and the Jesus Prayer: Contesting Contemplation, Christopher D.L. Johnson, 2010, page 19) over and over. (The Globalization of Hesychasm and the Jesus Prayer: Contesting Contemplation, Christopher D.L. Johnson, 2010, page 20, paras 2–3) It was believed that repetition of a prayer would result in continual prayer which leads to union with God. This mode of praying is very similar to the method of meditation used in Pagan and Eastern religions

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transcendental_Meditation_technique#cite_ref-Olson_26-1)

[Transcendental_Meditation_technique#cite_ref-Olson_26-1](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transcendental_Meditation_technique#cite_ref-Olson_26-1)). The theory behind Transcendental Meditation is that repetition of the mantra can allow one to “transcends all mental activity and experiences the ‘source of thought’, which is said to be pure silence, ‘pure awareness’ or ‘transcendental Being’, ‘the ultimate reality of life

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transcendental_Meditation_technique#cite_ref-Science_of_Being_23-1)

[Transcendental_Meditation_technique#cite_ref-Science_of_Being_23-1](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transcendental_Meditation_technique#cite_ref-Science_of_Being_23-1).”

The teaching of hesychastic prayer is that repetition of the so-called Jesus prayer leads to union with God. Both teach that these techniques focus the mind on ultimate reality. Hesychastic Prayer, and the Contemplative Prayer Movement that emerged out of it (<http://www.contemplativeoutreach.org/christian-contemplative-tradition>), is simply Eastern meditation on a Christian wrapper.

Jesus own words about prayer explicitly condemn modes of prayer that mimic Pagan or Eastern meditation such as hesychastic/ contemplative prayer. Jesus condemns the use of repetition as a technique for getting closer to God.

“But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.” – Matthew 6:7

Eastern orthodoxy tries to distinguish hesychastic prayer from occult meditation by appealing to synergy between the divine and human will. The Bible, however, has zero tolerance for the involvement of God’s people in occult things. God’s people are told to destroy all idols and have nothing to do with the religious practices of the Pagans (Deuteronomy 18:9–14) Idolatry includes not only worshipping false gods, but by improperly worshipping God. We are worship God in the way He requires. Nadab and Abihu found out the hard way that God only accepts worship on his terms. When people worship God according to

their own terms, they have created a man-based religion; man-based religion leads to man-made gods.

“And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not. And there went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them, and they died before the Lord.” – Leviticus 10:1–2

Because Hesychastic prayer is direct disobedience to The Lord Jesus' commands concerning prayer, praying in that mode will drive one further from God rather than closer to God. While all of the elements of hesychastic prayer have ancient antecedents dating from the fourth century (The Globalization of Hesychasm and the Jesus Prayer: Contesting Contemplation, Christopher D.L. Johnson, 2010, page 31, last para –page 35, first para) the current state of this mode of prayer was composed and defended by Gregory Palamas in the fourteenth century as the occult paganism of the Renaissance was making resurgence in Europe (Mystery Babylon Rising).

Gregory of Palamas specifically formulated “***a theological apologia of hesychasm***(The Globalization of Hesychasm and the Jesus Prayer: Contesting Contemplation, Christopher D.L. Johnson, 2010, page 35, second para).” It is this apologetic that further entrenches Paganism into the church. Palamas who was heavily influenced by Neo-Platonism through Pseudo-Dionysius(Dialogue Between an Orthodox and a Barlaamite By Saint Gregory Palamas, edFerwerda& Denning-Bolle, introduction) (<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/pseudo-dionysius-areopagite/#AftSigInf> last para in AfterLife section), uses an epistemology common to gnosticism, Neoplatonism, and Hermeticism in developing his defense of hesychastic prayer.

“Palamas brought up the distinction first formulated by Philo (d. 50) and the Cappadocian Fathers between God’s essence and God’s energies (ousia /energia) (Louth 1981: 91). Using this distinction, Palamas claimed that while God’s essence is completely unknow-able and imperceptible, God’s energies are perceivable as his mode of direct action and interaction with creation (Ware 1993: 68) (The Globalization of Hesychasm and the Jesus Prayer: Contesting Contemplation, Christopher D.L. Johnson, 2010, page 35, last para).”

Hermeticism and gnosticism teach that god is unknowable as the ultimate source but knowable through emanations (<http://www.hermetics.org/pdf/kybalion.pdf> page 29, 1st para) (<http://www.iep.utm.edu/neoplato/#SH2a> first para unknowable as ineffable). The fallacy of emanationism is this: Is an emanation from God perfect and fully God. If so, then the emanation is as knowable or unknowable as the source. Christ Jesus, as the Logos, emanated perfectly and totally from God the Father and is fully God. If, however, the emanation is not full and perfect, then the emanation is less than fully God. The Christ of hesychastic prayer is less than the Christ who proceeded from the Father. It is this “lesser Christ,” one who is less than God in His essence/ousia that is worshipped. The Jesus of hesychasm is a different Jesus from the one proclaimed by the apostles. Hesychasm is idolatry. Hesychasm became Eastern Orthodox dogma (Rome, Constantinople, Moscow: Historical and Theological Studies, John Meyendorff, page 41, St Vladimir’s seminary press, 1996). Eastern Orthodoxy fell into delusion. (Theosis?)(Rome, Constantinople, Moscow: Historical and Theological Studies, John Meyendorff, page 158, St Vladimir’s seminary press, 1996).

<http://books.google.com/books?id=-PxVklqRBgUC&pg=PA41&lpg=PA41&dq=hesychasm+constantinople&so>

later when astrology had entered in earnest upon its triumphant course, and a Ceccod'Ascoli was already its devoted adherent. In [Petrarch's](#) day the questionable activity of the astrologers at the Italian courts had made such progress that this clear-sighted Humanist (De remed. utr. form. I, iii, sqq; Epist. rer.famil., III; 8, etc.) again and again attacked astrology and its representatives with the keenest weapons of his wit, though without success, and even without any following except the weak objections of Villani and the still more ineffectual polemics of [Salutato](#) in his didactic poem "De fato et fortunâ". Emperors and [popes](#) became votaries of astrology- the Emperors Charles IV and [V](#), and Popes [Sixtus IV](#)[1471-1484],[Julius II](#)[1503-1513], [Leo X](#)[1513-1521], and [Paul III](#). When these rulers lived astrology was, so to say, the regulator of official life; it is a fact characteristic of the age, that at the [papal](#) and imperial courts ambassadors were not received in audience until the court astrologer had been consulted."
(<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/02018e.htm>)

In addition to this, there was Rodrigo Borgia. He took the occult to a deeper level. On August 11, 1492, he ascends to the Papal throne as Alexander VI. He is a student of Hermeticism, being an admirer of the Corpus Hermeticum (Science Fact and Science Fiction: An Encyclopedia,Brian M. Stableford, page 340, left col, 1st para, 2006, Routledge).Borgia commitment to Hermeticism led him to dismiss charges of heresy against Pico Mirandola, one of the leaders of the resurgence of Hermeticism (The Renaissance: The Revival of Learning and Art in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries,PhilipSchaff, page 67,Putnam, 1891).Borgia even went as far as to commission to creation of "a fresco teemingwith Egyptian - that is - Hermetic - images and symbols painted in the Vatican! This was done not for aesthetic or ornamental reasons; rather, Alexander VI wanted to mark his protection of the exalted and occult Egyptian tradition.(The Quest: History and

Meaning in Religion, Mircea Eliade, 1969, University of Chicago Press, page 38)."

Hermeticism is a satanic religion that is the religion of Mystery Babylon and the religion of the Antichrist (Mystery Babylon Rising). The pandemic of astrological popes in the late 15th and early 16th centuries coupled with a Hermetic pope resulted in Satan taking over the Papacy. At the time that Martin Luther nailed his Ninety-five Thesis at the door of the church in Wittenberg, Satan ruled the institutional church. The reforms of Gregory VII were a complete failure. Borgia was guilty of every abomination including simony and sexual immorality(). By the time Leo X became Pope, the church was in financial straits. Leo X decided to put the forgiveness of sin for sale (<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09162a.htm> 5th para)().

The condition of the church at the close of the fifteenth century was so carnal that it was distressing to those who were more spiritually minded. This distress resulted in centuries of conflict: on one side there were those who increasingly promoted humanistic version of Christianity – a version that promoted church leaders over Christ and the other side those who resisted those trends. The next chapter will document this resistance.

In addition to resistance, there must also be judgment. Both churches have desecrated God's Temple. These churches must suffer the judgment of Manasseh. It became necessary for the Lord to cause a split in the church and foster a movement towards religion that seeks its foundation in Christ. Chapter 19 will document this paradigm shift.

Ch 18 The Church in the Highlands (Wilderness)

The 1260 years in the wilderness

Revelation 12 presents a picture of a woman who gave birth to a man-child who would rule the nations with a rod of iron. This man-child is Jesus. In Gal 4, this woman is identified as the Heavenly Jerusalem and the mother of us all. If Mystery Babylon is the false religion, then Mystery Jerusalem is the true religion revealed by God.

We read that Satan, as the dragon, was set to devour the child as soon as he was born. When the child was brought up to heaven, he attacked the woman. WE read then that the woman was given refuge in the wilderness for 1260 days. It is my view that these are day-years; for 1260 years, she would be hiding. The true gospel would never disappear from the earth, but would become obscured or less visible for 1260 years.

During the apostolic age, the light of the gospel burned white-hot. After the apostolic age, the gospel indeed became less visible as the doctrines of men began to marginalize the faith once and for all delivered to the saints. This light would progressively recede into the background for 1260 years, and then it would re-emerge. The gospel light begins to recede with Ignatius puffing up of the bishop in about AD 100. This recession would end in about 1360 with the ministry of Wycliffe -1260 years.

During this time in the wilderness, the white-hot light of the apostolic gospel dimmed due to mixture with foreign elements. Monasteries - the refuge of most of the spiritual life of the Middle Ages - were established

upon a belief that extreme deprivation of the flesh had value in sanctification (). This belief, called ascetism, is debunked in Col 2:20–23. There is, however, a kernel of truth. The Scriptures do teach us to deny the lust of the flesh, including the statement that “*they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts*” (Galatians 5:24).

The first problem with ascetism was that it relied on human effort to produce righteousness rather than the confession of faith in God’s grace. Rom 6:11–18 instructs to “reckon out selves dead to sin.” We are to focus upon what God has already done. This means we make the confession of faith in what Christ did for those He redeemed – that we are crucified with Him. When Galatians says that believers have already crucified the flesh, it means that they have already matured in the practice basic confessions that Christ’s blood cleanses us from sin and that we are crucified with Him. These mature believers confess that the Holy Spirit is living inside of them and producing fruit. (Gal 5: 22–23; *)

The Medieval Resistance to Romanist Hegemony

Soon after Rome fell to the Pagan Germanic tribes, the Merovingian dynasty emerged. During this time, a monastic model of revival arose. While it mixed some error with truth, particularly the error that physical deprivation of the flesh has value in sanctification, it was also the haven of much of the spiritual life during the Middle Ages (Dreams, Visions, and Spiritual Authority in Merovingian Gaul By Isabel Moreira, page 13??).

The Scriptural teaching that the “just shall live by faith (Habbakkuk 2:4; Rom 1:17; Galatians 3:17; and Hebrews 10:38)” provides the explanation for the hidden Evangelical life that persisted during the middle ages. Because church authority was artificially puffed up by Cyprian and legally enforced by Roman imperial authority, any **public** Evangelical profession of faith, whether it is the primitive confession held by believers in the

apostolic age or of the modern kind, would have been ruthlessly exterminated. This would result in an absence of specific evidence of Evangelical faith during the middle ages.

True spiritual life was hidden with the Woman during this time. During this time of darkness, there were those who lived by faith in Christ. God counts the faith that one bases their life upon, rather than the creed that is confessed. The evidence of Evangelical life must be inferred by supernatural fruit.

An unknown number of people embraced a proto-Evangelical faith **as a matter of practice and to a degree that indicates salvation in Christ**. This medieval faith would later mature into an Evangelical recovery of apostolic doctrine and Scriptural supremacy.

The monasticism that nurtured true spiritual life was prevalent throughout Europe, but the area there is now Great Britain and Ireland provided an environment exceedingly conducive to Evangelical revival: isolation from continental Europe, and the early development of national interest that ran contrary to the interest of the religious elite – particularly the Papacy.

In the fourth through sixth centuries (), monastic missionaries swept through Ireland, England, Wales, and Scotland with Evangelistic zeal. These missionaries were largely absent to the affairs of the bishops who bedded with Constantine. The church that grew out of these efforts reflected the faith as it was practiced in that time. The corruptions caused by the reign of Pornocracy, the subversion of monasteries, and political corruption of the Papacy had little influence on these churches. The corruption caused by the influence of Islam and Eastern religions on Eastern Orthodoxy had absolutely no effect on these churches. These

churches developed independently of both Rome and Constantinople for centuries.

The Roman church did eventually seize control of religion in Great Britain and Ireland. England fell in the ninth century. Scotland, however did not fall until 1192, when the church of Scotland came into full communion with Rome. The Fall of the church of Scotland, and to a lesser extent, the Church in England, coincided with the Norman occupation. The Normans were in alliance with Papal Rome: foreigners dominated both secular and ecclesiastical offices. This occupation helped stir up a sense of nationalism that resulted in resistance to Papal claims.

Both Scots and English people became resentful against the Papacy because the Papacy was supporting those who oppressed them, the impulse for liberty that God programmed into those created in His image stirred the people into hostility against their oppressors – which translated into resistance to Papal claims. It was this resistance that motivated English nobles into forcing King John into signing the Magna Carta.

How the Lawlessness in Northumbria helped breed Wycliffe

The resistance to Romanist tyranny was stiffest in Scotland. While the official church was in communion with Rome, many Scots were resentful of being dominated by the Norman [French] invaders, who had a stronger grip in England to the south. There was much warfare during this time both in Scotland and along the border with England. This border became very fluid at the time of Wycliffe. This area, called Northumbria, had no stable governmental regime during this period. The significance of this lawlessness is not it became practically impossible

for Papists to effectively control religion. The native medieval, monastic spirituality, with its opposition to Papism, was able to survive.

Wycliffe was born just a few miles south of the southern border of Northumbria. Wycliffe was, without doubt, exposed to anti-Papist thought. This exposure opened up Wycliffe to hold to a different view of both the church and the Scripture than that of either Rome or Constantinople. Wycliffe would begin his polemics exactly 1260 years after Ignatius began the movement away from government by God over the church and towards domination of the church by men – which is the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes.

Ch 19 The Reformation

At the end of the 1260 years in the wilderness, the woman who represents true religion, Mystery Jerusalem, comes out of hiding. John Wycliffe was the point man in this change.

Wycliffe starts a Ezra revival, marking the beginning of the reformation

Wycliffe's ministry was a Josiah revival. Wycliffe began to promote the supremacy of Scripture over Popes and councils. The re-emergence of a Bible-centered faith meant that God's people would be restored to their spiritual life according to the specifications found in the documents of the Bible. Starting with Wycliffe, reformers would seek to reform the church according to the instruction in the Bible in the same way that Ezra restored spiritual life to the nation of Israel by interpreting the documents of the Law using the grammatical-historical hermeneutic.

The Lollards and the Bohemian Reformation

Wycliffe suffered excommunication and persecution; following his death, his reformation in England was brutally crushed. His followers, the Lollards, fled to Bohemia. There they helped start a reformation there. This reformation was led by Jan Hus who was burned at the stake in 1415. It has been said that Hus, whose name means goose in the Bohemian tongue, once said "they haven't cooked my goose yet." This response to an inquiry about his safety became the origin for the slang expression "your goose is cooked!" The Bohemian church suffered persecution but survived until the reformation.

Martin Luther changes the balance of power

Things came to a head when Martin nailed his Ninety-Five Theses to the door of the church at Wittenberg. The combination of upswelling demand

for reform, the decadence of the Vatican, and political opportunism among the leading secular powers of Europe created a perfect storm that broke the monopoly of the Roman Catholic Church on religious and civil life in Western Europe

The principles of the Reformation

The reformation restored to the church five basic truths, known as the five solas: Sola Scriptura, Sola Fide, Sola Gratia, Sola Christus, and Sola Deo Gloria. (<http://www.fivesolas.com/5solas.htm>)

Sola Scriptura means that Scripture alone is the highest authority. Church councils, popes, and other human authorities, regardless of their holiness or wisdom, can never equal the authority of Scripture. The Scripture alone is the standard for judging doctrinal truth.

The Scriptures teach Sola Scriptura. We read in 2 Timothy 3:14–17 that “http.” During the apostolic age, the authority was in the revealed message(). At the Diet of Worms where Luther was summoned to answer for the Ninety–Five Thesis he posted, Martin Luther made the following confession:

“We believe that [the] holy Scriptures fully contain the will of God, and that whatsoever man ought to believe unto salvation is sufficiently taught therein...Neither may we consider any writings of men, however holy these men may have been, of equal value with those divine Scriptures nor ought we to consider custom or the great multitude, or antiquity, or succession of times and persons, or councils, decrees or statutes, as of equal value with the truth of God... Therefore, we reject with all our hearts whatsoever does not agree with this infallible rule.”

-The

Belgic

Confession

<https://reformed.org/documents/BelgicConfession.html>

Sola Gratia means that we are saved by grace alone. This stood in contrast to the long-held teaching in both the Roman and Eastern Orthodox churches that made salvation a joint effort of grace and works.

Sola Fide means that we are saved through faith alone. From the time of Cyprian, the church held to what is called sacramentalism – salvation through rituals administered by a lawfully consecrated priest. Throughout the Middle ages, it was widely believed that if one submitted to the authority of the Catholic Church and engaged in the rituals, then they would be saved. Having a living faith in Christ was seen as secondary.

Sola Christus means that the source of salvation is Christ alone based on the merit of Christ alone. There is nothing we can do that can add anything to the finished work of Christ.

Sola Deo Gloria means that everything is to be done for the glory of God.

The Reformation basis of freedom

The reformation was founded on an apologetic of freedom. There is a three-fold freedom that was promoted during the reformation: Freedom of conscience, freedom inherent by our status as created in the image of God, and freedom to access knowledge.

The first freedom was **freedom of conscience**. The conscience of the individual was bound only by God. While church councils and Popes

could speak to the conscience, the conscience was bound exclusively by God. Only God's Word revealed through the power of the Holy Spirit could bind the conscience.

The reformation also recognized that there is **freedom that is inherent in man's condition of being created in the image of God**. This is manifested in two ways. This freedom is manifest in the existence of free will that is rooted in the existence of imagination. This freedom presupposes the existence of legal protection in the form of certain inalienable rights.

The existence of free will and inalienable rights implies that decisions will be made. Because decisions from made from a list of perceived alternatives, freedom of access to knowledge is essential to the exercise of freedom. This implies an epistemology or theory of knowledge in which knowledge is accessible.

God granted freedom of access to knowledge of Him

Freedom of access to knowledge is an essential pre-requisite to decision-making. Let us consider Martin Luther makes an eloquent defense of freedom of conscience. Luther, in his Treatise on Christian liberty, argues that external authorities and external reality have no grip on the soul. Luther is undermining the Romanist claims that the Magisterium's judgments are binding upon the conscience

'First, let us consider the inner man to see how a righteous, free, and pious Christian, that is, a spiritual, new, and inner man, becomes what he is. It is evident that no external thing has any influence in producing Christian righteousness or freedom, or in producing unrighteousness or servitude. A simple argument will furnish the proof of this statement. What can it profit the soul if the body is well, free, and active, and eats, drinks, and does as it pleases? For in these respects even the most

godless slaves of vice may prosper. On the other hand, how will poor health or imprisonment or hunger or thirst or any other external misfortune harm the soul? Even the most godly men, and those who are free because of clear consciences, are afflicted with these things. None of these things touch either the freedom or the servitude of the soul. It does not help the soul if the body is adorned with the sacred robes of priests or dwells in sacred places or is occupied with sacred duties or prays, fasts, abstains from certain kinds of food, or does any work that can be done by the body and in the body. The righteousness and the freedom of the soul require something far different since the things which have been mentioned could be done by any wicked person. Such works produce nothing but hypocrites. On the other hand, it will not harm the soul if the body is clothed in secular dress, dwells in unconsecrated places, eats and drinks as others do, does not pray aloud, and neglects to do all the above-mentioned things which hypocrites can do.'

–Martin Luther, Treatise on Christian Liberty (1520),
para 6

<https://history.hanover.edu/courses/excerpts/165luther.html>

Luther then proceeds to make his case that there is only one thing that does affect the conscience, the Word of God. The word of God is both a necessary and sufficient governor of the conscience.

*'Furthermore, to put aside all kinds of works, even contemplation, meditation, and all that the soul can do, does not help. **One thing, and only one thing, is necessary for Christian life, righteousness, and freedom. That one thing is the most holy Word of God, the gospel of Christ, as Christ says, John 11[:25], "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live"; and John 8[:36], "So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed"; and Matt. 4[:4], "Man***

shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.” ...You may ask, “What then is the Word of God, and how shall it be used, since there are so many words of God?” I answer: The Apostle explains this in Romans 1. The Word is the gospel of God concerning his Son, who was made flesh, suffered, rose from the dead, and was glorified through the Spirit who sanctifies. To preach Christ means to feed the soul, make it righteous, set it free, and save it, provided it believes the preaching. Faith alone is the saving and efficacious use of the Word of God, according to Rom. 10[: 9]: “If you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.” Furthermore, “Christ is the end of the law, that every one who has faith may be justified” [Rom. 10:4]. Again, in Rom. 1[:17], “He who through faith is righteous shall live.” The Word of God cannot be received and cherished by any works what ever but only by faith. Therefore it is clear that, as the soul needs only the Word of God for its life and righteousness, so it is justified by faith alone and not any works; for if it could be justified by anything else, it would not need the Word, and consequently it would not need faith ‘

–Martin Luther, Treatise on Christian Liberty (1520),
para 7–8

<https://history.hanover.edu/courses/excerpts/165luther.html>

In the spirit of this work, Luther boldly defends freedom of conscience, saying before the Diet of Worms ” *I cannot and will not recant anything, for to go against conscience is neither right nor safe. Here I stand, I can do no other, so help me God. Amen”*

–Christian History Institute, Oct 20, 2016

<https://christianhistoryinstitute.org/blog/post/here-i-stand-i-can-do-no-other/>

Luther, however, did not extend this freedom to those who opposed him. In *The Liberty of the Christian* and *The Babylonian Captivity*, he made statements that logically lead to the expansion of freedom. He argued convincingly that the only thing that the soul needed was the Word of God. This is in accordance with Scripture. ” ***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, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*** (2 Timothy 3:16–17).” The Word of God, revealed in the Scripture, has three properties.

1. Is inspired or God–breathed. It came from God.
2. It is an adequate reference frame for training in sound doctrine and righteousness.
3. It is sufficient to equip one for every good work. This does not mean that the man of God does not need to learn any extra–Biblical knowledge; it does mean that knowledge of the Bible is sufficient to provide a framework through which he can integrate all of his knowledge and thought.

It should surprise no one that, if the sufficiency of Scripture alone is preached, that people would start to go to the Bible for answers. It would not be long until people would discover that Biblical teaching addresses the full range of topics covering all of life. The Bible is not just a religious book. People quickly discovered principles from the Bible that address the social and political context they were in. It would not be long before people are going to make inferences from the Bible that are hostile to the current regime.

Germany in the 16th century was a harsh place for those who were not in the elite. Peasants suffered from ever increasing oppression. They had to

pay exorbitant rents and were increasingly denied access to lands that were reckoned as common property of the community. They began to demand more liberty, liberty which the princes were unwilling to grant.

When it came to war, however, Luther sided in with the princes. He urged the princes to spill as much blood as possible and slaughter the peasants. Luther severely limited his doctrine of freedom to apply only to the spiritual freedom. Luther preached absolute obedience to the state.

“1. Our first task is [to find] a firm grounding for secular law and the Sword, in order to remove any possible doubt about their being in the world as a result of God’s will and ordinance. The passages [of Scripture] which provide that foundation are these: Romans, 12 [in fact 13.1–2]: ‘Let every soul be subject to power and superiority’. For there is no power but from God and the power that exists everywhere is ordained by God. And whoever resists the power, resists God’s ordinance. But whosoever resists God’s ordinance shall receive condemnation on himself.’ And again 1 Peter 2 [13–14]: ‘Be subject to every kind of human order, whether it be to the king as the foremost, or governors as sent by him, as a vengeance on the wicked and a reward to the just.’

–Martin Luther, On Secular Authority (1523), para 1

[https://www.tapestryofgrace.com/year2/corrections/pdcs/Govt2-16%20\(On%20Secular%20Authority\).pdf](https://www.tapestryofgrace.com/year2/corrections/pdcs/Govt2-16%20(On%20Secular%20Authority).pdf)

Luther taught that government existed from the very beginning. Luther believed that Cain’s fear of being killed was proof that Adam said “murderers should be killed.” There is, however, no record of Adam actually saying that. Even if Adam had said that murders should be killed, it does not follow from that that God set up a government.

The Sword and its law have existed from the beginning of the world. When Cain beat his brother Abel to death, he was terrified that he would be killed in turn. But God imposed a special prohibition, suspending [punishment by] the sword for Cain's sake: no one was to kill him. The only possible reason why Cain should have been afraid is that he had seen and heard from Adam that murderers should be killed.

–Martin Luther, *On Secular Authority* (1523), para 1

[https://www.tapestryofgrace.com/year2/corrections/pdcs/Govt2-16%20\(On%20Secular%20Authority\).pdf](https://www.tapestryofgrace.com/year2/corrections/pdcs/Govt2-16%20(On%20Secular%20Authority).pdf)

After the flood, God did provide for a legal framework for the human race to allow the legal and ethical termination of the lives of murderers. Contrary to Luther's claim, this does not instruct us on "*How the secular Sword and law are to be employed.*" The passage only provides ethical justification for human beings to kill people who have killed other human beings. God does not specify, through positive law, how this ministry of justice was to be organized.

Furthermore, God re-instituted and confirmed [this command] in express words after the Flood when he says in Genesis 9 [6]: 'Whosoever sheds man's blood, by man let his blood be shed.' This cannot be interpreted as a reference to God [himself] inflicting suffering and punishment on murderers, since many of them, either because they repent or by favor, remain alive and die [naturally] without the sword. No: it refers to the right of the Sword: a murderer forfeits his life, and it is right that he should be killed by the sword. ... How the secular Sword and law are to be employed according to God's will is thus clear and certain enough: to punish the wicked and protect the just.

–Martin Luther, *On Secular Authority* (1523), para 1

[https://www.tapestryofgrace.com/year2/corrections/pdcs/Govt2-16%20\(On%20Secular%20Authority\).pdf](https://www.tapestryofgrace.com/year2/corrections/pdcs/Govt2-16%20(On%20Secular%20Authority).pdf)

Luther held to a doctrine of absolute obedience to secular, civil authority. The only exception is as it pertains to beliefs. Luther even took this idea as far as to tell the peasants that their bodies were the property of their lords (http://projects.ecfs.org/eih/documents/LutherAdmon.html next to last para). Calvin also taught absolute obedience to secular authority, except in matters of faith. Like Luther, Calvin believes that rulers are **directly** appointed by God, adding the following.

“And he adds, Wilt not thou then fear the power? Do good. By this he intimates, that there is no reason why we should dislike the magistrate, if indeed we are good; nay, that it is an implied proof of an evil conscience, and of one that is devising some mischief, when any one wishes to shake off or to remove from himself this yoke...”

–John Calvin, Commentary on Romans 3:3–4 ,verse 3, para 2

<https://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom38.xvii.ii.html>

...Let us then continue to honor the good appointment of God, which may be easily done, provided we impute to ourselves whatever evil may accompany it. Hence he teaches us here the end for which magistrates are instituted by the Lord; the happy effects of which would always appear, were not so noble and salutary an institution marred through our fault. At the same time, princes do never so far abuse their power, by harassing the good and innocent, that they do not retain in their tyranny some kind of just government: there can then be no tyranny which does not in some respects assist in consolidating the society of men “

–John Calvin, Commentary on Romans 3:3–4 ,verse 3, para 2

<https://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom38.xvii.ii.html>

Calvin and Luther both had such a negative view of human nature, that they believed that people could not be trusted with liberty. Calvin asserted here that dislike of a magistrate was “*implied proof of an evil conscience.*” Luther had a very gloomy picture of humanity, believing that people were incapable of self-government, but rather needed masters.

“ 4. All those who are not Christians [in the above sense] belong to the kingdom of the world or [in other words] are under the law. There are few who believe, and even fewer who behave like Christians and refrain from doing evil [themselves], let alone not resisting evil [done to them]. And for the rest God has established another government, outside the Christian estate and the kingdom of God, and has cast them into subjection to the Sword. So that, however much they would like to do evil, they are unable to act in accordance with their inclinations, or, if they do, they cannot do so without fear, or enjoy peace and good fortune.”

*–On Secular Authority: How Far Should It Be Obeyed – Martin Luther
Luther: On Secular Authority: how far does the Obedience owed to it
extend?, ch 4*

[https://www.tapestryofgrace.com/year2/corrections/pdcs/Govt2-16%20\(On%20Secular%20Authority\).pdf](https://www.tapestryofgrace.com/year2/corrections/pdcs/Govt2-16%20(On%20Secular%20Authority).pdf)

Due to their low view of human nature, Luther and Calvin held to an interpretation of Romans 13 that was, at that time, a novel

interpretation. They systematically suppressed the libertarian impulse to which freedom of conscience leads. The Reformation that they were constructing is sometimes called a magisterial reformation (<http://cat.xula.edu/tpr/movements/magisterial/>). The magisterial Reformation emphasized the authority of secular magistrates and viewed teachers as being authoritative, though not infallible as the Papists did. This combination resulting a various state churches These magisterial reformers did equivalent of replacing the absolute monarchy of the Papacy with the “constitutional monarchy.” They rejected Rome’s political claims, but continued with the state–church paradigm

“The tactical working of the Reformation was that a national church was established as distinct from one universal. The aim of the papacy and the priesthood had been to subordinate the state to the church, to make the pope supreme over all nations. Wherever Protestantism triumphed a national church arose, self-governed, and independent of Rome. These national churches assume different forms, Episcopal in England, Presbyterian in Scotland, somewhat mixed in northern lands. The exception was the Anabaptist movement which emphasized a ‘free church’ “

–A Matter of Conviction: A History of Southern Baptist Engagement with the Culture Jerry Sutton, page 40,2008, Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission of the SBC

These national churches continued the tradition that started with Constantine: The church was tethered to the state. This hybrid institution, by its very nature, usurped Christ’s role as head of the church. This is not say that there were no saved individuals who cherished Christ over the institution. This intuitional arrangement, however, is premised on either the state being crowned lord over the

church – Caesaropapism, or a church institution claiming lordship over every nation instead of Christ – Papocaesarism.

During the Reformation, the Anabaptists emerged as an exception to this tradition. Anabaptist promoted a model for doing church called a “*free church*.” This Free church was one that was not tethered to the state.

Ch 20 The Counter-Reformation – setting the stage for Modernism

The apologetic of Scriptural Relativism

The Reformation did not occur without an answer from Roman Catholic apologists. They came up with their responses to Sola Scriptura. It was a frontal attack on the claim that man is able to access the revelation that God gave him.

They constructed an argument that individual interpretation of Scripture was just “private interpretation.” In other words, they were saying to Protestants that their interpretation was “just your perspective.” This idea can be found on many Catholic Web Sites. This is what the Web site Traditional Catholic Teaching had written on this subject.

“A competent religious guide must be clear and intelligible to all, so that everyone may fully understand the true meaning of the instruction it contains. Is the Bible a book intelligible to all? Far from it; it is full of obscurities and difficulties, not only for the illiterate, but even for the learned...

“The Fathers of the Church, though many of them spent their whole lives in the study of the Scriptures, are unanimous in pronouncing the Bible a book full of knotty difficulties. And yet we find in our day pedants, with a mere smattering of Biblical knowledge, who see no obscurity at all in the Word of God, and who presume to expound it from Genesis to Revelation. “Fools rush in where angels fear to tread.

“Does not the conduct of the Reformers (2) conclusively show the utter folly of interpreting the Scriptures by private judgment? As soon as they rejected the oracle of the Church, and set up their own private judgment as the highest standard of authority, they could hardly agree among themselves on the meaning of a single important text.”

–James Cardinal Gibbons, Church and Bible,
ch 20 – “The Folly of Private Interpretation” (1876), para 13–14

<http://traditionalcatholicteaching.com/21lessons-20.html>

Traditional Catholic Teaching flatly denies that the Bible is understandable. They argue that the Bible is obscure even to the learned. While some passages are obscure, to brand the Bible as whole as an obscure work flatly contradicts by the testimony of the Biblical authors and reason.

A number of Scriptures indicate that the Scriptures are meant to be plainly understood. God did not move upon people to write about the things of God to conceal, but to reveal his things. The following passages, which are explained in further detail in chapter 6, in the **section on the legal structure** God ordained for Israel. Contrary to the Romanist exaltation of Popes and the Magisterium, God ordained the conscience as a **check and balance** against institutional apostasy. God gave the conscience supreme authority in belief, subject only to God, to counteract religious corruption. To support this end, God communicated in the Scripture in such a way that **substantial, though not exhaustive**, knowledge of Him can be acquired through plain reading of the text.

“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.”

-Deuteronomy 6:4-9

“For this commandment which I command thee this day, it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it.

-Deuteronomy 30:11-14

“And Moses wrote this law, and delivered it unto the priests the sons of Levi, which bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and unto all the elders of Israel. And Moses commanded them, saying, At the end of every seven years, in the solemnity of the year of release, in the feast of tabernacles, When all Israel is come to appear before the Lord thy God in the place which he shall choose, thou shalt read this law before all Israel in their hearing. Gather the people together, men and women, and children, and thy stranger that is within thy gates, that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear the Lord your God, and observe to do

all the words of this law: And that their children, which have not known any thing, may hear, and learn to fear the Lord your God, as long as ye live in the land whither ye go over Jordan to possess it.

-Deuteronomy 31:9-13

Paul, in 1 Corinthians 13:12, sets forth an illustration that shows both the scope and limits of epistemology (knowledge) for the Christian. He says see "through a glass darkly." This was a reference to ancient mirrors, which were usually polished brass. These mirrors did not have the high reflectivity of modern mirrors. When one looked at his/her image in these ancient mirrors, they were quite effective at projecting a big picture view of the image. Broad features of the face would be recognizable. The image, however, was fuzzy. Precise details were difficult to impossible to recognize. What this means for our knowledge of the Bible and the world is that we can know the big picture and the major ideas framed within that picture, but once one gets into a microscopic view, things become too fuzzy to make out with certainty. God revealed the Bible so that we do not need an enlightened elite to tell us the main story or the major ideas being communicated by the main story. These things are plainly understandable.

Isaiah 29:10-16 [http](#)

The positioning of an ecclesiastical elite as having a monopoly does not resolve the issues involved in hermeneutics. It actually complicates matters as the interpreter is not only facing ambiguities in the text but also the biases and ecclesial politics of their official interpreters. The Old Testament history of God's people was a history of epic failure on the part of ecclesiastical elites (chapters [7](#), [9](#), [12](#)). The history of God's people in the New Testament is also largely a failure of epic failure amongst ecclesiastical elites (chapters [15](#), [16](#), [17](#), [18](#)).

The philosophical problem with the contention of the Catholic church that the text of Scripture is obscure and unfathomable is that the Magisterium also faces these same problems in interpretation. If the language of God's revelation is obscure, then any revelation through the Magisterium would be just as obscure; the problem is actually compounded because there is obscurity not only through ambiguity of the text but also the subjectivity of the human beings. Human agendas inevitably creep in both constructing the official interpretation and in the private interpretation of the official interpretation on the part of people who have pledged allegiance to the official interpretation. Whereas the Biblical ecclesiology provided for a system of checks and balances to counter this influence, using both the conscience, the community, and apostolic encounter with the living God through Christ ([ch 14 - authentication](#)); Roman Catholicism has no checks and balances against institutional corruption.

Loss of Faith in the Magisterium paved the way for Modernism

Not only is the Roman Catholic epistemology not give an adequate answer, but the history of the Roman church – and to a lesser extent the eastern Orthodox churches – gives many people good reason to doubt the trustworthiness of these religious elites. As Roman Catholic epistemology shifted faith away from objective truth as revealed in Scripture and shifted it towards human leaders, all that stood in the way of relativism was faith in these elites. As the next chapter reveals, people soon lost faith in the Magisterium and descended into relativism.

Ch 21: The Rise of Modern Evangelicalism

While the Reformation made positive contributions towards Christian liberty, it was not very consistent with its principles. The Reformation was marked by an extremely inconsistent application of freedom of conscience. The same Martin Luther who eloquently defended liberty of conscience was also brutally at crushing dissent when it was launched against him. It would take several centuries for a more coherent philosophy of liberty of conscience to be restored to the church.

During the Reformation, the Anabaptists emerged as an exception to this trend. Anabaptist promoted a model for doing church called a “*free church*.” This Free church was one that was not tethered to the state.

Antecedents to Evangelicalism

There are three major antecedent threads in the history of the 16–17 centuries that are woven together to form Evangelicalism: Pietism, Christian intellectual engagement with ancient Greek scholarship, and disgust with Christendom due to ceaseless religious warfare. All three of these developments are a mixed bag, as they influence not only the development of Evangelicalism but of the anti-religious narrative that would later emerge.

Pietism Anabaptism would soon morph against the legalism of the Reformed paradigm. Both Luther and Calvin had backgrounds in law, and their theologies reflect this emphasis. The Magisterial reformation was

more concerned about maintaining the proper legal structure for all of society. Having a robust spiritual life as one's personal or subjective experience was secondary. People would arise who would advocate a renewed emphasis on individual spiritual life as a correction to this imbalance. One such person, Phillip Jakob Spener, would become a major influence in this direction

Spener wrote *Pia Desideria* (1675). He diagnoses the problems in the church and culture, then proposes six reforms (pages 87– 122)

1. More extensive use of the Scriptures. The pulpit ministry was not sufficient to expound on the Word in its fullness, and the full benefit of the word was to be found in revelation of "all Scripture." To this end, diligent Bible study amongst all disciples was encouraged.
2. Exercise the Priesthood of all believers. Diligent Bible study among all disciples implies a priesthood of all believers. The ministry suffered because God intended for all every member of the church to be involved in the work.
3. Emphasis on Christian practice.
4. A new, irenic approach to religious controversies.
5. Reform of Schools and universities
6. Preaching for edification

The result of these emphases is that there is a renewed focus on the inward spiritual life – specifically the idea that the individual has access to God without needing a religious hierarchy to mediate for him. While the Reformation affirmed this theoretically, this represented an attempt

to put this into practice in a systematic and coherent manner. This movement was called pietism.

This ended up being a mixed bag, as many in the pietistic movement became radical in their subjectivism, denying the role of Scripture and even objective truth*. The renewed emphasis on individual spiritual life would be woven into another movement which would have a stronger bond to the Scriptures – Evangelicalism.

Christians lead the intellectual engagement of the era. Christians began engagement of not only religion, but also scholarly pursuits. A full treatment of this subject is beyond the scope of this book, but two Christian intellectuals in particular have had a critical effect on the intellectual climate: Rene Descartes and Isaac Newton. These two men take opposing approaches to knowledge. Descartes was a rationalist that relied on deductive reasoning to draw out certain judgments about reality; Newton, however, was critical of that approach. Newton believed that a more empirical approach that relied on observation was necessary to gain knowledge. However, both of these men believed that it was impossible to have knowledge of the world with knowledge of God as foundational.

René Descartes is often considered the father of modern philosophy. Descartes founded rationalism as a response to Emiricus' skepticism*. In his Five Meditations, he lays out his philosophical system. Descartes says that knowledge of God is the necessary foundation of all other knowledge.

" 14...Thus, for example, when I consider the nature of the [rectilinear] triangle, it most clearly appears to me, who have been instructed in the principles of geometry, that its three angles are equal to two right

angles, and I find it impossible to believe otherwise, while I apply my mind to the demonstration; but as soon as I cease from attending to the process of proof, although I still remember that I had a clear comprehension of it, yet I may readily come to doubt of the truth demonstrated, if I do not know that there is a God: for I may persuade myself that I have been so constituted by nature as to be sometimes deceived, even in matters which I think I apprehend with the greatest evidence and certitude, especially when I recollect that I frequently considered many things to be true and certain which other reasons afterward constrained me to reckon as wholly false.

“15. But after I have discovered that God exists, seeing I also at the same time observed that all things depend on him, and that he is no deceiver, and thence inferred that all which I clearly and distinctly perceive is of necessity true: although I no longer attend to the grounds of a judgment, no opposite reason can be alleged sufficient to lead me to doubt of its truth, provided only I remember that I once possessed a clear and distinct comprehension of it. My knowledge of it thus becomes true and certain...

“... 16. And thus I very clearly see that the certitude and truth of all science depends on the knowledge alone of the true God, insomuch that, before I knew him, I could have no perfect knowledge of any other thing. And now that I know him, I possess the means of acquiring a perfect knowledge respecting innumerable matters, as well relative to God himself and other intellectual objects as to corporeal nature, in so far as it is the object of pure mathematics “

https://acc.thoughtexperience.com/files/phil1301/readings/med_5.htm

Isaac Newton is considered the father of modern science. Newton's achievements led the way to the development of modern science. While

Isaac Newton was critical of Descartes rationalism, preferring a more empirical or observation-based method, he came to the same conclusion concerning the necessity of knowledge of God.

“ This Being governs all things, not as the soul of the world, but as Lord over all: And on account of his dominion he is wont to be called Lord God παντοκράτωρ, or Universal Ruler...

... We have ideas of his attributes, but what the real substance of anything is, we know not. In bodies we see only their figures and colours, we hear only the sounds, we touch only their outward surfaces, we smell only the smells, and taste the savours; but their inward substances are not to be known, either by our senses, or by any reflex act of our minds; much less then have we any idea of the substance of God. We know him only by his most wise and excellent contrivances of things, and final causes; ...

... Blind metaphysical necessity, which is certainly the same always and everywhere, could produce no variety of things. All that diversity of natural things which we find, suited to different times and places, could arise from nothing but the ideas and will of a Being necessarily existing. But by way of allegory, God is said to see, to speak, to laugh, to love, to hate, to desire, to give, to receive, to rejoice, to be angry, to fight, to frame, to work, to build. For all our notions of God are taken from the ways of mankind, by a certain similitude which, though not perfect, has some likeness, however. And thus much concerning God; to discourse of whom from the appearances of things, does certainly belong to Natural Philosophy. “

Principia Mathematica, General Scholium, pages 504–506

<http://newtonprojectca.files.wordpress.com/2013/06/newton-general-scholium-1729-english-text-by-motte-letter-size.pdf>

Both Descartes and Newton proclaimed that God created man with categories roughly similar to categories that exist in the external world. God created us in such a way that our critical observational and reasoning processes will yield an understanding of reality that closely approximates reality. Descartes and Newton built modern philosophy and modern science within the framework of a Christian world-view.

Descartes and Newton were not the only ones who believed that God created humanity with the categories that are compatible with the mind of God and with the physical world. Perhaps the clearest statement of this idea can be found in the writings of Johannes Kepler

“To God there are, in the whole material world, material laws, figures and relations of special excellency and of the most appropriate order. ...Let us not try to discover more of the heavenly and immaterial world than God has revealed to us. Those laws are within the grasp of the human mind. God wanted us to recognise them by creating us after his own image so that we could share in his own thoughts...”

– Kepler, Letter to Johannes George Hewart von Hohenburg, “April 9–10 1599, cited in *Johannes Kepler: Life and Letters* By Carola Baumgardt, 1951, page 50

also Kepler’s *Philosophy and the New Astronomy* By Rhonda Martens, page 79, 2000, princeton University Press.

<http://www.saintsandseptics.org/six-ways-christianity-supported-the-growth-of-science/>

Christians were not only engaging the physical sciences, but making contributions to political philosophy. It was specifically Christian intellectuals that produced the ideas that are foundation to modern political freedom: John Milton, Richard Hooker, Hugo Grotius, James Harrington, and John Locke.

Milton. All Milton quotes are taken from Areopagiticus.

Milton made the following argument for freedom of speech by analogy to the image of God. Milton reasoned that if the image of God in man included rationality, then attacking words was an attack on reason itself. *And yet, on the other hand, unless wariness be used, as good almost kill a man as kill a good book: who kills a man kills a reasonable creature, God's image; but he who destroys a good book, kills reason itself, kills the image of God, as it were, in the eye. Many a man lives a burden to the earth; but a good book is the precious life-blood of a master-spirit, embalmed and treasured up on purpose to a life beyond life...*

... We should be wary, therefore, what persecution we raise against the living labours of public men, how we spill that seasoned life of man preserved and stored up in books; since we see a kind of homicide may be thus committed, sometimes a martyrdom; and if it extend to the whole impression, a kind of massacre, whereof the execution ends not in the slaying of an elemental life, but strikes at that ethereal and fifth essence, the breath of reason itself; slays an immortality rather than a life. Page 33

Milton here appeals to Scripture from Thessalonians, where they are instructed to use discernment; Milton here compared knowledge to food, reasoning that if God declared foods clean, then it is the same for knowledge. Milton concludes that God gave man reason so he could nature into a free being who could make decisions for himself

...The worthy man, loath to give offence, fell into a new debate with himself, what was to be thought; when suddenly a vision sent²⁰ from God (it is his own Epistle that so avers it) confirmed him in these words: "Read any books whatever come to thy hands, for thou art sufficient both to judge aright, and to examine each matter." To this revelation he assented the sooner, as he confesses, because it was answerable to that of the apostle to the Thessalonians: "Prove all things, hold fast that which is good." And he might have added another remarkable saying of the same author: "To the pure, all things are pure"; not only meats and drinks, but all kind of³⁰ knowledge, whether of good or evil: the knowledge cannot defile, nor consequently the books, if the will and conscience be not defiled. For books are as meats and viands are; some of good, some of evil substance; and yet God in that unapocryphal vision said without exception, "Rise, Peter, kill and eat"; leaving the choice to each man's discretion...

...I conceive, therefore, that when God did enlarge the universal diet of man's body, saving ever the rules of temperance, he then also, as before, left arbitrary the dieting and repasting of our minds; as wherein every mature man might have to exercise his own leading capacity. How great a virtue is temperance,³⁰ how much of moment through the whole life of man! Yet God commits the managing so great a trust, without particular law or prescription, wholly to the demeanour of every grown man. And therefore when he himself tabled the Jews from heaven, that omer, which was every man's daily portion of manna, is computed to have been more than might have well sufficed the heartiest feeder thrice as many meals. For those actions which enter into a man, rather than issue out of him, and therefore defile not, God uses not to captivate under a perpetual childhood of prescription, but trusts him with the gift of reason to be his own chooser;

Hooker argues here that freedom is the natural state of man, and this is in the likeness of God. Hooker sees this like to be found in knowledge and reason. Because we are created in the image of God, we can discern conceptually the consequences of our actions and apply reason to choose the good over the evil.

[2.]Man in perfection of nature being made according to the likeness of his Maker resembleth him also in the manner of working: so that whatsoever we work as men, the same we do wittingly work and freely; neither are we according to the manner of natural agents any way so tied, but that it is in our power to leave the things we do undone. The good which either is gotten by doing, or which consisteth in the very doing itself, causeth not action, unless apprehending it as good we so like and desire it: that we do unto any such end, the same we choose and prefer before the leaving of it undone. Choice there is not, unless the thing which we take be so in our power that we might have refused and left it. If fire consume the stubble, it chooseth not so to do, because the nature thereof is such that it can do no other. To choose is to will one thing before another. And to will is to bend our souls to the having or doing of that which they see to be good. Goodness is seen with the eye of the understanding. And the light of that eye, is reason. So that two principal fountains there are of human action, Knowledge and Will; which Will, in things tending towards any end, is termed Choice⁴ . Concerning Knowledge, “Behold, (saith Moses⁵ ,) I have set before you this day good and evil, life and death.” Concerning Will, he addeth

immediately, "Choose life;" that is to say, the things that tend unto life, them choose. BOOK I. Ch. vii. 3.

Hooker here makes a distinction between will and appetite, with Will being governed by reason

[3.]But of one thing we must have special care, as being a matter of no small moment; and that is, how the Will, properly and strictly taken, as it is of things which are referred unto the end that man desireth, differeth greatly from that inferior natural desire which we call Appetite. The object of Appetite is whatsoever sensible good may be wished for; the object of Will is that good which Reason doth lead us to seek. Affections, as joy, and grief, and fear, and anger, with such like, being as it were the sundry fashions and forms of Appetite, can neither rise at the conceit of a thing indifferent, nor yet choose but rise at the sight of some things. Wherefore it is not altogether in our power, whether we will be stirred with affections or no: whereas actions which issue from the disposition of the Will are in the power thereof to be performed or stayed. Finally, Appetite is the Will's solicitor, and the Will is Appetite's controller; what we covet according to the one by the other we often reject; neither is any other desire termed properly Will, but that where Reason and Understanding, or the show of Reason, prescribeth the thing desired.

He argues here that the use of reason makes acts voluntary, which is distinct from living on instinct.

It may be therefore a question, whether those operations of men are to be counted voluntary, wherein that good which is sensible provoketh Appetite, and Appetite causeth action, Reason being never called to counsel; as when we eat or drink, and betake ourselves unto rest, and such like. The truth is, that such actions in men having attained to the use of Reason are voluntary. For as the authority of higher powers hath

force even in those things, which are done without their privity, and are of so mean reckoning that to acquaint them therewith it needeth not; in like sort, voluntarily we are said to do that also, which the Will if it listed might hinder from being done, although about the doing thereof we do not expressly use our reason or understanding, and so immediately apply our wills thereunto. In cases therefore of such facility, the Will doth yield her assent as it were with a kind of silence, by not dissenting; in which respect her force is not so apparent as in express mandates or prohibitions, especially upon advice and consultation going before,

BOOK I. Ch. vii. 4–6.[4.] Where understanding therefore needeth, in those things Reason is the director of man's Will by discovering in action what is good. For the Laws of well-doing are the dictates of right Reason. Children, which are not as yet come unto those years whereat they may have; again, innocents, which are excluded by natural defect from ever having; thirdly, madmen, which for the present cannot possibly have the use of right Reason to guide themselves, have for their guide the Reason that guideth other men, which are tutors over them to seek and to procure their good for them. In the rest there is that light of Reason, whereby good may be known from evil, and which discovering the same rightly is termed right.

<http://oll.libertyfund.org/index.php?>

[option=com_staticxt&staticfile=show.php](http://oll.libertyfund.org/index.php?option=com_staticxt&staticfile=show.php)

[%3Ftitle=921&layout=html#c_lf0172-01_footnote_nt_616](http://oll.libertyfund.org/index.php?option=com_staticxt&staticfile=show.php%3Ftitle=921&layout=html#c_lf0172-01_footnote_nt_616)

James Harrington gives an argument similar to Milton, arguing that reason is the image of God in man, and that anything which attack such reason, such as laws that pre-empt the use of reason to make free choices, is a type of murder

“If our religion be any thing else but a vain boast, scratching and defacing human nature or reason, which, being the image of God, makes it a kind of murder; here is that empire whence justice shall run down like a river, and judgment like a mighty stream.

http://files.libertyfund.org/files/2565/Harrington_Oceana1656.pdf page 18

This intellectual engagement of Christians ended up becoming a mixed bag. While Christian started the modern scientific and philosophical enterprises, in the three centuries since both science and philosophy have wandered far from the plantation. Many modern people have been led to believe that intellectual enterprise is the opposite of religious faith, but the Christian faith has engaged intellectual pursuits since the very beginning. Jesus and Paul were both philosophers, and many early Christian leaders such as Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Hyppolytus, Origen, and Augustine were first-rate apologists. Ancient Christian apologetics concerned with the totality of knowledge; the middle ages became focused on theology, but began to shift back towards a total, holistic focus towards modern times. This refocusing of Christians towards intellectual pursuits would be woven into the Evangelical movement that would emerge in the seventeenth century.

Disgust with Christendom due to ceaseless religious warfare.

Between 1500–1700, Europe was embroiled in bloody religious conflict. By some estimates, as much as *“half of the population of the continent was killed, starved, or sent into exile during the war.”*

A Global History of Christians: How Everyday Believers Experienced Their World, By Paul Spickard, Kevin M. Cragg, page 345, 1994, Baker books

This resulted in growing disillusionment with the state of religion. There were two responses to this sad state. The first, which will be covered in

this chapter, is the renewed emphasis away from statist and organizational forms towards Evangelical religion where religion lives within the heart and appeals to hearts and minds. The other response is towards increasingly secularization.

“As a result, many of the educated elites of Europe became disillusioned with revealed religion and dogmatic theology. They concluded that the religious conflicts of the Reformation gave rise to this chaos and destruction. Enlightenment thinkers believed that if society was to avoid such wars in the future and recover unity, it must base its common life and public institutions on purely non-sectarian, rational philosophies.”

–A Global History of Christians: How Everyday Believers Experienced Their World, By Paul Spickard, Kevin M. Cragg, page 345, 1994, Baker books

The Beginning of Evangelicalism

Spener’s pietistic emphasis influenced many people of different religious backgrounds. Amongst these was Count Nicholas Ludwig von Zinzendorf*. Around 1727, Zinzendorf invited Hussites (and anyone else) who was fleeing religious persecution to settle on his estate in Saxony. Zinzendorf longed for revival of dynamic spiritual life of hearts and minds of the people in the community. In August 1727, he led a prayer meeting. On August 5, he began to pray. Starting at midnight on August 6 through August 12, he was joined by other members of his community of those who fled persecution. August 13, 1727, the Holy Spirit came in a mighty way in what has been called the hundred year prayer meeting. Revival spread throughout Europe. Zinzendorf, whether consciously or not, had conducted a sacred assembly according to the Biblical pattern. A sacred assembly that is conducted according to the Biblical pattern, which is defined in Leviticus 23, involves 7 days of

prayer and seeking God; on the eighth day God manifests himself supernaturally.

http://www.path2prayer.com/site/1/docs/Greenfield_Power_From_on_High_complete.pdf John Greenfield, Power from on high, page 11, para 4–6

Zinzendorf influenced John Wesley and George Whitefield

Wesley encountered the Moravian brethren on a ship sailing to America from England. There was a fierce storm – so fierce that Wesley feared for his life. The Moravian Brethren, however, were not afraid – not even the women and children. During this storm while *“The English passengers screamed with terror. The Brethren calmly sang a hymn.”* Wesley was amazed at the confidence these Christians had in Christ. Wesley had a conversation from one of the “Brothers” afterward.

“Was not you afraid?” said Wesley.

“I thank God, no,” replied the Brother.

“But were not your women and children afraid?”

“No; our women and children are not afraid to die.””

–History unveiling prophecy; or, Time as an interpreter
By Henry Grattan Guinness, revell 1905, *page 187*

This events created a crisis of faith for Wesley which prompted a search that ended with an experience of God at Aldersgate where Wesley’s heart “became strangely warmed.” Wesley wanted to know the secret behind the confidence of the Moravian Brethren. He sought out the counsel of one of their reknowned ministers, Spangler. This was the beginning of a friendship with the Moravian Brethren, whose influence prepared him for his encounter with God at Aldersgate. Through the influence of the Moravian Brethren, revival spread to John Wesley, who introduced George Whitefield to them*. Revival spread throughout Britain and North

America – and Evangelicalism was birthed as the mightiest move of God since the ancient Pentecostal revival since the first century

Waves of Evangelical revival

1. **First Great Awakening:** Primitive Evangelicalism or Ancient Pentecostalism that began in Acts 2 and endured through the Apostolic Age.
2. **Second Great Awakening:** (Zinzendorf, Wesley, Whitefield with Edwards). Usually called the First Great Awakening.
3. **Third Great Awakening:** (Cane Ridge Finney). usually called the Second Great Awakening.
4. **Fourth Great Awakening:** (Moody, social gospel, global missionary movement). Usually called the Third Great Awakening.
5. **Fifth Great Awakening:** (Welsh–Azusa Pentecostalism, anti-modernism).
6. **Sixth Great Awakening:** (charismatic movement, renewed interest in restoration of Davidic worship, renewed interest in apologetics). Sometimes called the Fourth Great Awakening.
7. **Final Great Awakening:** Full Restoration of Davidic worship. Renewed awareness of citizenship in Israel. Total spiritual warfare using both God's power ("spiritual warfare") and God's wisdom (apologetics). Imprecatory prayer to bring in God's judgments to reclaim the earth using spiritual, not physical, weapons.

The four basic Evangelical Distinctives.

There are four basic Evangelical Distinctives. These themes form the core definition of Evangelicalism. They are Individual access to the word of God through the Scriptures, the necessity of having a personal encounter with God – becoming born again, the Restoration of the paradigm of New Testament Church, and the necessity of personal evangelism.

[http: unfinisheddd](http://unfinisheddd)

Individual access to the Word of God through the Scriptures is the intellectual bedrock of Evangelicalism. This theme has four main ideas: Verbal plenary inspiration of Scripture, inerrancy and infallibility, Perspicuity or accessibility of the text to sound interpretation, and providential preservation of Scripture.

1. Verbal plenary inspiration of Scripture means simply that God's supervision and intervention of the creation of Scripture extends to every word. The Bible is literally "***God-breathed.***" It came from the Mind of God through human agents who "***wrote as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit*** ()." The Bible is not viewed as man's interpretations of God's word or as a human document that merely contained God's word or as a human document that is declared God's word through some Magisterium or other ecclesiastical body.
2. Providential preservation of Scripture is God's work in preserving the message that was inspired. Because of the inherent vagueness of human language and thought forms, it is not necessary to preserve miraculously every jot and tittle but only a substantial preservation of the message.
3. Inerrancy and infallibility mean that the Scriptures cannot err. While human interpretation might err, the text – and particularly the original autographs – cannot err.
4. Perspicuity or accessibility of the text to sound interpretation

The necessity of having a personal encounter with God – becoming born again – is the

The Restoration of the paradigm of New Testament Church is

Personal Evangelism of the individual is

Ch 22 A City on a Hill – a Community of Freedom

the nations that bring forth the fruits of God's vineyard

The City on a Hill as a community of Freedom

In the last chapter, I wrote that man's condition as a creature created in the image of God resulted in freedom being his natural condition. God created man to be free. He also created man to be in community. In Genesis we find it written of the creation of man: He created them male and female. God embedded a copy of his image in all of us as our primary master status. A secondary master status, secondary to our condition in the image of God but still a critical component of our being, is our gender. The masculine and feminine genders were created to be complimentary to each other and to have intercourse in community.

The community that started with the union of man and woman grew to include children born to that union. These children, while not born with the full capacity of those bearing the image of God, they have a copy of that image embedded that allows them to develop the attributes necessary to freedom: free will, natural reason, and growing knowledge of differing alternatives and their consequences. Each member of this community is a copy of the image of God (Genesis 9:6), and yet the community is also a collective copy of the image of God (Genesis 1:26–27). God intended for a free community composed of free citizens.

If freedom is an attribute of the individual copy of God's image, then it is also an attribute of the collective copy of the image of God. Before the fall of man through Adam's rebellion, there was no government, neither

was there need for government. Everyone lived in harmony as free people as there was no risk of liberty leading to chaos. God's design for the earth and man was perfect. Genesis says in multiple places of God's creation that it was good. Freedom was embedded into human nature and functioned in a way that was compatible with the rest of creation.

Why did God create us with freedom. Throughout the Biblical narrative, we see that God personally interacted with humanity. He justified Abraham by faith, covenanted with the entire Israelite community under Moses, and gives His Holy Spirit to those who have faith in Christ. God wants a love relationship with His people. Jesus speaks of this in several places.

“At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you. He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. ”

–John 14:20–21

“These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do...

“...Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I

have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me. Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world. ”

- John 17:1-4,20-24

God wanted to create creatures for the purpose of a love relationship. Eternal life is defined as knowing God and Jesus Christ. God created us in such a way that we could freely enter in. We all have been given a choice of whether to trust in Christ or not (John 3:14-21), a choice that impacts one's status before God and, ultimately, one's eternal destiny.

God created us with freedom so that we could use our freedom to love God and our fellow human beings. We are instructed to use our liberty as servants of God and not as a cover for evil (1 Peter 2:16). Christ Jesus regards loving God “with all your heart” and loving your “neighbor as yourself” as the two greatest commands and the basis for all of the law and the prophets . Man, in the beginning, did those things by nature.

Freedom was designed to work well only in an atmosphere of mutual love. Adam's rebellion introduced a selfishness into human nature which destroyed that balance. People then started to use their freedom to rob, rape, maim, and murder. From the time of Adam until the Great Flood, man lived in the state of nature. According to Genesis 6:11-13, “*the earth was filled with violence.*” These “*inconveniencies of the state of nature*”, as Locke called them, could not be ignored(). God did five things to restrain evil.

- 1.Rebooted the human race, using the most righteous person on earth as the founding. Noah was arguably the ONLY righteous person on the entire planet. This jettisoned the bulk of the evil and allowed a new start.
- 2.God shortened human life span. Shorter life means less time to become increasingly depraved. Imagine what it would have been like if Hitler lived a thousand years. The average sinner would have been become more corrupt than Hitler with such a long life in the corrupt nature. This was how the earth became filled with violence after only 1656 years.
- 3.God embedded in man the impulse to establish government. It is written in Genesis 9:5–6 that “***And surely your blood of your lives will I require; at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man; at the hand of every man’s brother will I require the life of man. Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man.***” God commands all of humanity to kill murderers and hardwired this command into human nature.

This prime directive to kill murderers which was given to the whole human race is correctly called the dispensation of government. God, however, did not give any positive law concerning the form of government, nor did he crown Noah king. God gave the right of governance to the whole human race, but left it up to man to figure out what form of government he would live under. Locke is right when he argued that governments exist by consent of the governed. Even the most ruthless dictatorships will collapse without a critical mass of support from society(*). The collapse of communism in Eastern Europe is

one example. Throughout history, governments have fallen and kings deposed because they lost the critical mass of support from the people.

There is evidence in the gospels of how governments exist by at least tacit consent of the governed. When the Jewish leaders tried to entrap Jesus by asking whether Jews should pay taxes to Caesar (Matthew 22:17–21), they thought they were putting Jesus into a dilemma. If He said no, he could be accused of inciting rebellion against Rome. If he said yes, then He could be accused of being an enemy of Jewish liberty. Jesus asks a question that blows their dilemma: “**Show Me the tribute money. And they brought a denarius to Him. And He said to them, Whose image and inscription is this? They said to Him, Caesar’s** (Matthew 22:19–21).” They were using Caesar’s money. They were also using Caesar’s roads, his utilities, and within a week after this encounter, they would use Caesar’s police power to crucify Christ and proclaim “**we have no king but Caesar.**” All of these imply that they recognized Caesar’s right to rule and gave tacit consent to his government. Jesus reasoned that, since they had already recognized Caesar’s authority and given him rights, that they should “**Therefore render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things which are God’s** (Matthew 22:21).” Jesus Himself taught what was later called the Social Contract Theory.

1. It didn’t take long for humanity to pervert the impulse God placed to want government. People have an impulse for more government whenever faced with a problem. Recent research shows that this follows even when government is the problem. This would soon degenerate into statolatry or worship of the government. Soon, the human race conspired at Babel to create a state religious system where a global government would be worshiped as god on earth (Mystery Babylon Rising). God divided the earth into languages so

that there would be separate nations. The existence of separate nations would serve as a check and balance on the excesses of any one nations. Even super-powers live at risk of decline when they become corrupted.

2.The first four only treat symptoms of the problem caused by Adam's rebellion. They do not transform the heart from selfishness and self-centeredness into God-centered goodness that naturally cares about one's fellow-humans. God sent Christ to restore human freedom.

The Christian Basis of Liberty

There are three pillars to the Christian foundation for liberty: Christ's sacrifice delivered us from the bondage of sin, The Holy Spirit internalizes God's law in the heart and minds of the redeemed. This redemption produces social norms based on Christian principles that protect freedom in a society that has a preponderance of Christians - including a Christian apologetic of liberty.

Christ's sacrifice delivered us from the bondage of sin. The ultimate bondage is self-centeredness. When Adam rebelled, human nature was trapped in this self-centeredness. This self-centeredness stood contrary to God's original harmony of ordered liberty. This self-centeredness worked against the rights of others. Tyranny began with people robbing, raping, maiming, and murdering others to fulfill selfish wants. The establishment of government and empires simply broadened the scale of the atrocities. Instead of a lone criminal killing a dozen people; dictators

like Nero, Torquemada, Hitler, and Stalin murdered millions. While non-Christian solution can affirm the existence of rights and treat symptoms, it is only Christ's blood that can deal with the root problem that causes tyranny.

The Holy Spirit internalizes God's law in the heart and minds of the redeemed. When we come to Christ, we are given the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38; Romans 8:9-11). The Holy Spirit makes available to us Christ's ability to live a righteous and just life. The Holy Spirit also works to change our character from within. He internalizes God's laws in our hearts and mind.

Because the Holy Spirit internalizes the laws of God in the hearts and minds of true believers, **this redemption produces social norms based on Christian principles that protect freedom in a society that has a preponderance of Christians.** Preponderance need not be a numerical majority but majority in terms of influence*. When God's laws become social norms, then the social implications of the gospel can become manifested.

The Christian apologetic of liberty.

There are four major arguments that buttress the Christian foundation of liberty: liberty is an attribute of man's status as creature made in the image of God, God created man in a free state, The liberty wherein Christ has made us free extends to political liberty, and that the sovereignty of God implies limited human authority.

Liberty is an attribute of man's status as creature made in the image of God. God created man in a free state. Galatians 5 instructs us that the liberty wherein Christ has made us free extends to political liberty. John Milton used this argument heavily

That the sovereignty of God implies limited human authority. This is based on Sola Deo Gloria doctrine. If to God alone be the glory, then there are spheres on both scope and magnitude that mere human authority cannot touch

Ch 23 The Challenge of Modernism

At about the same time that the Roman Catholic Church was casting skepticism in the ability of people to properly interpret what they observe, there occurred a resurrection of ancient skepticism that would both spill into Romanist polemics and eventually undermine the Romanist claims.

In 1562, French scholar Henri Estienne, also known as Heinrich Stephanus, published a Latin translation of Sextus Empiricus' work *The Outlines of Scepticism*. This work introduced Empiricus' skeptical arguments into modern audiences. Empiricus made ten different arguments designed to show that we can only observe things as they appear to us, not as they are in their nature.

One type of argument of argument that Empiricus made bears great similarity to the Romanist dismissal of Bible interpretation as "private interpretation." Compare the following paragraph, written by Empiricus:

"Since, then, choice and avoidance are in pleasure and displeasure, and pleasure and displeasure lie in sense and phastasia, when the same things are chosen by some people and avoided by others it is logical for us to infer that these people are not affected alike by the same things, since if they were they would alike have chosen and avoided the same things. Bu if the same things produce different affects depending on the difference of human beings, this too would reasonably lead to suspension of judgment and we would, perhaps, be able to say what each of the objects appears to be, relative to each difference, but we would not be able to state what is in its nature."

*– Sextus Empiricus,
page 100, paragraph 87, Outlines of Pyrrhonism*

Below is a quote by Michel de Montaigne that uses much the same language as Empiricus. Montaigne wrote a series of essays that promoted the arguments of Scepticism. during the 1570's he read Sextus Empiricus heavily*. Montaigne, who is reckoned by some as a "*founding father of the Counter Reformation,*" creates an early form of the Romanist polemic against the perspicuity or plainness of the Scriptures.

" I have observed in Germany, that Luther has left as many divisions and disputes about the doubt of his opinions, and more than he himself raised upon the Holy Scriptures. Our contest is verbal: I ask what nature is, what pleasure, circle and substitution are? the question is about words, and is answered accordingly. A stone is a body; but if a man should further urge: "And what is a body?"- "Substance." "And what is substance?" and so on, he would drive the respondent to the end of his Calepin. We exchange one word for another, and often for one less understood. I better know what Man is, than I know what Animal is, or Mortal, or Rational. To satisfy one doubt, they pop me in the ear with three; 'tis the Hydra's head. Socrates asked Menon, "What virtue was." "There is," says Menon, "the virtue of a man and of a woman, of a magistrate and of a private person, of an old man and of a child." "Very fine," cried Socrates, "we were in quest of one virtue, and thou hast brought us a whole swarm." We put one question, and they return us a whole hive. As no event, no face, entirely resembles another, so do they not entirely differ: an ingenious mixture of nature. If our faces were not alike, we could not distinguish man from beast; if they were not unlike, we could not distinguish one man from another; all things hold by some similitude; every example halts and the relation which is drawn from experience is always faulty and imperfect. Comparisons are ever coupled

at one end or the other; so do the laws serve, and are fitted to every one of our affairs, by some wrested, biased, and forced interpretation.”

<http://oregonstate.edu/instruct/phl302/texts/montaigne/montaigne-essays-8.html#XXI>.

This is a clear rejection of the idea that the Scripture can be understood in its actual meaning. Empiricus argued that it is not possible to know the true nature of a sensory impression, only what it means to the subjective observer. If Empiricus is correct, then it would be impossible for one to read Scripture and acquire a “thus saith the Lord,” but can only come up with a “private interpretation” or “private judgment.”

The Roman Catholic church harnessed these arguments, tethering them to one qualification. They regarded the Magisterium, or teaching authority of the Catholic Church, as exempt from the epistemological limitations of individuals. The Romanist Church, however, provides no rational basis to support this claim. If the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the early centuries is insufficient to substantially preserve God’s word in a form that is substantially understandable, then the Magisterium is lost in the same subjectivity that locks everyone else out of the truth. These philosophical problems with the Church’s position, coupled with the dissonance between the church’s talking points and actual history and practice, resulted in people losing faith in ecclesiastical authority generally and specifically the Magisterium.

The Skepticism of Empiricus. however, is philosophically problematic. The difficulty is that total skepticism is self-refuting; the assertion that sensory impressions cannot communicate any knowledge about reality is itself an inference from sensory impressions about reality; the assertions that one cannot judge is itself a judgment; and the decision not to have any beliefs is itself a belief.

In later years, Montaigne held to a more moderate skepticism based on Cicero's probabilism*. Cicero, like Empiricus, did not believe one could gain infallible knowledge. However, Cicero believed in making probability judgments about the real world (<http://www.iep.utm.edu/cicero-a/#H4>). The skeptical argument "the premise that it is impossible to think or speak about reality "as it really is"—as it is independently of our modes of thought—because thinking and speaking requires us to use our concepts and words. " often leads to relativism that asserts that truth is relative to our modes of thought (<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/relativism/#1.7>).

Cicero's moderation of Empiricus' skepticism also has no rational basis. Without some absolute knowledge, there is no logical demarcation between a mystical leap of faith and a scientific judgment. Without some absolute knowledge, it is impossible to know for certain that the confidence level is 99%, or to know for certain that you are 95% confident in the 99% confidence. Without some absolute knowledge, one cannot be absolutely certain of a 98%, 97%, 96%, etc. logically speaking, doubt eats up certainty. While it is more practical to take a moderate approach to skepticism, there is no logical difference between the moderate and the extreme skepticism.; the moderate skepticism is only an inconsistent form of the extreme skepticism. Moderate skepticism is inconsistent and extreme skepticism is self-refuting.

Relativism is itself self-refuting. If all truth is relative to perspectives and situations, then either the principle of relativism is itself relative to certain situations and perspectives – implying that absolute truth exists outside of the relative context, or relativism is itself an absolute. Relativism is therefore self-refuting.

Naturalism and Higher Criticism as fruits of relativism

If truth is relative to our modes of thought, then human knowledge exist on a very slippery slope. Modes of thought are themselves changing and relative to historical processes. This relativism produced three related modes of thought that have challenged the church: an evolutionary theory of history, an evolutionary theory of science, and a theory of literary of literary criticism that denies Biblical authority.

An evolutionary theory of history emerged even before the modern theory of evolution was brought forth. In this theory, supernatural explanations for the Bible are rejected. The Bible is seen as **MERELY** a product of historical, evolutionary processes that can discerned using naturalistic methods of inquiry. One result of this approach is that the Bible's truth claims and authority were relativized to the evolutionary flow of history. **An evolutionary theory of science** was produced that argued that all living organisms emerged from naturalistic evolutionary processes. Humanity and civilization are seen as the product of evolutionary process consisting solely of natural forces. These theories leave no room for supernatural intervention, no room for miracles, no room for supernatural, propositional revelation

The meta-narrative of evolutionary naturalism has lead to the idea that science provides the answer to all of life's question. philosophical, theological, and Biblical authority are replaced by the authority of the scientific elite. In this view, the Bible is seen as a natural product of evolution. This is the view that underlies the historical method and specifically **theories of literary criticism** that seek to deconstruct the Bible into its evolutionary antecedents.

This is not merely Torrey's take on higher Criticism. Feuerbach, who laid the philosophical foundation of Higher Criticism, saw history as an

evolutionary process Feuerbach saw God as a principle in nature that creates change by acting through nature.

“Feuerbach argues that nature contains within itself the principle of its own development. It exercises “unlimited creative power” by ceaselessly dividing and distinguishing its individual parts from one another. But the immeasurable multiplicity of systems within systems that results from this activity constitutes a single organic totality. “Nature is ground and principle of itself, or—what is the same thing, it exists out of necessity, out of the soul, the essence of God, in which he is one with nature” (GTU, 291/86). God, on this view, is not a skilled mechanic who acts upon the world, but a prolific artist who lives in and through it.”

Feuerbach denies the transcendence of God, arguing God cannot exist and move apart from nature

” A biological species is both identical with and distinct from the individual organisms that make it up. The species has no existence apart from these individual organisms, and yet the perpetuation of the species involves the perpetual generation and destruction of the particular individuals of which it is composed. Similarly, Spirit has no existence apart from the existence of individual self-conscious persons in whom Spirit becomes conscious of itself (i.e. constitutes itself as Spirit). Just as the life of a biological species only appears in the generation and destruction of individual organisms, so the life of Spirit involves the generation and destruction of these individual persons.”

Feuerbach argued that the life of God, or action of God, is an imminent cause of change and diversity in nature, accounting the “*pouring forth*” of the “*plenitude of finite shapes in nature.*”

” This occurs most clearly where matter comes to be regarded as an attribute of the divine substance, so that God is no longer conceived of as a being distinct from nature but rather as the immutable and eternal

imminent cause from which the plenitude of finite shapes in nature pours forth.

(<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/ludwig-feuerbach/#FeuHis>)”

Later in life Feuerbach drifted more towards Philosophic Materialism and away from his earlier Pantheism

” ‘matter is indeed posited in God, that is, it is posited as God,’ and to posit matter as God is to affirm atheism and materialism’

<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/ludwig-feuerbach/#New>

Feuerbach did not believe that religion could communicate any knowledge of a transcendent, Infinite–Personal God. On the basis of this and his evolutionary concept of God, Feuerbach saw religion as an evolutionary history of man’s interpretation of God. Feuerbach believe God was created in man’s image, and that the history of religion is nothing more than the evolution of the concept of God which was a projection of human religious nature.

“In what seems to be a significant departure from, and not simply a supplement to, the theory of religion presented in The Essence of Christianity, where God was interpreted as an imaginary projection of the human species–essence, the central premise of The Essence of Religion is that the subjective ground of religion is the feeling of dependence (Abhängigkeitsgefühl), and that the original object of this feeling is nature, which Feuerbach defines at one point as “the sum of all the sensuous forces, things, and beings that man distinguishes from himself as other than human ... [including] light, electricity, magnetism, air, water, fire, earth, animals, plants, [and] man insofar as he acts instinctively [unwillkürlich] and unconsciously” (VWR 104/90).^[15] To say

that human beings are dependent upon nature is to say, among other things, that nature, which is devoid of consciousness and intention, is what has caused human beings to exist, and that the same physical processes that have produced the human brain have also produced human consciousness. “

http://people.bu.edu/wwildman/bce/feuerbach.htm#5._Relation_to_other_Thinkers 1st para

Feuerbach's concept of the history of religion leave no room for taking religious text at their plain meaning; religious texts were a product of evolution and should be interpreted in terms relative to this evolutionary process rather than their plain meaning. While Feuerbach was not himself a textual scholar, his work influenced the development of higher criticism, particularly that of David Strauss and Bruno Baur.

<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/bauer/#BauWri182> 6th para

“In his critique of the Synoptics, Bauer's object was more openly to negate dogmatic Christianity, mobilized in defence of the absolutist order. The incidents described in the gospels were products of the religious consciousness, rather than factual reports. “

David Friedrich Strauss. (2014). In Encyclopædia Britannica. Retrieved from <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/568501/David-Friedrich-Strauss>

‘His religious odyssey closed with the publication of Der alte und der neue Glaube (1872; The Old Faith and the New), in which he ventured to replace Christianity with scientific materialism, a personalized form of

Darwinism. Criticized for an inadequate understanding of the biblical and theological texts he criticized, Strauss nevertheless not only influenced 20th-century liberal and eschatological schools of biblical thought but also challenged subsequent scholars with the search for the “historical Jesus.” ‘

Feuerbach’s general approach to religion has become the paradigm among the social sciences, which view religion as a product of “social functions” or social evolution.

<http://people.bu.edu/wwildman/bce/>

feuerbach.htm#5._Relation_to_other_Thinkers 4th para

Higher critical methods are used to redact out of the Scripture any references to the supernatural. To this end, scholars constructs various theories of higher criticism. These theories claim to be historical, but these theories begin with the idea that the historical documents and the ancient witnesses don’t really tell us anything about “*the real history.*” The job of the critic is to deconstruct the real history using critical methods to reconstruct the evolution of the document.

This approach is obviously a fallacious way to deal with history. How can the interpreter of documents get to any actual history if he systematically regards the plain testimony of the text or of other ancient witnesses to the document as historically unreliable. Higher criticism presupposes evolution, and then forces the text to fit the evolutionary narrative. Consider this critique of higher criticism by R. A. Torrey.

‘ As an introduction to the fundamental fallacies of the higher criticism, let me state what the higher criticism is, and then what the higher critics tell us they have achieved.

'The name "the higher criticism" was coined by Eichhorn, who lived from 1752 to 1827. Zeno, [* "The Elements of the Higher Criticism."] after careful consideration, adopts the definition of the name given by its author: "The discovery and verification of the facts regarding the origin, form and value of literary productions upon the basis of their internal characters." The higher critics are not blind to some other sources of argument. They refer to history where they can gain any polemic advantage by doing so. The background of the entire picture which they bring to us is the assumption that the hypothesis of evolution is true. But after all their chief appeal is to the supposed evidence of the documents themselves.*

' Other names for the movement have been sought. It has been called the "historic view," on the assumption that it represents the real history of the Hebrew people as it must have unfolded itself by the orderly processes of human evolution. But, as the higher critics contradict the testimony of all the Hebrew historic documents which profess to be early, their theory might better, be called the "unhistoric view." '

http://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/torrey_ra/fundamentals/03.cfm

Ch 24 The Challenge of Postmodernism

In the Logic of God, I write about the philosophical journey that the West took that was started by Rene Descartes statement “I think, therefore I am.” This statement made “self” the reference-frame. This led to a difficulty of how we can justify knowing anything about the external world. The various stages of Modernism were attempts to create philosophical systems that would provide a positive answer to that question. A growing number of people starting coming to the conclusion that there was no positive answer to this question. A pervasive and radical skepticism started to gain a grip on a growing number of people. People began to seriously doubt the possibility of knowing objective truth.

Denial of objective truth led people to think of truth as relative to perspectives and situations. Postmodernism emerged as an attempt to navigate a world where no objective truth is perceived. While the attempts to create a coherent system based on relativity ended up a colossal failure, it produced some rather distinctive methods. These methods include cultural relativism, deconstruction, and denial of objectively true meta-narratives.

Cultural relativism is the idea that ideas – truth – can exist only relative to culture. Each culture determines its own truth in this mode of thought. Cultural relativism denies any universal or objective reference-frame from which to define or understand anything. In this mode of thought everything is culturally determined. This type of thought quickly became popular in dealing with issues relating to religions and morality, but its incoherent self-denial of absolute truth would turn any concepts of an objective reference-frame into quicksand.

Deconstruction is an approach to interpretation of a text that follows if cultural relativism is true. If there are no objective reference-frames for measuring truth, then there are no objective reference-frames for knowledge or interpretation. If that is true, then there is no baseline for interpretation of language. Language is fundamentally incapable of conveying meaning from author-speaker to audience. If text carries no meaning, then the only meaning it carries is that which the interpreter reads into the text. Actual authorial intent carries no force in deconstruction.

If authorial intent really carried no meaning, then no communication would be possible and we would have no way of knowing that authorial intent was not carried in attempts at communication. Deconstruction is a fictional construct. This fictional method, however, provides a powerful tool for manipulating language. For the Postmodernist, language is nothing more than a tool for manipulation.

Deconstruction subverts the process of construction of language in determining meaning. Construction involves using clues in the text to determine authorial intent and framing the interpretation in terms of author's intended topic sentence and logic flow. Deconstruction ignores authorial intent, focusing instead on the interpreter. The interpreter looks at a passage and cherry-picks the sentence whose interpretation can be most easily shaped into his or her personal biases. The interpreter then frames the rest of the passage into this wrested topic sentence without regard to the author's intended construction.

Denial of objectively true meta-narratives

If there is no objective truth and words do not have meanings that correspond to objective truth, then it would not be possible to construct any meta-narrative or grand-story. This has led to the denial of any

appeal to any objective or natural bases for anything in the areas of law and morality. it is impossible to understand the current trends in popular culture and law apart from the denial of objectively true meta-narratives.

Major decisions of the Supreme Court in the “culture wars” are non-sensical apart from/an understanding of the Postmodern dialectic that is occurring:

Roe v Wade and her sister decision, Griswold v Connecticut, deny any objective basis for the concept of the sanctity of human life. The Court argued that legal recognition of personhood – a subjective criterion – is the only foundation of the sanctity traditionally associated with human life. When Justice Blackmun wrote that “...we *NEED NOT resolve the difficult question of when life begins,*” he meant that the objective nature of human life is irrelevant to liberty. The only thing that counts to the Court was legal personhood, which is nothing more than a construct of the state. Obergefell vs Hodges and her sister decision, Windsor vs Ontario, establish that marriage and family are mere constructs of the state.

The denial of objectively true meta-narratives leads to the Denial of the Biblical, Judeo-Christian meta-narrative

The postmodern denial of objectively true metanarratives has been used to attack the Judeo-Christian metanarrative and any ideology and cultural norms based on it. This denial is often worded in terms of a postmodern interpretation of pluralism which argues that there are only relative narratives that only apply relative to specific contexts, situations, and perspectives. This type of attack did not initially purport to wipe out Christianity as a narrative, but sought initially it as culturally and legally normative. Catch phrases and concepts such as “separation of church

and state,” government neutrality, and moral relativism were common modes of attack. There was no room in these ideas for absolute truth, moral absolutes, or authoritative revealed religion. Instead of an objectively true meta-narrative, there are many relative, subjective narrative that all have a valid context and equal claim to a merely subjective interpretation of truth.

Deconstructing Scripture

The sovereignty of God was not the only aspect of Christianity subjected to Postmodern deconstruction. It was not long before the method of deconstruction would be used to twist Scripture. Anti-Christians, Anti-Jews, and Anti-Theists will ignore the logical and legal structure of revelation to create deceptive memes and soundbytes.

Many of these attacks misapprehend the unique and contextual nature of the Mosaic Covenant. The Mosaic Covenant was never meant to be an eternal covenant or normative for all of creation. It was meant to tutor the people of God while they were children (on a historical, sociological scale). It was only meant to be in force until the people of God were ready for a more complete revelation (Gal 3:23-25). We do an analogous thing today in how we treat minors and those declared mentally incompetent. We legally allow authorized adults to treat these in ways that, if done to other mentally competent adults, would amount to assault, kidnapping, criminal confinement, and a violation of a host of civil rights. We do this for their benefit, because they are not yet ready to handle liberty.

Most other attacks are just bare deconstruction. Interpreters will take any passage, cherry-pick a phrase easily bendable to their personal biases, and frame the rest of the passage accordingly. The following are several examples of deconstruction at work.

Example 1 involves a deliberate misconstruction of the topic sentence that is used to frame how a passage is understood. It is claimed that Levitical prohibitions on sex are merely ceremonial. Deconstructionists would ignore the many verses that clearly speak of sexual immorality and zero in on the verse that commands the children of Israel not “to pass their children through the fire.” They interpret it as a ceremonial requirement, and force the rest of the chapter into their ceremonial paradigm. Had they interpreted it in light of authorial intent and realized that the actual topic sentence was “*Ye shall therefore keep my statutes and my judgments, and shall not commit any of these abominations; neither any of your own nation, nor any stranger that sojourneth among you: (For all these abominations have the men of the land done, which were before you, and the land is defiled;)*” (Lev 18:26–27. God detested the sexual immorality because it was morally vile, and the passing through the fire that apostates want to pass off as a merely ceremonial actually involved child sacrifice as a fertility rite – hence its inclusion in the list of sexual crimes.

Example 2 involves cherry picking a convenient part of a passage and ignoring the rest of the context. Ezekiel 16 is a parallel passage concerning Sodom. In verses 49–50 we are instructed concerning the sin of Sodom. Here is verse 49

Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy.

– Ezekiel 16:49

Those who wish to twist Scripture to support homosexuality stop here as if this was the whole passage. They would have you believe that Sodom

was charcoaled and brimstoned for nothing more than lack of hospitality. God literally cooked them for being rude and incompassionate. However; this is not the whole story. Verse 50 completes the diagnosis of the sin of Sodom.

And they were haughty, and committed abomination before me: therefore I took them away as I saw good.

-Ezekiel 16:50

They committed two other sins: They were haughty, and they committed abominations.

What abominations could these be? Could it be that their sexual practices were detested by God? Could Ezekiel, as a faithful follower of the Mosaic Covenant and a prophet of God, have been thinking about the list of sex crimes in Leviticus 18 when he heard this word from God.

How haughty (extremely arrogant) were the Sodomites? They proceeded to trespass on Lot's property and dictate to him what was going to happen **on his own private property**. They then proceeded to spin lot's exercise of his own personal property rights as judging them. This sounds eerily similar to the "disagreement = hate" Homo-fascist mantra we hear today. They were essentially saying "give us what we want, or your a hater!!!" Just as the ancient Sodomites disregard others boundaries, Post-modern Homo-fascists disregard the rights of others. The difference between compelling bakers, photographers, and ministers to provide material assistance in fulfilling the requirements of same-sex ceremonies and requiring others to provide material assistance in fulfilling the requirements of one's sexual appetites is a very short distance.

There are many more examples of Scripture twisting, and on many issues outside of LGBTQ concerns. Scripture warns us against people who would twist Scripture and parse words in a campaign to avoid truth.

Post-postmodernism and the replacement of the Judeo-Christian meta-narrative

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[http://philosophynow.org/issues/58/
The_Death_of_Postmodernism_And_Beyond](http://philosophynow.org/issues/58/The_Death_of_Postmodernism_And_Beyond)

Ch 25 The Failure of Protestantism and Evangelicalism

In the present day we are seeing much of Evangelicalism and Protestantism fall short of the mark. This chapter will document some of the failures of Evangelicalism and Protestantism. These failures stem from Underdeveloped Biblical foundations, Flirting with humanistic foundations, Failure to discern the changing political landscape, and Failures in systematic theology.

Underdeveloped Biblical foundations

Much of Protestantism and Evangelicalism has underdeveloped her Biblical foundations. She has been quasi-agnostic concerning how the Bible was developed and distributed and quasi-agnostic concerning Biblical hermeneutics. She has neglected the core disciplines of the faith, failed to produce organic church that the Bible describes, and failed to understand messianic political foundations.

Much of Protestantism and Evangelicalism has been quasi-agnostic concerning how the Bible was developed and distributed. This has opened the door for Higher Criticism to sow skepticism concerning the authenticity of the text. This has historically been more of a problem with Mainline Protestantism than with Evangelicalism, as Evangelicalism has historically affirmed both divine inspiration and preservation of Scripture. Evangelicals, however, have been vulnerable to creating “strawmen” out of the text that set themselves up for critique. In some cases people have fallen away from the faith due to inconsistencies

and difficulties that are falsely perceived to belong to the text due to misunderstanding what the text is.

Much of Protestantism and Evangelicalism has been quasi-agnostic concerning Biblical hermeneutics, in part due to lack of knowledge of How Scripture was developed. This ignorance concerning proper Biblical hermeneutics has resulted in a proliferation of faulty understandings and false doctrine concerning what the Bible teaches. This lack of depth concerning hermeneutics has also opened the door for attacks on Biblical authority and Judeo-Christian morality based on undetected but faulty hermeneutics.

Little defense, in particular, is given against postmodern hermeneutics. Postmodern hermeneutics denies that author intent embeds any meaning into the texts that an author constructs, insisting that texts only have the meaning that the reader reads into the text. This approach to hermeneutics is used to re-frame texts into whatever shape or purpose is useful. This shift in hermeneutics has done more to undermine Biblical authority. Whereas Modernists went to great lengths to deny Inspiration of Scripture, Postmodern concede this point only to say it does not matter if it is inspired. If there is no authorial intent in meaning of texts, there is no “Thus saith the Lord.” to the Postmodernist, there is only a sea of private and subjective interpretations.

Much of Protestantism and Evangelicalism has neglected the core disciplines of the faith. So many have neglected a daily routine of prayer, praise, and proclamation of God’s word. Neglect of a routine of prayer, Bible study, and private worship leaves the soul dry, and lacking in spiritual strength to continue a consistent walk in following Christ,

resulting in both grave inconsistencies in the Christian walk and a degradation of devotion to Christ.

Much of Protestantism and Evangelicalism has failed to produce organic church that the Bible describes. The Reformation was successful at restoring fidelity of the church to the authority of Scripture, and Evangelicalism was successful at restoring fidelity to a vital personal organic relationship between the individual soul and God. The communal life of the church largely inherited the formalism and strict hierarchicalism of the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches rather than the organic life that is found in the New Testament Apostolic Church. Although Protestant and Evangelical churches have toned down the formalism and hierarchicalism by varying degree, these churches have largely borrowed the formal-hierarchical paradigm from the Roman Catholic Church. Community life revolves around the mainframe of the institution rather than an organic network structure of all believers networked together as the corporate body of Christ. This resulted in a spasmodic connection to Christ as the head, as church life became increasingly to worldly politicking as competing interests jostling for power in the institution or people using the institution as a weapon of power or a means to make money to serve themselves or enslave others.

Flirting with humanistic foundations

Much of Protestantism and Evangelicalism has flirted with humanistic foundations in the areas of humanistic intellectual foundations, foreign alliances within Evangelicalism, politicization of the church, humanistic psychology, and affection for pop culture. The result of this is that the thought and reasoning of many Christians follows that of the world rather than the Word.

Much of Protestantism and Evangelicalism has flirted with humanistic intellectual foundations. These foundations include basing apologetic, philosophical, and theological foundations on the wisdom of humanity rather than the wisdom of God. Compromises have been made concerning the issues the relationship of revelation to reason to empirical evidences. Compromises have been made to the authority of the text, transferring authority to the culture. Compromises have been made concerning the role of the conscience, transferring that to the so-called consensus. There is also a growing divide between the life of the mind and spiritual life in Evangelicalism

Evangelicals have increasingly set apologetic, philosophical, and theological foundations on the wisdom of humanity rather than the wisdom of God. Compromises have been made concerning the issues the relationship of revelation to reason to empirical evidences. Some have divorced reason, or more commonly, empirical evidence apart from revelation. For these people, their faith rest upon the latest finding in history, science, and other human disciplines. Their faith rest upon the work of people who often do not know God, sometimes do not believe in God, and are occasionally hostile to God. Paul the Apostle warns of the dangers of resting our faith on human wisdom in 1 Corinthians 2. Faith that is built on the wisdom of humanity is like a house built upon sand.

“And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. “

- 1 Corinthians 2:4-5

A faith that is built upon the rock is built upon the three-fold revelation of God. God has given to each of us a hardwired revelation that enables us to access knowledge of God and evaluate the evidence of the world around us (Romans 1:19–20; 2:14–15). God has moved in history in definitive patterns, of which this book has documented those patterns. The result of this is that God has left His voice-print on the people of God – the most authoritative mark is the revelation of the Scripture. God has also given to our consciences His Spirit, enabling us to discern and confirm those patterns. Through a conscience empowered by the Holy Spirit we can confirm the evidence of inspiration of Scripture, confirm the work of God in the community of God’s people, and check against error. This three-fold revelation provides a rock solid foundation – the meta-narrative – through which everything else is evaluated.

Compromises have been made in the area of hermeneutics, transferring authority from the text its author(s) intent to cultural perspectives and biases of its readers. There is an ongoing debate on culture vs text and reader vs author in Biblical hermeneutics or interpretation. There is a growing move within Evangelicalism to give culture in general and reader in particular more weight than the text and authorial intent in interpretation.

The doctrinal question that is at the forefront of the latest controversy over inerrancy in Evangelicalism concerns what authority culture has in interpretation. I see four basic views here:

Text is king. In this view, the Bible is a-cultural, containing no cultural background. A “wooden” literal interpretation is adequate. The text is written to all people.

Text is predominant. The meaning is fixed in the text. Culture can supply information and fill in areas of ambiguity or difficulty, but is

otherwise subordinate to the text itself. The text is written to all people, but contains references that are culturally linked. This has been the historic approach of Evangelicalism.

Culture is predominant. While some meaning is fixed in the text, it is largely unfathomable without resort to cultural context. Appeals to “the plain teaching of Scripture” are rarely available, as information must be vetted and processed by professional scholars. Most Christians are thus removed from discussions about the Bible. **If the Bible is accessible only to scholars, then authority has been transferred from the Scriptures to the scholars.** The Bible was written only to the original cultures where the books were penned. Most adherents of the Cultural Predominance view would say that Bible can be applied today, but this is incoherent. If God intended to use the Bible to communicate to modern humanity, then it was written to us; if not, then it doesn't apply to us today.

Culture is king. In this view, culture totally determines the meaning. Ironically, this view also destroys the authority of ancient cultural context. If meaning is totally determined by culture; then the text is irrelevant. Each culture decides for itself the meaning of a text. Deconstruction prevails. Travesties such as Matthew Vines' asinine attempt to argue that the Bible supports homosexuality become the norm.

Number 1 is common in folk theology, but rarely seen in the academy. Number 4 is common among Postmodern and Post-Evangelical, but not much among Evangelicals. The current battle for inerrancy in the Evangelical world is primarily over whether #2 or #3 is embraced as the definition. In my view, #3 greatly weakens the authority attributed of Scripture. In the worst case scenario, #3 makes the Scripture relative to

culture or the latest “scholarly consensus.” as to what culture says. The danger of #3 is that the next generation can shift easily from #3 to #4.

This hermeneutical relativism has two major forms within compromised Evangelicalism:

One form actually argues that texts carry some meaning, but that culture carry more authority to determine the meaning of texts than evidence of authorial intent from the texts themselves. This type of reasoning is often employed in conjunction with promoting an Ancient Near East (ANE) perspective on Scripture. The argument is that we must embrace and ANE perspective if we are to truly understand the Scripture. If culture carries more weight than evidence of authorial intent from the texts, how do we know what the ANE perspective would be? No mortal in that crowd is alive today to “set the record straight.” We know through the texts what their perspective was. In order to properly know the cultural context of any given text and use that to gain a fuller understanding of the text, the primacy of the text as evidence of authorial intent must be affirmed.

There are those who will fail to realize that affirming textual primacy as the evidence of authorial intent as a necessary condition for properly understanding the role of culture and audience understandings. There are other who will not care. These hold to the self-refuting, Postmodern deconstructionist view that language – including the language that is a part of texts – carries no meaning but what the reader decides to put into it. Neither the author nor the text carry any authority in the interpretation of texts. These academics will construct texts or speech and invest their authorial intent into language for the purpose of denying that authorial intent has any authority and for the purpose of

denying that the language has any meaning until a reader interprets it. Is the language they create really meaningless? If so there is no point in listening to them or reading them because they have refuted themselves by applying their deconstructionist view of language to their own language. If not then their deconstructionist view of language is self-refuting.

The consequences of both forms of hermeneutic relativism has been to undermine faith in “thus saith the Lord” to a confused sea of perspectival babble. Both views open the door for the Bible to be parsed in ways diametrically opposed to God intention when He inspired the texts. Hermeneutic relativism allows an interpreter to formally agree to the concepts of verbal plenary inspiration and inerrancy while advocating all sort of doctrines that are in opposition to historic Biblical teaching.

Compromises have also been made concerning the role of the conscience, transferring that to the so-called consensus. The reason to for the push towards consensus is the same reason that Postmodernism is pushing towards Post-Postmodernism. While hermeneutic relativism can produce many perspectives, it is not a robust way of either acquiring knowledge or communicating with the external world. Hermeneutic relativism is not only self-refuting, but it collides with the real world. Truth is not really a matter of perspective, changing with the whims of who is chances upon the cosmic mirror. The world is much more orderly than Postmodernism would suggest. Postmodern relativism is at a fork. It must either repudiate itself and be reconciled to objective truth, or it will morph into a Post-Postmodern relativism that is weighted in favor of certain perspectives and narratives. This dynamic pushes against conscience and towards a consensus around a selected narrative. This often involves appeal to academic authority, even when fallacious. It is beyond the scope of this book to document how people are being

herded into Mystery Babylon through her manipulations. Chapters 9–13 of Mystery Babylon Rising documents these manipulations in great detail. It is sufficient here to say that a Post–Postmodern relativism that places emphasis on authoritative narratives enables elites to promote agendas of advanced manipulations being done today by operatives and entities of Mystery Babylon or the New World Order.

The compromises that have occurred in the intellectual arena have occurred partly because Evangelicals have been more than co-belligerents with ungodly intellectuals. Evangelical intellectuals have been seduced by philosophies and allures elements within academia that stands opposed to the knowledge of Christ. We are warned in Scripture about the dangers of such thinking.

Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:..

...Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God. Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, (Touch not; taste not; handle not; Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men?

– Colossians 2:8–10, 18–22

The word translated “spoil” here means plunder or seduce. Both shades of meaning are applicable here as shifted one;’s foundations from Christ results in both seduction into spiritual adultery and loss of the benefit are being rooted and grounded in Christ The degree that any particular individual or group of Christians base their philosophical foundations on the basic principles of the world rather than Christ is the degree that these particular Christians are disconnected from, or “*not holding the Head,*” of Christ.

In the early stages of this disconnect, a cognitive dissonance is created. In pre-modern and modern epochs this dissonance would come to a head very quickly, forcing a decision. In the Postmodern and emerging Post-Postmodern epochs, hermeneutic relativism and deconstruction have allowed a creative parsing of words to pro up dissonance much longer. People parse their words to mask the contradiction. In the early stages this caused a divide between the **intellectual life in Evangelicalism and other dimensions of Evangelical life**. The schism has been going on for multiple generations. Francis Schaeffer, in both *The God Who is There* and *Escape From Reason*, document the fragmentation of much of modern and postmodern thought. Schaeffer believed that Postmodern man built his world-view in two stories: The lower story was a rational story built on a humanistic, materialistic foundation that was devoid of meaning and anything really human; the upper story was devoid of logic and rationality but contained meaning. Schaeffer taught that people resorted to what he called “*semantic mysticism*” to mask the dichotomy. His apologetic method was to pull back those masks. He called it “*blowing the roof off.*”

Semantic mysticism involved using a shade of meaning of a word to mask the actual intention. For example, the term “natural selection” is a

semantic mysticism. The term would seem to imply that nature is selecting which species are fit to survive. In Evolutionary biology, however, natural selection is viewed as a blind, un-directed process. No selection of any kind is taking place in the sense we normally think of when we read or hear the word “selection.” The use of the word “natural selection” masks both the absurdities of affirming processes incapable of intelligent selection and lacking any direction actually selecting and directing with a higher degree of intelligence than the most intelligent processes directed by man; it also masks the absurdities of the dark consequences of such view of life.

The tools used to construct these semantic mysticisms have matured since Schaeffer (1912–1984). Schaeffer’s strategy is less effective today because developments in Postmodernism and Post-Postmodernism have provided more sophisticated ways to evade presuppositional apologetics. Postmoderns today use three methods in this evasion. They will:

1. Try to reverse the apologetic and blow the roof off the apologist. Sometimes they will use deconstruction to create a straw-man and reverse on that. Other times they will exploit inconsistencies caused by the fact that many intellectual Evangelicals have a mixed foundation of Christian and humanistic elements.
2. Some will borrow the meaning of the upper story and use deconstruction and hermeneutic relativism to pass it off as a feature of the world-view of the lower story. An example of this is the so-called “New Atheists.” They borrow from Christian morality, cherry-pick from it to condemn Christianity, and then falsely represent as a fruit of atheism – fruit that could not logically ever come from an atheistic foundation.
3. Others will borrow the world-view of the lower-story and use deconstruction and hermeneutic relativism to pass it off as a

feature of the upper story. Many Christians do this to Scripture today, creatively parsing it to make it fit into what the culture is saying rather than seeking to know what God has to say.

The commonality of these three responses to smooth over the cognitive dissonance is that the more vigorously they are used, the greater the pressure created to wander further and further from Christ. These responses are creating a two-fold movement of apostasy that forms a two-theater attack on Christianity. The first theater of operation is done by those explicitly hostile to the Christian faith. They use deconstruction and hermeneutic relativism to create a straw man of Christianity and slander the Christian faith. The second theater of operations is by those who claim to be Christians, but use deconstruction and hermeneutic relativism to redefine what Christianity is. They have a “form of godliness, but deny the power thereof (2 Tim 3:1–8, esp vs 5).” These people do nothing more than put a Christian skin and a Christian label on worldly philosophies that stand in opposition to Christ.

We are strongly warned in Scripture against those who parse words using methods similar to those used in deconstruction and hermeneutic relativism. The Bible refers to these as engaging in “*strifes of words*(KJV),” translated as “*arguments over words*(NKJV), and ‘*quarrels over words*(NIV).”

If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself.

- 1 Timothy 6:3–5

This passage describes a particular type of false teacher who creatively parses words in a way that create controversies where there would be none (envying, strife, and railings), opening the door for the most perverse types of argument (perverse disputings) to gain traction. Arguments done by people who think language is nothing more than a tool for power (supposing that gain is godliness) and who, by their own admission, are destitute of the truth (believing that language cannot carry meaning). This is what is happening today.

While these dynamics were birthed in the intellectual realms, they do not stop there; they spill over into all areas of life, even affecting people who do not read the intellectual arguments that are at the root of the apostasy. This apostasy that we are in is nothing less than the final great apostasy predicted in 2 Thess 2;3.

Much of Protestantism and Evangelicalism has flirted with foreign alliances within Evangelicalism – relations that politicize of the church. It is not only in the intellectual life that compromise has set in. Just as the ancient Israelites became snared by becoming extensively entangled in foreign alliances such as Egypt and Babylon(chs), so has the Evangelical church. Evangelicals follow what the world considers authoritative rather than the authority of Scripture. In much of Evangelicalism, science, sociology, anthropology, psychology, politics, and corporate policies all carry greater authority than Scripture. Evangelicals have ceased to have an integrated understanding of both the doctrines and methods of these disciplines within a larger Biblical meta-narrative that recognized both the supreme authority of Scripture and the distinct methodologies of the various academic disciplines.* Evangelicals routinely allow secular and humanistic principles frame their understanding of the word rather than principles informed by, and

compatible with, a Biblical world-view. They even allow secular and humanistic principles to frame their hermeneutics concerning the Biblical texts, resulting in either forcing the Bible to fit the culture or outright rejection of the Bible in favor of the emerging cultural paradigm.

Nowhere is this accommodation more acute than in politics. Evangelicals have all too often hopped into bed with their favorite political paradigm. Evangelicals often cherry-pick Scripture that support their favorite paradigm, ignore passages that are most condemning of that paradigm. Political paradigms are also extremely inconsistent and accompanied by creatively parsed but fallacious responses to any criticisms of themselves. Evangelicals, like most others in the world, have become apologists for sundry abominations that are done in the name of politics.

The spirit of political prostitution is not limited to the civil politicking that is used to install representatives into the machinery of the state. It happens throughout the corporate world and in the organizational machinery of the church. Church leaders are selected too often in accordance to the political realities of the context they are in rather than Scriptural fitness. Churches and ministries are especially vulnerable to manipulation by church politics when those God has called into ministry are dependent on other benefactors for sufficient financing to do the work of ministry. In so many cases, the man of God compromises with the political realities or faces termination and expulsion from the ministry. Even where the man or woman of God makes substantial inroads to advance God's kingdom, they often must do so as politicians rather than by stepping into the prophetic role God has called them as they apostle, prophesy, evangelize, or pastor-teach.

As Evangelicalism shifted towards humanistic foundations and increasingly prostitutes herself to the academic, economic, cultural, and

corporate authorities that exalt themselves against God, then these pressures stamp out the love for Jesus and replace it with a growing love – a growing lust after the things of the world that are promoted through pop culture. **Much of Protestantism and Evangelicalism has flirted with elements of the pop culture**, resulting in affection for the lusts of flesh promoted in these venues. Evangelicalism is increasingly infatuated with the pornography, sexual lust, greed, megalomania (love of power) and love of violence. People have become addicted to these sins through Hollywood and her children (Bollywood, Nollywood, Pallywood, etc). As the love of these sins grows, then these sins become increasingly common in actual life as people increasingly not only live out their abominable fantasies, but skillfully use hermeneutic relativism to justify their abomination. This is the final great apostasy predicted in 2 Thess 2:3 when Paul wrote “*Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;*” The final great apostasy would precede the revelation of the Antichrist, who precedes the rapture/resurrection events that initiates the Great Day of the Lord.

Why Evangelicalism failed

Why did Evangelicalism fail. She failed because she failed to discern changes to her own foundations early enough to stop the crash, because she failed to discern the role of spiritual realities in the apostasy, and because her systematic theologies were not equipped to counter the attacks that were launched.

Evangelicalism has failed to discern the changes to her own foundations.

Evangelicalism failed to discern that relativism was gaining a strong hold because it began in the English classes*. As people were indoctrinated that language is not adequate to carry meaning (Post-structuralism) and

that deconstruction is the valid way to do hermeneutics, then three results followed:

- 1.It undermined Biblical authority
- 2.It created a vacuum for secular and humanistic authorities to exalt themselves against the knowledge of God
- 3.It allowed its subjects to use deconstruction to smooth over the discrepancies between the new paradigm and the clear teaching of Scripture.

It undermined Biblical authority by creating skepticism concerning the adequacy of the text to carry meaning. This under cut the very heart of Evangelicalism as it is based on the supremacy of Scripture as the reference-frame for truth faith, and morals. Evangelicalism has never relied on official interpreters at any level to mediate doctrine. Lest Roman Catholics and Eastern Orthodox think that their official interpreters give them any advantage in accessing knowledge of God, it only moves the problem to a different level. If language cannot adequately convey meaning, then the Pope is just as lost as the parishioner in the pew. To a Postmodern mindset, language carries no authority, only perspectives. Authority is vested in whatever individuals or groups are perceived to most successfully promote their particular narrative.

It created a vacuum for secular and humanistic authorities to exalt themselves against the knowledge of God. In academia, official dogma would be promoted as “the consensus” and anyone who did not hold to the consensus would be labeled a heretick or crank. Prior to postmodernism, science was based on valid application of the scientific method; it was irrelevant how many or what percentage of “scientists” held to a position. Now science is based on the official consensus, and

everything outside of that is “anti-science.” It isn’t only in science that we see this happening. In politics, religion, corporate life, and pop culture, we see myriads of narrative being promoted as more authoritative than others.

It allowed its subjects to use deconstruction to smooth over the discrepancies between the new paradigm and the clear teaching of Scripture. When Mainline Protestantism had its apostasy due to the rise of evolutionary theory and higher criticism, Modernist religionists found that they no longer believed the historic doctrines of the Christian faith, and because of that they refused to sign such statements of faith. During the 1920’s and 1930’s a bitter war ensued as both camps could not coexist in the same organizational space. The Modernists took over every Mainline Protestant denomination except the Southern Baptist Convention. Out of the Southern Baptists, those who broke away from the apostate Mainline denominations, and those from other groups who were never considered Mainline Protestants formed what is now Evangelicalism.

Because Postmodernism involves deconstruction, they do not need to formally reject statements of faith to enter into apostasy. Postmodern religionists continue to sign the statement of faith, only to parse them to make them fit their biases and then proceed to conduct their day-to-day business in a way that diametrically opposes the faith “*once for all delivered to the saints* (Jude 1:3).”

She failed to discern the role of spiritual realities in the apostasy. While people were drawn by fleshly desires and trusting in self over the Lord, this didn’t just happen by accident. Satan and his minions have been manipulating and seducing humanity for thousands of years, from Eve to

the present day. Just as God has a plan and has acted in a specific pattern in history (as documented in this book), Satan also has a plan and has also acted in a specific pattern in history (as documented in *Mystery Babylon Rising*), setting the New World Order. Satan is using relativism and deconstruction to promote an allegedly authoritative agenda that will herd most of the entire planet into his world order that he rules, setting up a one-world religion, one world government, and a one world dictator that Satan will promote as a counterfeit Christ. He will do this to oppose the truth Christ as his last stand before being imprisoned for 1000 years (Revelation 20:2).

Failures in systematic theology

As these attacks came upon Evangelicalism, the two predominant systematic theologies both had vulnerabilities to the attacks. These systematic methods of attaining an integrated understanding Scripture failed because neither of these systems truly understood the work of God in history. They failed to understand the work of God because they failed to understand how God rooted, grounded and integrated to two major constructs He has created as the vehicles through which He acts in history: Israel and the Church.

The two major systematic theologies are variations of Covenant Theology and Dispensationalism.

Covenant Theology began to rise not long after the early church began to lose its Jewish identity. During the third century understandings arose that would comprise the various streams of Covenant Theology. Covenant Theology consists of three basic principles:

- God interacts with His people primarily through Covenants
- The New Covenant fulfills all previous covenants
- The church has replaced Israel as the covenant people of God

The first two principles were well established long before the third century, being understood since the days of Christ Jesus and the Apostles. The third principle, however, did not become prevalent until the third century. The reckoning the church as the replacement of Israel resulted in a failure to truly understand that Israel and the church are an integrated whole. This failure meant that there would be missing pieces. As Covenant Theology failed to integrate all of the missing pieces,. It would be necessary to manufacture parts of the whole from the wisdom of humanity instead of God. This would open up areas for attack.

Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox interpretations of Covenant Theology put church leadership in absolute charge of the church as the new Israel. Given that much of the history of God's people was one involving battle between the true prophets of God against corrupt leaders, a covenant regime giving absolute power and monopoly to established organizational leaders provided little defense against corruption. When the Reformation began, the Protestants utilized the same Covenant Theology, but put an important check against corruption: Sola Scriptura. The Scripture held authority over church leaders.

This worked at very well for awhile, but Evangelicals were neither prepared for attacks on the text nor prepared for attacks on the adequacy of language to carry meaning in thought or communication. When these attacks came, Evangelicals increasingly relied on counter-argument based on the relativistic wisdom of humanity rather than rock-solid arguments. Biblical foundations were weakened, with authority being transferred from the text to the perspectives and prestige of scholars.

The fatal blow to Covenant Theology, however, came as ancient prophecies concerning Israel found literal, historical fulfillment. This falsified the allegorizing treatment of Israel and undercut the theological basis of the mandate given to the church. Covenant Theology teaches that the church replaced Israel as the covenant people of God and inherited all of the promises given to Israel. Literal historical fulfillment of prophecies of the restoration of Israel imply that God still has a covenant purpose for Israel distinct from the church.

If God still has a covenant purpose for Israel distinct from the church, does this mean that the church has a rather limited mandate. In the next chapter I will show why that is not the case. However, the answer that Evangelicals latched onto during the 20th century unwittingly implied that the church did indeed have a limited mandate. As Covenant Theology found its narrative concerning Israel falsified, Dispensationalism made inroads by putting forward a faulty explanation of why Israel has repossessed the land that was given to Ancient Israel.

Dispensationalism has historically taught that the Church and Israel have totally separate covenant relationships with God, differing covenant purposes, and headed towards separate covenant destinations*. If this be true, then the church has a limited scope that pertains only to the religious and spiritual and not applicable to all of life. This segmentation reinforces both secularization and relativization of the message. The church is pigeonholed as applying to a narrow segment of life that necessarily exists relative to a broader narrative; this kind of thinking is used to dismiss any inconvenient "Thus saith the Lord."

The Hermeneutic relativism and the move to replace Evangelicalism with an anti-Christ narrative has led to the final great apostasy. The answer is to rebuild solid Biblical foundations which uphold a coherent Messianic

narrative. In the next chapter the proper Messianic foundations of the church will be explained.

Ch 26 The Messianic Foundation

A coherent Messianic narrative provides a robust answer to the challenges posed by hermeneutic relativism and the movement to replace Evangelicalism with an anti-Christ narrative. The hermeneutic relativism and Christophobia behind the popular Post-Postmodern narratives has not made inroads because it is a strong narrative, but because it was able to exploit weaknesses in both modern philosophy and modern Evangelicalism.

The major problem of modern philosophy was set by Descartes. While Descartes was looking for an absolute foundation to his philosophy, he discovered that the statement “I think” is necessarily true. All attempts to refute it are themselves self-refuting. There are two inferences that follow from it: “I think, therefore I exist,” and “I think, therefore thoughts exist.” Descartes made the inference “I think, therefore I exist.”

Making the inference “I think, therefore I exist” had one flaw. In making the existence of the self the reference-frame, he raised the question of how one can validate anything outside of the self. This became known as the subject-object problem. Modern philosophers struggled with this problem through centuries of developments, a struggle that ended with Post-structuralism and Postmodernism. Postmodernism denies that we can know truth, and Post-structuralism says that language is not adequate to carry meaning.

If language is truly inadequate to carry meaning, then post-structuralism and deconstruction would not follow. What would follow is that humanity would not and could not evolve past the stone age. Without the ability to use language to think and communicate, civilization could not have developed. The ability to reason with abstraction is not possible without the abilities of language: creating syntax and encoding signs and

symbols with meaning. The philosophical developments that led to post-structuralism and deconstruction could not have developed if language is not adequate to carry meaning. No philosophical developments of any kind could have emerged if language was inherently incapable of carrying meaning. The problems that have emerged in the philosophy of language are largely problems with philosophical system that are ground in self as the reference-frame rather than the inherent limitations of language.

The Messianic narrative, however, begins with the inference “I think, therefore thoughts exist.” Beginning with the existence of thought completely eliminates the subject-object problem and other problems that are inherent in beginning with a self-centered reference-frame. The Bible begins with the existence of thought as the reference-frame as well. In John 1:1 we are instructed that “*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God , and the Word was God...*“. Thought is an essential attribute of the infinite-personal God, and particularly the Person of the Trinity who is the Mind of God. It can also be shown through Logic that thought is fundamental. My book “*The Logic of God*” has through logical arguments how the existence of thought points to the existence of God. The thought of God, via the Word of God, is the ground of creation. God’s thought also leaves as a signature a clear pattern in history, a pattern this book documents.

What is the Messianic Narrative?

1. Jesus Christ the living Word, as the ultimate thought, is the ground of all creation
2. The Word became incarnate and acts in history in ways that are identifiable to both the community and the conscience.

3.The activity of Christ in history is as both the Messiah of Israel and personal savior.

Fully developed Biblical foundations

Because the Messianic narrative can trace the history of the revelation and expression of God's thought, it can both account for the origins of Scripture and ground the Scripture on the foundation of Christ rather than the speculation of humanity.

Messianic Theology has a robust account concerning how the Bible was developed and distributed. This is rooted in the recognition of the signature of God's activity in history. God's activity in history has left a signature in both history and Scripture that includes the following four parameters:

- 1.God activity in history is consistent with hard-wired knowledge of His nature. The nature of this knowledge is discussed in *The Logic of God*.
- 2.God's activity in history results in a fundamental coherence between the Old Testament and the New Testament, with every covenantal construct finding fulfillment in Christ as the Messiah.
- 3.There is coherence between God's activity in history and God's activity in individual conscience, with both pointing to Christ as Messiah and the Scripture as the authoritative account of God activity in history.
- 4.The activity of God is usually counter-cultural.

Messianic Theology has a robust account concerning proper **Biblical hermeneutics**. Because the Messianic narrative being the existence of thought in the Mind of God as being fundamental, there is no subject-object problem. The universe was created with categories compatible to the categories that exist in the Mind of God, and man is created in God's image – possessing in his mind compatible categories. The necessary and sufficient structure for language adequate to carry meaning is in place.

Additionally, the Messianic Narrative teaches that the activity of God in history is centered around the incarnation of Jesus Christ. In Christ, the divine nature found connection with the human nature. The incarnation shows that divine-human communication is not only possible, but actually occurred in the Mind of Jesus Christ. The divine nature not only communicated to the human nature of Christ in the Mind of Jesus. If the divine nature found a way to communicate with the human nature in the Mind of Christ, then Jesus Christ know how to communicate Words from God with humanity. He knows both the capabilities and limitations of language and used this knowledge when he framed His revelation to humanity. In 1 Corinthians 13:9-12 Paul describes the current nature of human knowledge

For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in 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 part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.

- 1 Corinthians 13:9-12

Paul likens our knowledge to looking at one's reflection through a "glass." This glass was an ancient mirror. These mirrors were not the highly reflective surfaces we know today, but polished brass. Looking into these mirrors was adequate to get the overall appearance of an object, but precise details are fuzzy or blurry. The fuzziness on the fine details does not prevent us from knowing the big picture. Language is the same in that ambiguity may cloud finer details, but that does not prevent it from carrying meaning. A sound hermeneutic rooted in the basic principles of the Messianic Narrative can accurately determine both meaning and the limits of language

What follows from humanity being created in the image of God and from Jesus Christ knowing how to deliver God's message to humanity is that Christ can deliver words that are sufficient to carry meaning. This means that we can actually exegete the meaning and construction of spoken and written language. The Messianic narrative has a robust explanation for the grammatical-historical hermeneutic. In chapter 10, we studied that it was only through application of the grammatical-historical hermeneutic to the extant texts of the Torah and annals of the kings that allowed Ezra to re-construct Judaic religion because apostasy had gotten so bad by the time of king Josiah that reconstruction from cultural memory was no longer possible.

Messianic Theology protects us from humanistic foundations by inculcating a thoroughly rooted and grounded spiritual life

Much Paul the Apostle warns of the dangers of resting our faith on human wisdom in 1 Corinthians 2. Faith that is built on the wisdom of humanity is like a house built upon sand.

“And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. “

- 1 Corinthians 2:4-5

A faith that is built upon the rock is built upon the three-fold revelation of God. God has given to each of hardwired revelation that enables us to access knowledge of god and evaluate the evidence of the world around us (Romans 1:19-20;2:14-15). God has moved in history in definitive patterns, of which this book has documented those patterns. The result of this is that God has left His voice-print on the people of God – the most authoritative mark is the revelation of the Scripture.– not was – but is the current and eternal occupant of the throne of King David.

Because the Messianic Narrative has a coherent, sufficient foundation for all of life, a coherent program that address spiritual, cultural, and political realities can be constructed. The Messiah of this narrative, Jesus Christ, fulfills every covenant in fulfillments that addresses all of life. Jesus Christ is Prophet, Priest, and King. The covenants that are enacted in the Old and New Testaments define a composite picture of God’s people. Israel as a body politic and the church as a spiritual assembly. Both the Mosaic and Davidic Covenants construct a governmental construct that is identified as Israel. While The Mosaic Covenant came pre-programmed with an expiration (see ch), the Davidic Covenant is eternal. Because the Davidic Covenant provides that David will never cease to have a descendant to sit on his throne, that descendant who currently sits on David’s throne is the king of Israel. **Jesus Christ is the King of Israel.** The Abrahamic and Mosaic Covenants made provisions for atonement so that humanity can enter into the Presence of God. Abraham put his faith in what was then the future Messiah when he said “God will provide the Lamb (Genesis 22:8).” The Mosaic Law, which is a

shadow or premonition of the New Testament (), prefigured salvation through the blood of the Lamb through the institution of the Passover(Exodus 13). Both of these are fulfilled in Jesus Christ (see Ch). **Jesus Christ is the Lamb of God.** The church is the spiritual assembly of those who have redeemed by the blood of the Lamb.

Those who have been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb have also been given citizenship in Israel. Eph 2:11–20 describes the relationship between the church and Israel from the perspective of Israel. The two are distinct, yet connected.

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; Ephesians 2:12 That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: Ephesians 2:13 But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

–Ephesians 2:11

The members of the Church of Jesus Christ are citizens of Israel. This means that Christians have the same rights and same political franchise as the Children of Israel. This is the hook God has provided for His people to act as state actors on the world stage. This is currently problematic in terms of the flesh as the current State of Israel is in rebellion against her Messiah. She does not yet recognize Jesus as her Messiah and has even gone as far as to deny the right of the Law of Return to biologic Jews who have embraced Jesus as the Messiah. This problem was anticipated in Scripture. Romans 11 describes the members of the church as being grafted into a vine where rebellious Israelite children were cut off. We are instructed that the biological descendants of

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob can be grafted back in by accepting Jesus Christ. The church and Israel are two parts of the same whole.

The fact that the church and Israel are two components of the same whole means that, like Covenant Theology, the Messianic narrative offers a holistic, comprehensive narrative for all of life. Keep in the mind that the prophets prophesied that the scope of the rule of the Throne of David was going to be expanded to be global (see chapter). Jesus is both personal Lord and Savior and Lord of lords. The weakness of Covenant Theology was that humanistic elements had to be added to make the narrative work. God's people had to work through the nations of man with their man-made constructs, the result was that the works fell short of God's ideal. Whenever covenant Theology was used to justify so-called theocracies, the true Christians were invariably persecuted by the false ones. These systems, while purporting to exalt Christ as Lord, actually denied His Lordship by allowing mere human leaders to usurp the position that can be rightfully held only by HIM. This problem was alleviated in America and other English-speaking countries who opted to embed into their Christian societies a secular form of government that guaranteed liberty for all so that Christianity can prevail "in the marketplace of ideas." While this approach produced some very robust fruit, the weakness in this approach was that it opened the door to give freedom to those who would use that freedom to deny liberty to Christians. This is precisely what is happening. As America and other English-speaking countries are becoming post-Christian societies, unbelievers are using their franchise to disenfranchise Christians. The Messianic narrative, however, uses the nation God ordained and enforces it through Christ's power, not that of mortal man. Jesus Christ will establish the throne of King David as the government of the whole earth, with God's people using spiritual weapons rather than physical weapons.

The Messianic Narrative grounds believer's faith in the sovereignty of God, reducing temptation to indulge in foreign alliances that would politicize of the church. There are two dynamics that will fuel this feature of the Messianic Narrative in the end times. One is that God's people will be hated by all nations; Christians will have nowhere else to turn but Him. It is on this place that the Messianic Narrative reveals to the believers the Power and Majesty of God, who has been continuous working throughout history according to a specific pattern. This book has been written to document that pattern.

The Messianic Narrative produces the organic church that the Bible describes. The Messianic Narrative, like the Reformation, upholds the fidelity of the church to the authority of Scripture, and also fidelity to a vital personal organic relationship between the individual soul and God. The Messianic Narrative, unlike Evangelicalism, rejects the formalism and strict hierarchical-ism of the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches in the communal life of the church in favor of the organic life that is found in the New Testament Apostolic Church. Community life revolves around the mainframe of the institution rather than an organic network structure of all believers networked together as the corporate body of Christ.

The Messianic Narrative encourages the applications the core disciplines of the faith. So many have neglected a daily routine of prayer, praise, and proclamation of God's word.

Ch 27 – Times and Seasons of Deliverance

God has a plan to deliver His people from the extreme trials that beset them during the Endtime Revival. A slate of recent reports suggests that we are soon to enter into the time in history when Israel is surrounded by armies. Obama is shifting America's policy away from Israel and towards the Palestinians. This is coupled with revolutions in the Middle East that are resulting in the replacement of U.S. – friendly governments with more radical governments. Both of these developments are setting the stage for a major war where Israel is surrounded by a coalition of armies.

Psalm 118 gives some promises that apply to this time. He promises great revival and victory. The end-time revival occurs within the context of world war against Israel. It will involve both Jews and Christians. Great revival, the likes of which the world has never seen, will break out on the Temple Mount as Jews join with Christians in seeking God.

Both testimony of the enduring mercies of God and encouragement to testify to those mercies is given in verse 1–4. Both Israel and the House of Aaron are called upon to praise God. This is a universal call on all of God's people, both those who are God's people in Moses (The House of Aaron), and those who are grafted into Israel in Christ. Both the people and the priests are called.

In the remainder of the chapter, there is a call to prayer, praise, and proclamation. Psalm 118 is a special call to seek God during the time of greatest distress for God's people.

In verses 5–9, We see that God answers our cry for deliverance by “setting us in a large place” We are to trust in God and NOT in our

political alliances with “princes.” During this time, God’s people cease to trust in their political alliances and trust in the Lord. This trust results in assurance that God will strengthen us for the coming battle.

Verses 10–13 positively identify this as the end-time global war on God’s people. Israel is surrounded by all nations. The global hostility to God’s people extends to Christians as well. Jesus says in [Matthew 24:7–9](#) that, among other things, that we will “***hated by all nations for My name’s sake.***”

There is confession of great victory in verses 14–18. We read repeatedly, “***in the name of the LORD I will destroy them.***” While God’s people suffer much during this time, it is a time of victory. The people of God are militant about their faith in the face of war. In verses 15–16 we read of the “right hand” of the Lord doing valiantly. This is a reference to spiritual war contained in Isaiah 59:, which is itself a reference to Eph 6:10–18. We see this reference to spiritual warfare in the language in verse 14 “***The LORD is my strength and song, and is become my salvation.***” This language ties together God’s strength and the power of praise and worship. As God’s people worship Him, His power becomes manifested and His ordained salvation is revealed in space-time.

The remainder of the chapter is a call for God to “***Open to me the gates of righteousness.***” This is a call for God to open to pathway to His Presence. We will see that “***The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner***” Christ, who has been rejected by the Jews, will finally be recognized by the Jews as her rightful King. After almost 2000 years of rejecting Christ, the Jews finally call on them. When Christ departed from Israel, He told them in [Matthew 23:38–39](#), “***you shall see Me no more till you say, ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!’***” Verse 26 contains that exact phrase. What Jesus is saying is that when God’s people start to pray Psalm 118 in the time of global distress, then Christ will return.

Revelation is to be seen as the Psalm 118 prayer. The theme of the book is that God's [ower and mjudgments become manifest as His people Praise Him, Pray to Him, and Proclaim His Word. There is more on this in my book Reve;ation.

Hosea's prophecy of end-time revival

In Hosea 5-6 contain a prophecy that gives us a clue concerning the times and seasons. Verse 7 instructs us that Israel dealt treacherously against the Lord and have begotten strange children. This portion of the prophecy concerns the rejection of Christ and the embrace of Talmudic Judaism in apostasy. Modern Jews, while biologically the children of Abraham, have abandoned the Abrahamic faith and wont be restored until the very end. This rejection, however, is not universal. There is a remnant that is torn away from this apostasy.

Ch 28 Joel's Call to Sacred Assembly and the End-time Revival

Every great awakening has been preceded by fervent effectual prayer of the saints. Specifically, we are called to seek God both individually and collectively in a Acts (former rain) and the Final Great Awakening (latter rain). The book of Joel is a primer on seeking God for revival. Chapter 1 of Joel ties in with the previous chapter of this book (Ch 27) in showing us the back drop to the Final Great Awakening. The last great revival will begin in the midst of great trouble and impending disaster. Chapter 2 gives us the template for seeking God in a great assembly. Chapter 3 places this in the context of the end times and the judgments of the Great and Terrible Day of the Lord, tying it in with chapter 30 of this volume.

Joel Ch 1

The book of Joel was written to both warn of coming judgment and give promises of revival. Chapter 1 sets the stage for what is happening. Joel definitely speaks of the end times. Joel speaks of events happening today.

In vs 2-3 Joel proclaims that what is about to happen is something that has never happened before. He asks this rhetorical question as the introduction to the book “*Has anything like this happened in your days, or even in the days of your fathers?*” The implied answer is that what is about to happen is unprecedented. What follows appears to be ordinary disasters, but Jesus comments on the use of seemingly ordinary disasters as signs of the end. He likens them to birth pangs. Birth pangs start slow, but steadily increase in both frequency and intensity until

childbirth. As we near the end, we will see disasters increase in frequency and intensity. In just the past ten years we have seen disasters escalate: 911, Hurricane Katrina, Tsunamis devastate Indonesia and Japan, Another hurricane devastate Haiti, so this is relevant to us.

We see the same escalation of frequency and intensity in vs 4 “*What the chewing locust left, the swarming locust has eaten; What the swarming locust left, the crawling locust has eaten; And what the crawling locust left, the consuming locust has eaten.*” One disaster is followed by a more extreme disaster until destruction is complete.

Vss 5–13 speak of economic and political ruin. Drunks are told to weep because there is “no new wine.” Given that people drink aged wine first, it speaks of a total loss. This loss even affects the church. Vs 9 tells us “*The grain offering and the drink offering Have been cut off from the house of the LORD; The priests mourn, who minister to the LORD.*” The church has been ruined, unable to fulfill her mission. Those ministers who care grieve. Folks, this is happening today before our eyes. We are witnessing a political, economic, and moral collapse of Western Civilization. What are we to do as things go from bad to worse?

In vss 13–20, We are instructed to seek the Lord in solemn assembly. There is precedent for it in Lev 23:33–36. The solemn assembly, or sacred assembly, was about seeking God in repentance. The solemn assembly has transcended it’s Mosaic context, having been a part of the practice of God’s people throughout the centuries. Even today, we are to seek God in repentance as repentance is taught throughout Scripture. I will have more on this in the next installment which will be commentary on chapter 2

Joel Ch 2

Joel 2 begins with a dire warning that I believe is relevant today. I believe that God's judgment on the whole earth is very near and that disasters and distress we are experiencing are just the beginning of birth pains.

The Day of the Lord is at hand.

Joel 2 begins with a warning that the Day of the Lord is very near. The people are warned to blow the trumpet and sound an alarm. The watchers are to warn the people of danger (Ezekiel 33). Joel 1:3-11 give a vivid description of this army. Vs 10-11 speak of the darkening of the sun and reddening of the moon as signs coinciding. This places this battle in the end-times.

In vss 12-17, there is a call to repentance- specifically a call to what the Bible refers to as a Solemn assembly. While solemn assemblies were instituted under the Mosaic law, the application of it's key component, the solemn assembly, transcends the limitations of the Mosaic law. The solemn assembly was critical to the Feast of Tabernacles. Seven days of observance is followed by a solemn assembly on the eighth day (Lev 23:36).

When the temple of Solomon was dedicated (2 Chr 5-7) it was at the time of then Feast of Tabernacles. They observed seven days and had a solemn assembly on the eighth day. During that solemn assembly, fire came down from God and the priests fell under the power of God. (2 Chr 7:1-9)

We know from the passion narratives that on the third day after Christ died, He rose from the dead. He ascended into heaven 40 days later. 40 days + 2 = 42 (He rose on the third on the third day so the third is counted among the 40 days) 42 + 7 days in the upper room = 49. The

50th day after Christ died is Pentecost. Pentecost also fell on the 8th day in the Upper Room. The apostles stay in the Upper Room where they engaged in “prayer and supplication” was a solemn assembly.

In Zech 14:16–21, which speaks of the time after the Day of the Lord judgment, that the Feast of Tabernacles was both a regular and international Feast day.

The call to solemn assembly or sacred assembly is applicable to all legal contexts, not just the Mosaic Covenant. The call to seek God in solemn assembly for public and collective repentance is for today. We are to make prayers and supplication for redemption and revival in the context of impending doom for God to glorify himself by reviving us.

Physical Restoration

Vss 18–27 promise physical restoration, including deliverance from our adversaries. In context the adversary is the Gog coalition that surrounds Israel and breathes out murders against God’s people (Ezekiel 38–39).

Spiritual Restoration – End Time Revival.

The other promise is that of great revival. Vss 28–32 are also recorded in Acts 2 as the prophetic basis of Pentecost. In the context of Joel, this revival occurs before the End-time Day of the Lord judgments. That is why Joel’s prophecy includes the darkening of the sun and reddening of the moon as signs accompanying the revival. The revival in Acts was the initial, but not complete, fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy. This is sometimes called the former rain. The complete fulfillment or latter rain occurs just before the Return of Jesus Christ.

The initial awakening resulted in a mighty movement of the Holy Spirit. The end-time revival will see both a continuation of the this mighty move and great manifestation of the Sovereignty of God: The sun darkening and the moon reddening followed by judgment on the nations and great deliverance of His people.

Ch 29 – Preparing the Church for the Final Great Awakening

In addition to seeking God in repentance, we need to restore the five-fold ministry. The five-fold ministry consists of four offices that are both God ordained and God appointed: apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastor-teachers. There are three marks of this type of ministry. The first is that these offices equip the saints to do what they do. The second is that every saint uses his or her gifts and service to build up the body, and the third is that authority is distributed according to a rational basis in gifting and service rather than arbitrarily posited by superior human authority.

The following text reveals to us God's plan for "The five-fold ministry." God has ordained four offices (pastor and teacher is one office) for the purpose of equipping the saints for ministry and doing ministry to build up and bring the extended body of Christ to maturity, preparing the Church for the end time revival.

"And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting 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 man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

"...That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight 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 4:11-16

The text is clear here that it is through these ministries that God brings the church to maturity. There are three levels of the five-fold ministry.

The first is that God uses selected people to equip the rest with the fundamentals needed for maturity (Eph 4:11-13.) This involves teaching, instruction, and apprenticeship in the giftings and service of the ministry. That is the purpose of my seven or so books I have written.

The second level begins when the church becomes adolescent. Eph_4:14-16 The church at large is equipped with the fundamentals necessary for Christian life and ministry. Each member—and not just certain people are used in ministry. The contributions of each member bring the church to sufficient maturity that she is able to enter into marriage with Christ at the marriage of the Lamb.

The third level is reached as the church understands that all true authority comes from God and is delagated according to an organic, rational basis rather than arbitrarily posited by human authority. Most churches today operate on a view of authority known as positivism. Positivism asserts that the only law and the only authority that exists are those posited by a recognized authority. In addition to being a circular begging the question, it denies the Supreme Authority of Christ. In this scheme, a pastor is pastor because he has been appointed. It is not necessary that he actually possess the capabilities or integrity to serve in that position. It only matters that he is pleasing to those who put in in that position. This positivism means that you have people who are

declared witnesses of Christ who have never seen Him nor known Him. The third level of the Five-Fold ministry obliterates this idol.

The fact that the Bible indicates that the church attains maturity as a result of the spiritual life of her members contributing to her growth indicates that there must be an end time revival and that the final condition of the church is better than the original condition.

The Church is called to attain the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. There are four end goals of the work of 'the five-fold ministry'. Eph 4:13 One of these is to attain the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. This means to get the full amount (measure) of the substance(stature) of everything Christ is and has (fullness of Christ). This refers to our glorified condition after the resurrection. The indication is that in the latter part of the church age the work of God's ministers will result in a massive end time revival or Final Great Awakening in the church or 'ekklesia.' This revival will usher in the return of Christ.

Jesus said in John 14:21 He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. The more we love and obey God the more that Christ will manifest Himself to us. Total love for God and Christ means complete and full manifestation of God in His fulness. the kind of manifestation or revelation of God that will occur at the second coming of Christ. When this happens Christ will reveal Himself completely with the Shouted Word of God and the dead in Christ will rise and those of us who are alive in Christ will be changed into incorruptible, immortal resurrection bodies.

For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: (17) Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. (18) Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

-1 Thess 4:16-18

The archangel proclaims God's Word that Christ has returned and with that proclamation and the blast of the seventh trumpet Jesus returns ready to do battle at Armageddon.

Ch 30 The Church as the Army of Israel

As we enter into the final chapter of human history, we will enter a time when carnal weapons will not be sufficient to win the day. It will be necessary to use spiritual weapons to both bring down spiritual strongholds and to release God's judgment on a world that is irrevocably in rebellion against Him.

We are living in an age where it is increasingly difficult, and sometimes impossible, to find justice in the courts of man. God's people are discovering that, with increasing frequency, God is the only recourse for justice. There are many in the church, however, that have been taught that both prayers for judgment and the ministry of judgment went out with the Old Testament and God does not do the terrible judgments of the Old Testament today. We are told in many quarters, that God is now only about love and redemption and not about judgment.

However, God's love and redemption must be seen in the context of His Law and Judgment. God metes out judgments partly because He is a loving God. Because He cares about humanity, He is interested in our liberty, safety, and security. This is why He outlaws murder, maiming, robbery, and rape. This is why Scripture references judgment against oppressors in numerous places.

We are living in an age where an increasing number of people will not listen to reason. It is also becoming increasingly difficult to appeal to righteous authorities – because there is a great scarcity of righteous authorities among earthly governments and political movements. God is our only hope for advancing justice or rescuing the oppressed. We are to seek God's power to bring justice for the oppressed. We must war

against Satan through imprecatory prayer—prayers for judgment. We are not to lust after the harm of people or gloat over the misfortune of the wicked. God does not take pleasure in the death of the wicked. But advancing God's justice and destroying the works of the devil will inevitably involve human casualties.

The ministry of imprecatory prayer is described in Psalm 149. We are told to have the praises of God in our mouths, and a sword in our hands (singular). According to Psalm 149 **All of God's saints** have the honor of meting out God's retribution upon the wicked. But how is this done? Is this a call to a Judeo-Christian version of jihad? Does God want us to become terrorists or is there another way to look at this text?

Praise ye the LORD. Sing unto the LORD a new song, and his praise in the congregation of saints. Let Israel rejoice in him that made him: let the children of Zion be joyful in their King. Let them praise his name in the dance: let them sing praises unto him with the timbrel and harp. For the LORD taketh pleasure in his people: he will beautify the meek with salvation. Let the saints be joyful in glory: let them sing aloud upon their beds. Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a twoedged sword in their hand; To execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people; To bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; To execute upon them the judgment written: this honour have all his saints. Praise ye the LORD. – Psalms 149:1–9 KJV

The Bible does not teach us to take over of the world by jihad. The Scriptures are clear that it is the Lord himself who will put down all authority and power. It is God's power and intervention that will end injustice, not the wrath of man, whether that be from Judeo-Christian jihad, Islamic jihad, Communist revolution or some other violent revolution.

The warfare described here is spiritual warfare. Ancient Israel never realized this honor completely. Many saints, in every season of time, lived as persecuted fugitives and felons. There has always been a need to seek God as the source of justice. Comparing Scripture with Scripture helps us get a clearer picture of the role of imprecatory prayers in attaining justice across the ages.

But I beseech you, that I may not be bold when I am present with that confidence, wherewith I think to be bold against some, which think of us as if we walked according to the flesh. For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled.

- 2 Corinthians 10:2-6

Our weapons are not carnal or flesh based. The weapons are spiritual. We are to pull down both the false philosophies of the world and the vanities that exalts themselves against Christ. There are two methods to neutralize Satan's schemes in the world thought systems: The effective preaching and teaching of the gospel to persuade hearts and renew minds (verse 5) and **revenging persistent disobedience** through God's judgment (verse 6).

Persuasive preaching only works on those who are open to the truth. Each of us who are saved are saved because we were persuaded that we were sinners in need of a saviour and that Jesus Christ saved us through the shedding of His blood on the cross. We live in a world where the

majority of people are not open to the truth. A Postmodern and emerging Post-Postmodern culture has no place for either absolute truth or the truth of the gospel. In those whose hearts and minds are open to ministry of the gospel, it is the power of God unto salvation. It is the power that engages in “...*Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God...*” and “...*bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ*“.

Thank God we are not limited to the ministry of persuasion. Our spiritual weapons can also “**revenge all disobedience**” After accomplishing a work of complete obedience of those being saved. Our warfare include retaliation upon injustice with spiritual weapons.

Examples of Imprecatory speech.

In Acts 13:6–12 we see the story of the conversion of Sergius Paulus, an official in Paphos. Paulus wanted to hear the Word of God from Paul and Barnabas, but a sorcerer named Elymas opposed the preaching of the gospel and sought to turn Paulus from the faith. Paul the apostle spoke the word of judgment and Elymas was made blind by the power of God.

And when they had gone through the isle unto Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Barjesus: Which was with the deputy of the country, Sergius Paulus, a prudent man; who called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear the word of God. But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith. Then Saul, (who also is called Paul,) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him, And said, O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord? And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and

thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand. Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord.

- Acts 13:6-12 KJV

This is not to be viewed as a unique incident but as a normal demonstration of power inherent in “*the doctrine of the Lord*” (verse 12). In 2 Tim 2:14-15 we read that Paul was hindered by Alexander the coppersmith. In this text Paul calls on God to reward him according to his deeds.

Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil: the Lord reward him according to his works: Of whom be thou ware also; for he hath greatly withstood our words.

- 2 Timothy 4:14-15 KJV

Matthew 23 is filled with imprecatory language. Jesus frequently (10 times) says “*woe*” to the Jewish religious leaders. In verses 32-39 Jesus pronounces judgment upon Israel for rejecting Him. The Lord Jesus commands that they “...*Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers...*” pronounces the judgment and then tells them “... *Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.*”

Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers. Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell? Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city: That upon you may

come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar...

...Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

– Matthew 23:32–39 KJV

Situations with Imprecatory implications.

The following situations do not involve God's people calling upon Him for judgment, but these show that even in the New Testament God is in the business of judgment upon the wicked.

But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, And kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet. But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God. And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things. And the young men arose, wound him up, and carried him out, and buried him...

...And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in. And Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much? And she said, Yea, for so much. Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out. Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost: and the young men came in, and found her dead, and, carrying her forth, buried her by her husband. And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things.

- Acts 5:1-11 KJV

Now as soon as it was day, there was no small stir among the soldiers, what was become of Peter. And when Herod had sought for him, and found him not, he examined the keepers, and commanded that they should be put to death. And he went down from Judaea to Caesarea, and there abode. And Herod was highly displeased with them of Tyre and Sidon: but they came with one accord to him, and, having made Blastus the king's chamberlain their friend, desired peace; because their country was nourished by the king's country. And upon a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat upon his throne, and made an oration unto them. And the people gave a shout, saying, It is the voice of a god, and not of a man. And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost. But the word of God grew and multiplied.

- Acts 12:18-24 KJV

Judgment in the Church

These situations involved God's judgment being invoked in the Church. It often involved someone "*being delivered unto Satan*" for a season, with Satan's torments and schemes being the means of punishment for

wickedness. It is not unusual for God to judge bad guys by allowing other bad guys to oppress them. The other bad guys will themselves will face judgment later. Old Testament examples of this is how God allowed Babylon to oppress wicked Judah and Jerusalem (read Jeremiah [chapters 1–37](#); [chapters 38–52](#); also [Habbakuk](#); also [Psalm 109:2–8](#) 😊) We also see several examples of this in the New Testament. One situation involved a man at Corinth who was having sexual relations with “*his father’s wife*,” and another situation involved Hymenaeus and Alexander who were engaging in blasphemy.

It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father’s wife. And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you. For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed, In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

– 1 Corinthians 5:1–5 KJV

Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck: Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme.

– 1 Timothy 1:19–20 KJV

The doctrinal basis of imprecatory prayer

The New Testament is not only full of examples of Imprecatory language bringing God's judgment, but in several places teaches the use of imprecatory speech as doctrine.

God gave the church the power to retain or remit (send away) sins in **John 20:18–24**. Some believe this was given only to leaders or apostles, but Mary Magdalene, not a leader, was numbered with the disciples. Thomas, an apostle, was not numbered among those who were first given this power. The disciples assembled, then, represented the entire church rather than merely the leadership. When Jesus gave the [Great Commission](#), He commanded the apostles to teach their disciples **everything** Jesus commanded. The truth of using imprecatory language to call down God's power upon the wicked was for all of the Church throughout the church age.

Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken these things unto her. Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. And when he had so said, he shewed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord. Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained. But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came.

- John 20:18–24 KJV

The Law did not completely cease to have legal force in the New Testament; only the legal construct of the Mosaic Covenant ceased. This meant that while the covenant relationship changed, the fundamental ethical and legal principles that are contained in and embodied by the covenant endured. In [Romans 7:1-6](#) It is written that we died to the Law so that we might be married to Christ. The law was given to be a school master to teach and train God's people until they have matured in the same way parents teach and train their children until they mature.

But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.

- Galatians 3:23-25

When children becomes mature, they are no longer in bondage to their parents authority. However, the principles taught during their minor years remain. In the same way, we are set free from the Mosaic judicial system when we find Christ because the Law may now be written in our hearts and minds.

Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my

people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

- Jeremiah 31:31-34 KJV

Whereof the Holy Ghost 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 KJV

God put His laws in our hearts and the law is to have force in our minds and hearts. The justice and judgment of God is to dwell within. The law is still there to be used; only our relationship with it is changed. We are to use it properly.

But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully; Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine; According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust...

...And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. This is a

faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.

- 1 Timothy 1:8-16 KJV

The Law still has legal force to condemn those who refuse to come to God and who still do the deeds of rebellion. The Law was intended as a schoolmaster to lead us to Christ – the background through which God’s offer of mercy is to be seen as the great offer it is. God offers us salvation and mercy because he Law requires that we die as criminals and suffer eternal punishment in the fire. Jesus Christ did not do away with the requirements of justice described in the Law but took the punishment for our sins. There is no contradiction between giving grace to those who receive His offer and punishing those who continue to reject His offer after having received ample opportunity.

Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward; How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?

- Hebrews 2:1-4 KJV

The role of imprecatory language in spiritual warfare

Ephesians 6:10–18 is a call to spiritual warfare. If we use the principle of comparing Scripture with Scripture and compare it with Isaiah 59:16 we get an expanded view of what spiritual warfare is.

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places...

...Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

– Ephesians 6:10–20 KJV

In transgressing and lying against the LORD, and departing away from our God, speaking oppression and revolt, conceiving and uttering from the heart words of falsehood. And judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off: for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter. Yea, truth faileth; and he that departeth from evil maketh

himself a prey: and the LORD saw it, and it displeased him that there was no judgment...

...And he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor: therefore his arm brought salvation unto him; and his righteousness, it sustained him. For he put on righteousness as a breastplate, and an helmet of salvation upon his head; and he put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloke. According to their deeds, accordingly he will repay, fury to his adversaries, recompence to his enemies; to the islands he will repay recompence...

...So shall they fear the name of the LORD from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun. When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him. And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the LORD.

- Isaiah 59:13-20 KJV

There is good reason that our spiritual armor is called the armor of God. It is because it is God's armor. When we fight in spiritual warfare we are fighting God's battles, as God's agents, using God's weapons, advancing God's justice. When we engage in spiritual warfare, we are engaging in God's vengeance.

Our target in this warfare is Satan and his kingdom. Flesh and blood are not the primary target. However a realistic view of spiritual warfare acknowledges that Satan uses flesh and blood as both weapons and warriors. Disarming Satan and destroying his weapons will inevitably involve human casualties. Isaiah 59 gives a broader view of God's

vengeance, as being both against both demonic and human adversaries of God. Warring against powers and principalities will involve human casualties among those humans who chose to remain Satan's henchmen.

Spiritual warfare involves imprecatory prayer and imprecatory language against both demons and people who refuse to repent but persist in opposing God's kingdom. We are told in Isaiah 59:19 "... **When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him...**" When Satan and his minions, both demonic and human, come in with overwhelming force; the Spirit of God will raise a battle standard against him. The battle standard is a call to battle and identifies an army on the battlefield.

We are living in the time where Satan is coming in like a flood. The Holy Spirit is calling God's people to battle. In these end times, let us seek the Lord God as the King of kings and Lord of lords to bring justice to the earth. All of this will culminate in his return to rule as the Lord of the earth

Appendix A: References to God in Locke's The Second Treatise

References to God in John Locke's Second Treatise on Government. These do not comprise every reference to God in the Second Treatise, but should give a good picture of Locke's view of the role of God in government. These references should also show that Locke was thinking from a Christian and not a deistic point of view. Locke employs both natural theology and Scriptural exegesis to make his case. These references also show that Locke viewed Scripture as authoritative. As this work, along with Locke's First Treatise were the seminal influence on the Founding Fathers, it is apparent that the roots of liberty had Christian antecedents. Locke drew from Christian thinkers such as John Milton and Richard Hooker. He then mixes Scripture with proofs from natural theology. It was truly from a Christian base that liberty sprung, and particularly the doctrine of God-given inalienable rights. Below are the references with some commentary.

Sec 8

In transgressing the law of nature, the offender declares himself to live by another rule than that of reason and common equity, which is that measure God has set to the actions of men, for their mutual security; and so he becomes dangerous to mankind (ch1 sec 8)

Defined reason and the innate sense of equity as the law of nature. Locke viewed God as the author of the law of nature.

Sec 11

That, he who has suffered the damage has a right to demand in his own name, and he alone can remit: the damnified person has this power of appropriating to himself the goods or service of the offender, by right of self-preservation, as every man has a power to punish the crime, to prevent its being committed again, by the right he has of preserving all mankind, and doing all reasonable things he can in order to that end: and thus it is, that every man, in the state of nature, has a power to kill a murderer, both to deter others from doing the like injury, which no reparation can compensate, by the example of the punishment that attends it from every body, and also to secure men from the attempts of a criminal, who having renounced reason, the common rule and measure God hath given to mankind, hath, by the unjust violence and slaughter he hath committed upon one, declared war against all mankind, and therefore may be destroyed as a lion or a tyger, one of those wild savage beasts, with whom men can have no society nor security: and upon this is grounded that great law of nature, Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed.

(ch 1, sec 11, the last sentence is from Gen 9:6, a direct command of God to kill murderers)

Refers to reason as the rule God has given to mankind. "That great law of nature, Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed" refers to Gen 9:6 as the basis for the capital punishment of murderers. Correctly notes that this Scriptural right of capital punishment was originally given to mankind in common.

Sec 21

Sec. 21. To avoid this state of war (wherein there is no appeal but to heaven, and wherein every the least difference is apt to end, where there is no authority to decide between the contenders) is one great reason of men's putting themselves into society, and quitting the state of nature: for where there is an authority, a power on earth, from which relief can be had by appeal, there the continuance of the state of war is excluded, and the controversy is decided by that power. Had there been any such court, any superior jurisdiction on earth, to determine the right between Jephtha and the Ammonites, they had never come to a state of war: but we see he was forced to appeal to heaven. The Lord the Judge (says he) be judge this day between the children of Israel and the children of Ammon, Judg. xi. 27. and then prosecuting, and relying on his appeal, he leads out his army to battle: and therefore in such controversies, where the question is put, who shall be judge? It cannot be meant, who shall decide the controversy; every one knows what Jephtha here tells us, that the Lord the Judge shall judge. Where there is no judge on earth, the appeal lies to God in heaven. That question then cannot mean, who shall judge, whether another hath put himself in a state of war with me, and whether I may, as Jephtha did, appeal to heaven in it? of that I myself can only be judge in my own conscience, as I will answer it, at the great day, to the supreme judge of all men.

(Chapter 3, Sec 21 – God as Supreme Judge; arbiter in state of war, civil society established to avoid constant state of war)

Locke asserts that God is the Supreme Judge of the World and arbiter of people who are in the state of war. This section is the likely source of the the phrase “Supreme Judge of the World” in the Declaration of

Independence. Locke draws from the Biblical story of Jephthah to make this point. Locke goes on to say that civil government is instituted to avoid a constant state of war.

Sec 25

Sec. 25. Whether we consider natural reason, which tells us, that men, being once born, have a right to their preservation, and consequently to meat and drink, and such other things as nature affords for their subsistence: or revelation, which gives us an account of those grants God made of the world to Adam, and to Noah, and his sons, it is very clear, that God, as king David says, Psal. cxv. 16. has given the earth to the children of men; given it to mankind in common. (ch 5, Sec 25)

Here Locke uses both natural theology and Scripture, specifically Psalm 115:16, to argue that God has given the earth as common property of humanity and not just to an elite.

Sec. 26

Sec. 26. God, who hath given the world to men in common, hath also given them reason to make use of it to the best advantage of life, and convenience. The earth, and all that is therein, is given to men for the support and comfort of their being.

(ch 5, sec 26 -)

God gave earth for man's benefit in common and gave man reason so that he could have optimal enjoyment.

Sec. 27

Sec. 27. Though the earth, and all inferior creatures, be common to all men, yet every man has a property in his own person: this no body has any right to but himself. The labour of his body, and the work of his hands, we may say, are properly his. Whatsoever then he removes out of the state that nature hath provided, and left it in, he hath mixed his labour with, and joined to it something that is his own, and thereby makes it his property. (Sec 27 – labor appropriates individual wealth).

While this section contains no references to God, it shows Locke's argument for private property ownership – when labor takes a common good out of the state of nature, it makes it private property of the laborer.

Sec 31

The same law of nature, that does by this means give us property, does also bound that property too. God has given us all things richly, 1 Tim. vi. 12 [1 Tim 6:12]. is the voice of reason confirmed by inspiration. But how far has he given it us? To enjoy. As much as any one can make use of to any advantage of life before it spoils, so much he may by his labour fix a property in: whatever is beyond this, is more than his share, and belongs to others. Nothing was made by God for man to spoil or destroy. (Sec 31)

Locke appeals to Scripture, albeit he gave an incorrect reference. Locke's reference is actually in 1 Tim 6:17 instead of 1 Tim 6:12, which says "***Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who***

giveth us richly all things to enjoy;” This section could be used to argue against Corporatization of all wealth, as Locke placed upper limits on one’s ability to take wealth from the state of nature. Locke does not further develop any idea of how to prevent “the 1%” from gobbling up all of the riches of the earth, but the Bible answers this with the institution of the Jubilee and James Harrington in his book Oceana develops these ideas further.

Sec 32

God, when he gave the world in common to all mankind, commanded man also to labour, and the penury of his condition required it of him. God and his reason commanded him to subdue the earth, i.e. improve it for the benefit of life, and therein lay out something upon it that was his own, his labour. He that in obedience to this command of God, subdued, tilled and sowed any part of it, thereby annexed to it something that was his property, which another had no title to, nor could without injury take from him.

Locke appeals to Scripture here, specifically to two commands in Genesis: Subduing the earth (Genesis 1:28) and laboring upon the earth (Genesis 2:15;3:17–19). Locke frequently mixes Scriptural exegesis with natural theology.

Ch 6 Sec. 56

Adam was created a perfect man, his body and mind in full possession of their strength and reason, and so was capable, from the first instant of his being to

provide for his own support and preservation, and govern his actions according to the dictates of the law of reason which God had implanted in him. From him the world is peopled with his descendants, who are all born infants, weak and helpless, without knowledge or understanding: but to supply the defects of this imperfect state, till the improvement of growth and age hath removed them, Adam and Eve, and after them all parents were, by the law of nature, under an obligation to preserve, nourish, and educate the children they had begotten; not as their own workmanship, but the workmanship of their own maker, the Almighty, to whom they were to be accountable for them.

Locke makes a two-fold assertion: asserts that the law of nature imposes an obligation on parents to nurture their children, and also that the Lord God Almighty will hold parents accountable for their actions as parents.

Sec 58

...for God having given man an understanding to direct his actions, has allowed him a freedom of will, and liberty of acting, as properly belonging thereunto, within the bounds of that law he is under.

Locke asserts that God has given humanity the three prerequisites to freedom: Reason necessary for decision-making, freedom to will amongst alternatives, and substantial ability to act upon decisions made.

The implication is that there exist God-given rights that are embedded into human nature.

Sec 67

The nourishment and education of their children is a charge so incumbent on parents for their children's good, that nothing can absolve them from taking care of it: and though the power of commanding and chastising them go along with it, yet God hath woven into the principles of human nature such a tenderness for their off-spring, that there is little fear that parents should use their power with too much rigour; the excess is seldom on the severe side, the strong byass of nature drawing the other way. And therefore God almighty when he would express his gentle dealing with the Israelites, he tells them, that though he chastened them, he chastened them as a man chastens his son, Deut. viii. 5. i.e. with tenderness and affection, and kept them under no severer discipline than what was absolutely best for them, and had been less kindness to have slackened. This is that power to which children are commanded obedience, that the pains and care of their parents may not be increased, or ill rewarded.

Locke argued that God embedded into human nature a tenderness towards one's offspring. He then refers to Deuteronomy 8:5, which describes God's relationship with the Israelites as a parent-child relationship. Locke's statement is still generally true today; Locke, however, did not anticipate the increase of depravity caused by the level of apostasy seen today which has diminished the natural love of many parents towards their children and other relatives (see Romans 1;18-32).

Sec 90

(The public power of all society is above every soul contained in the same*

society; and the principal use of that power is, to give laws unto all that are under it, which laws in such cases we must obey, unless there be reason shewed which may necessarily enforce, that the law of reason, or of God, doth enjoin the contrary, Hook. Eccl. Pol. I. i. Sect. 16.)

This simply asserts that both the higher natural law and the positive Law of God trump any and all positive laws of man. In the absence of such injunctions, the laws made by duly constituted “public power” of a society.

Sec. 101

Locke made three assertions here: Humanity lived in a state of nature prior to the development of civil society, civil society, with its governmental power, necessarily preceded the advent of writing, so there would be no documentary evidence from this period, God specifically intervened in the case of the Israelites. Archeology was a very young discipline in Locke’s time, but a vast body of archeological evidence exist to confirm Locke’s view of human existence prior to the emergence of the state.

Sec. 109.

And thus in Israel itself, the chief business of their judges, and first kings, seems to have been to be captains in war, and leaders of their armies; which (besides what is signified by going out and in before the people, which was, to march forth to war, and home again in the heads of their forces) appears plainly in the story of Iephthah. The Ammonites making war upon Israel, the Gileadites in fear send to Iephthah, a bastard of their family whom they had cast off, and entreat with him, if he will assist them against the Ammonites, to make him their ruler; which they do in these words, And the people made him head and captain over them, Judg. xi, ii. which was, as it seems, all one as to be judge. And he judged Israel, Judg. xii. 7. that is, was their captain-general six years. So when Iotham upbraids the Shechemites with the obligation they had to Gideon, who had been their judge and ruler, he tells them, He fought for you, and adventured his life far, and delivered you out of the hands of Midian, Judg. ix. 17. Nothing mentioned of him but what he did as a general: and indeed that is all is found in his history, or in any of the rest of the judges. And Abimelech particularly is called king, though at most he was but their general. And when, being weary of the ill conduct of Samuel's sons, the children of Israel desired a king, like all the nations to judge them, and to go out before them, and to fight their battles, I. Sam viii. 20. God granting their desire, says to Samuel, I will send thee a man, and thou shalt anoint him to be captain over my people Israel, that he may save my people out of the hands of the Philistines, ix. 16. As if the only business of a king had been to lead out their armies, and fight in their defence; and accordingly at his inauguration pouring a vial of oil upon him, declares to Saul, that the Lord had anointed him to be captain over his inheritance, x. 1. And therefore those, who after Saul's being solemnly chosen and saluted king by the tribes at Mispah, were unwilling

to have him their king, made no other objection but this, How shall this man save us? v. 27. as if they should have said, this man is unfit to be our king, not having skill and conduct enough in war, to be able to defend us. And when

God resolved to transfer the government to David, it is in these words, But now thy kingdom shall not continue: the Lord hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the Lord hath commanded him to be captain over his people, xiii. 14. As if the whole kingly authority were nothing else but to be their general: and therefore the tribes who had stuck to Saul's family, and opposed David's reign, when they came to Hebron with terms of submission to him, they tell him, amongst other arguments they had to submit to him as to their king, that he was in effect their king in Saul's time, and therefore they had no reason but to receive him as their king now. Also (say they) in time past, when Saul was king over us, thou wast he that reddest out and broughtest in Israel, and the Lord said unto thee, Thou shalt feed my people Israel, and thou shalt be a captain over Israel.

Locke made three assertions here: Humanity lived in a state of nature prior to the development of civil society, civil society, with its governmental power, necessarily preceded the advent of writing, so there would be no documentary evidence from this period, God specifically intervened in the case of the Israelites. Archeology was a very

young discipline in Locke's time, but a vast body of archeological evidence exist to confirm Locke's view of human existence prior to the emergence of the state.

Sec 134

(The lawful power of making laws to command whole politic societies of men, belonging so properly unto the same intire societies, that for any prince or potentate of what kind soever upon earth, to exercise the same of himself, and not by express commission immediately and personally received from God, or else by authority derived at the first from their consent, upon whose persons they impose laws, it is no better than mere tyranny. Laws they are not therefore which public approbation hath not made so. Hooker's Eccl. Pol. I. i. Sect. 10.*

Locke asserts that there are only two sources of moral authority to make laws: The positive grant of authority of God and consent of the people based on their natural rights. All laws outside of the scope of these are not legitimate. As we shall see in the next section, Locke viewed natural law as a subset of the law of God.

Sec 135

Thus the law of nature stands as an eternal rule to all men, legislators as well as others. The rules that they make for other men's actions, must, as well as their own and other men's actions, be conformable to the law of nature, i.e. to the will of God, of which that is a declaration, and the fundamental law of nature being the preservation of mankind, no human sanction can be good, or valid against it.

Here Locke equates the law of nature to the will of God. His numerous Scripture references indicate that Locke's concept of God was the Judeo-Christian God. This section is the likely source of the wording "laws of nature and nature's God" found in the Declaration of Independence

with this trust, that they shall be governed by declared laws, or else their peace, quiet, and property will still be at the same uncertainty, as it was in the state of nature.

(Human laws are measures in respect of men whose actions they must direct, howbeit such measures they are as have also their higher rules to be measured by, which rules are two, the law of God, and the law of nature; so that laws human must be made according to the general laws of nature, and without contradiction to any positive law of scripture, otherwise they are ill made. Hooker's Eccl. Pol. I. iii. Sect. 9.*

Locke here rejects the entire tradition of legal positivism. Law is not what legislative branch or other government entity arbitrarily decides that it is, but is bounds to the principles of justice. Locke viewed all form of arbitrary government as worse than the state of nature.

Locke cites Hooker, who lays out a two-fold basis of the higher law that frames the principles of justice. There is the natural law that God has embedded into creation, and the positive law of God revealed in the Scriptures. This distinction rules out pantheistic God as the source of natural law and points to the Judeo-Christian God. From this point on in the Second Treatise, Locke presents the law of nature and the positive law of God as distinct but connected subsets of the law of God.

Locke, along with many other Christian proponents, viewed God as working through nature (common grace) and special grace, revealing himself in both general and special revelation. They saw liberty as a common grace given by God to all people and as something that will not contradict the positive law of God given in the Scriptures.

These are the bounds which the trust, that is put in them by the society, and the law of God and nature, have set to the legislative power of every common-wealth, in all forms of government.

The law of nature and the positive law of God limit the scope of the positive laws of man.

Sec. 195

I will not dispute now whether princes are exempt from the laws of their country; but this I am sure, they owe subjection to the laws of God and nature. No body, no power, can exempt them from the obligations of that eternal law. Those are so great, and so strong, in the case of promises, that omnipotency itself can be tied by them. Grants, promises, and oaths, are bonds that hold the Almighty: whatever some flatterers say to princes of the world, who all together, with all their people joined to them, are, in comparison of the great God, but as a drop of the bucket, or a dust on the balance, inconsiderable, nothing!

Locke asserts that God is both sovereign and lawful here. Locke basis the statement "" on Isaiah 40: . God is infinitely more sovereign than all of the nations. God's sovereignty is not arbitrary, but logically and internally consistent and reflecting a uniquely Judeo-Christian understanding of divine sovereignty. God has given promises and keeps the ones he gives (1 Peter 1:4; Heb 6:18).

Sec 196

which is to have their yoke cast off, as soon as God shall give those under their subjection courage and opportunity to do it. Thus, notwithstanding whatever title the kings of Assyria had over Judah, by the sword, God assisted Hezekiah to throw off the dominion of that conquering empire. And the lord was with Hezekiah, and he prospered; wherefore he went forth, and he rebelled against the king of Assyria, and served him not, 2 Kings xviii. 7. Whence it is plain, that shaking off a power, which force, and not right, hath set over any one, though

Locke asserts specifically that God assisted Hezekiah in his rebellion against Assyria, and generally that God will assist those who throw off government based on force and not right.

Sec. 237

What then, can there no case happen wherein the people may of right, and by their own authority, help themselves, take arms, and set upon their king, imperiously domineering over them? None at all, whilst he remains a king. Honour the king, and he that resists the power, resists the ordinance of God; are divine oracles that will never permit it, The people therefore can never come by a power over him, unless he does something that makes him cease to be a king: for then he divests himself of his crown and dignity, and returns to the state of a private man, and the people become free and superior, the power which they had in the interregnum, before they crowned him king, devolving to them again.

Locke affirms the teaching of Romans 13:1–7, which says that rebellion against lawful government is resistance to the ordinance of God. Locke regarded Romans 13 as applying only to just governments. When the

text says *“For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil,”* it is limiting the definition of government to just

governments Only those governments that govern justly – for the good of the governed – have authority to do so. Locke saw this authority as God vindicating a social contract between the government and the people (see Sec 200 – *“The king binds himself by a double oath, to the observation of the fundamental laws of his kingdom; tacitly, as by being a king, and so bound to protect as well the people, as the laws of his kingdom; and expressly, by his oath at his coronation, so as every just king, in a settled kingdom, is bound to observe that paction made to his people, by his laws, in framing his government agreeable thereunto, according to that paction which God made with Noah after the deluge. Hereafter, seed-time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night, shall not cease while the earth remaineth. And therefore a king governing in a settled kingdom, leaves to be a king, and degenerates into a tyrant, as soon as he leaves off to rule according to his laws,”*)

Sec. 241

But farther, this question, (Who shall be judge?) cannot mean, that there is no judge at all: for where there is no judicature on earth, to decide controversies amongst men, God in heaven is judge. He alone, it is true, is judge of the right. But every man is judge for himself, as in all other

cases, so in this, whether another hath put himself into a state of war with him, and whether he should appeal to the Supreme Judge, as Jephtha did.

God is the Supreme Judge of the world, and the only appeal where there is no just, earthly power to judge.

[Appendix B: Citations of apologetics for Liberty](#)

Chapter 33 peekaboo