

Christian Life Digest

Featuring:

Doctrines of Grace, The Atonement, Sovereignty of God & Man's Free Will, Building A Christian Mindset, Manna In The Morning, The Virgin Birth, The Resurrection of Christ, The Incarnation of Christ, And The Mystery of Godliness

*Bible Teaching
For Today's Walk of Faith*

we walk by faith, not by sight

*Volume
#2*

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Christian Life Digest Preface

This Book is Volume Two of Five Volumes. Each volume focuses on different Biblical Teachings that are written as a resource for Christian growth.

The goal of each volume is to edify, and educate the Christian in the deeper things of God. This second volume addresses such concepts as The Atonement, The Resurrection, The Incarnation, The Virgin Birth, The Sovereignty of God, The Free Will of Man, The Doctrines of Grace And Building A Better Mindset.

The KJV of the bible is used most often as examples and referred to many times. It is considered by the author to be the most reliable source of knowledge and revelation in matters of Christian Living.

Introduction

Today's Christian church is in desperate need of sound Biblical doctrine. Heresy, False teachers and blatant errors have deceived and let many believers away from the simplicity of the gospel message.

Volume #2 of Christian Life Digest is an attempt to establish a strong foundation for believers as they seek to follow Jesus. Knowing the truth sets us free and gives us strength to walk with God through any circumstance. The right perspective is the sustaining force in living the Christian Life victoriously.

Most of us live our lives based upon assumptions that may or may not be true. Some folks don't even question the thought process that society says is the basis for living. There is a lie being spread that there is no "**Real Truth**" anymore. It seems to be your truth or my truth but never Absolute Truth. I guess that is why so many folks are confused and have difficulty trying to figure out their existence. The truth seems to elude them.

This confusion is not a new thing. It goes way back to the 1st century and is exemplified in the battle between believers concerning Law and Grace. We will begin this 2nd volume with the doctrines of grace so you can see what the Bible says and what it means to you as you walk with God in this world. This is also the basis for our everyday perspectives.

Once we discover the Doctrines of Grace, we will move to the other pillars of our faith that shape our very destiny. We will see the Lord in the scriptures and discover His magnificent love for us.

The term “Grace” is a translated word that comes from the Greek New Testament word *charis*. It means God's unmerited favor. It is kindness from God that we don't deserve. There is nothing we have done, nor can ever do to earn this favor. It is a gift from God. Grace is divine assistance given to humans for their regeneration (rebirth) or sanctification; a virtue coming from God; a state of sanctification enjoyed through divine favor.

Webster's New World College Dictionary provides this theological definition of grace: "The unmerited love and favor of God toward human beings; divine influence acting in a person to make the person pure and morally strong; a special virtue, gift, or help given to a person by God."

Two Schools of Thought

There are two schools of thought associated with Grace. One is Calvinistic. The other is Armenian. The main difference between the two is how they view Salvation. The Calvinists see a limited salvation just for the “Elect” that last for eternity. Whereas, the Armenians see an unlimited salvation (for all) but it could be lost, once found.

I tend to follow most of the Calvinistic view of Salvation. Here's why:

1. **The Elect of God is a result of the foreknowledge of God and man's Free Will...Romans 8:29** says, “*For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.*” The Bible is telling us that God, in His foreknowledge, knew who would believe in Christ and it is this group of folks, (The Elect) that God predetermines their destination. That destination is to be Christ-like. The purpose of God for doing this is so Christ can be the 1st born of many others.

This is a predestination based upon man's free will. It says that God could see ahead of when things actually happened and by looking ahead saw all those that chose Christ as their Savior. This is how the “Elect” is formed, not by God deciding to save some and damning others to hell but by whosoever wills.

2. **The Elect is not a chosen few but a harvest from all.** Jesus made this clear in **John 3:16**, *“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”*

This is not a “some saved and some not theology” but rather an all-knowing God seeing before hand and operating in accordance to man’s free will. The emphasis is on “Whosoever” The term implies everyone that chooses to qualify.

3. **Salvation is an eternal experience that is initiated by God, and kept by God.** Man will persevere until the end because of God’s seal of ownership. This is also easily explained by the scriptures, “You were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance” (**Ephesians 1:13–14**)

Here is a excerpt from an article I found on the Interned, www.Gracetoyou.com.

God’s Mark of Ownership

As one means of guaranteeing His promises to those who have received Jesus Christ, God has **sealed [them] in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise**. Every believer is given the very **Holy Spirit** of God the moment he trusts in Christ. “You are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwell-s in you,” Paul declares (**Rom. 8:9a**). Conversely, he goes on to say, “If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him” (**v. 9b**). Incredibly, the body of every true Christian is actually “a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in [him]” (**1 Cor. 6:19**).

When a person becomes a Christian, the Holy Spirit takes up residence in his life. Life in Jesus Christ is different because the Spirit of God is now within. He is there to empower us, equip us for ministry, and function through the gifts He has given us. The Holy Spirit is our Helper and Advocate. He protects and encourages us. He also guarantees our inheritance in Jesus Christ. “The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ” (**Rom. 8:16–17**). The Spirit of God is our securing force, our guarantee.

The sealing of which Paul speaks here refers to an official mark of identification that was placed on a letter, contract, or other important document. The seal usually was made from hot wax, which was placed on the document and then impressed with a signet ring. The document was thereby officially identified with and under the authority of the person to whom the signet belonged.

That is the idea behind our being **sealed in Him [Christ] with the Holy Spirit of promise**. The seal of God’s Spirit in the believer signifies four primary things: **Security, Authenticity, Ownership, and Authority**.

Roots of Arminianism

Arminianism, as mentioned above, is based on the theology of Dutch theologian Jacob Arminius (1560-1609). His opposition to some of the teachings of the Belgic Confession was formalized into five articles of Remonstrance published by his followers in 1610, on the heels of his death. This Remonstrance was the basis for formal debates in the Reformed churches and resulted in the national Synod of Dort (1618-1619) where *Arminianism was condemned by the State church*. Arminian theology later received official toleration by the State and has since continued in various forms within Protestantism.

John Wesley later adopted Arminianism and it has become the theological position of Methodism and the Wesleyan tradition. It was propagated in America through the revivalism of the *Second Great Awakening* and the revivalism of the Second Great Awakening and the burgeoning Methodist movement. It is also found today in other denominations such as the Nazarene, the Pentecostal, the Assemblies of God, the Churches of Christ, the Seventh-day Adventist and many Baptist groups. Elements of Arminianism (or its older sister Semi-Pelagianism) may also be found in Roman Catholicism.

Arminianism is perhaps most prominent in the Methodist movement and found in various other evangelical circles today. It stands in contrast to Calvinism, with which it has a long history of debate. Arminians as well as Calvinists appeal to various Scriptures and the early church fathers to support their respective views, however the differences remain — particularly as related to the sovereignty of God in salvation and the ideas of election and predestination.

“Doctrines of Grace”

The phrase “doctrines of grace” is used as a replacement for the term “Calvinism,” in order to remove the attention from John Calvin and instead focus on how the specific points are biblically and theologically sound. The phrase “doctrines of grace” describes the soteriological doctrines that are unique to Reformed theology, which is Calvinistic. These doctrines are summarized with the acronym **TULIP**. The **T** in **TULIP** stands for Total Depravity, **U** for Unconditional Election, **L** for Limited Atonement, **I** for Irresistible Grace, and **P** for Perseverance of the Saints.

Reformed Christians believe that all five of the doctrines of grace are derived directly from the Scripture and that the acronym **TULIP** accurately describes the Bible’s teaching on soteriology, which is the doctrine of salvation. The following is a brief description of each of the letters in the acronym **TULIP**.

Total Depravity - As a result of Adam’s fall, the entire human race is affected; all of Adam’s descendants are spiritually dead in their trespasses and sins (**Ephesians 2:1, 5**). Calvinists are quick to point out that this does not mean that all people are as bad as they could be. Rather, this doctrine says that, as a result of man’s fall in Adam, all people are radically depraved from the inside and that their depravity affects every area of their lives.

Unconditional Election - Because man is dead in sin, he is unable (and stubbornly unwilling) to initiate a saving response to God. In light of this, God, from eternity past, mercifully elected a particular people unto salvation (**Ephesians 1:4–6**). These people are comprised of men and women from every tribe, tongue, people, and nation (**Revelation 5:9**). Election and predestination are unconditional; they are not contingent on man's response to God's grace (**Romans 8:29–30; 9:11; Ephesians 1:11–12**) because man, in his fallen state, is both unable and unwilling to respond favorably to Christ's offer of salvation.

Limited Atonement - The purpose of Christ's atoning death was not to merely make men savable and thus leaving the salvation of humanity contingent on man's response to God's grace. Rather, the purpose of the atonement was to secure the redemption of a particular people (**Ephesians 1:4–6; John 17:9**). All whom God has elected and Christ died for will be saved (**John 6:37–40, 44**). Many Reformed Christians prefer the term "particular redemption" as they feel that this phrase more accurately captures the essence of this doctrine. It is not so much that Christ's atonement is limited as it is particular, intended for a specific people—God's elect.

Irresistible Grace - God has elected a particular people to be the recipients of Christ's atoning work. These people are drawn to Christ by a grace that is irresistible. When God calls, man responds (**John 6:37, 44; 10:16**). This teaching does not mean that God saves men against their will. Rather, God changes the heart of the rebellious unbeliever so that he now desires to repent and be saved. God's elect will be drawn to Him, and that grace that draws them is, in fact, irresistible. God replaces the unbeliever's heart of stone with a heart of flesh (**Ezekiel 36:26**). In Reformed theology, regeneration precedes faith.

Perseverance of the Saints - The particular people God has elected and drawn to Himself through the Holy Spirit will persevere in faith. None of those whom God has elected will be lost; they are eternally secure in Him (**John 10:27–29; Romans 8:29–30; Ephesians 1:3–14**). Some Reformed theologians prefer to use the term "Preservation of the Saints" as they believe that this choice of words more accurately describes how God is directly responsible for the preservation of His elect. It is clear in Scripture that Christ continues to intercede for His people (**Romans 8:34; Hebrews 7:25**). This continues to provide believers with the assurance that those that belong to Christ are eternally His.

These five doctrines together form the doctrines of grace, so called because they summarize the salvation experience as the result of the grace of God, who acts independently of man's will. No effort or act of man can add to the grace of God to bring about the redemption of the soul. For truly it is "by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast" (**Ephesians 2:8–9**).

Hyper Calvinism

Hyper-Calvinism is a branch of Protestant theology that denies a general design in the death of Jesus Christ, the idea of an indiscriminate free offer of the gospel to all persons and a universal duty to believe the Lord Jesus Christ died for them. It is at times regarded as a variation of Calvinism, but critics emphasize its differences to traditional Calvinistic beliefs.

If anyone believes that God has created souls damned to hell, and predestined them to hell, then they would be a poster child for Hyper Calvinism." - Ergun Caner, President of Liberty Theological Seminary.

Let's look at these two in a simple comparison.

Election...Calvinist say God elected to save some and not save others. This is a hyper viewpoint but nevertheless a mainstay of Presbyterianism today. **Armenians** say the election is not limited to a select few but open to all as stated by Jesus in **John 3:16**

Eternal Security...Calvinism, because of its doctrine of election, says that those chosen for election will persevere until the end and thus are eternally secure. It's called the **Perseverance of The Saints**. However, **Armenians** say that once saved does not mean eternally saved. They believe one can fall from grace because they ...sin for whatever reason. They perceive grace as a sort of perfection that is attainable but can be slip away if not held as a law to fulfill.

Limited Atonement... Calvinism says the blood of Christ is shed only for those who He elected to be saved before the foundation of the world. **Armenians** say the Christ died for the sins of the entire world, everyone who ever was or will be born into the Adamic race. Some will be saved and some will be lost but the ultimate choice is Man's free will.

Grace Explained

As I researched for this eBook, I came across an article by Joseph Prince. He is a pastor and evangelist with a clear message on grace. Here are some excerpts.

I asked the Lord once what it meant to live under grace. He said, "When you are conscious of My constant supply to you, you are living under grace.

Conversely, when you are conscious of the demand put on you to achieve, you are living under the law." Simply put, the principle of grace is *supply*, while the principle of the law is *demand*. The law says, "**You shall...You shall not...You shall...**" But under grace, God says, "**I will...I will...I will...**" (**Hebrews 8:10-12**) Can you see the difference? Under grace, **God is the one doing all the doing and supplying, not you**. Praise God, this is our relationship with Him under the new covenant of grace!

When you are demand-oriented, you see everything as a demand placed on you—“I must do this...I must do that...” The result? You feel stressed and pressurized to perform, meet people’s expectations and achieve results. But when you are living under grace, you see the rich supply from God providing whatever you need for your situation despite the demands. The result? You walk in peace and always see God’s provision because your eyes are focused on His unfailing supply. As we deal with life on a day-by-day basis, we can be demand-oriented or supply-oriented. So let me ask you this: Are you demand-oriented or supply-oriented?

Be Supply-Conscious

My friend, when you’re supply-oriented, you’ll see God work miracles in your life. Not long ago, I went to Universal Studios on the island of Sentosa, Singapore, with my family. While I was having some food at a food court, a lady who worked there walked right up to me and greeted me, “Pastor Prince!”

So I said, “Hi,” and she said, “Wow, I’m so glad to see you here.” She talked with me a little and then said, “You know, I’ve been having this pain in my back for the past few days. I prayed and asked God to send me someone and He sent you. Will you please pray for me?”

I looked around me. The setting wasn’t “right”. There wasn’t anointed worship music playing in the background. In fact, the food court was noisy with the chatter of people and the clatter of cutlery and crockery. I thought to myself, “You want me to pray for you here? Now?”

Then, I remembered what the Lord had been telling me about being supply-oriented. So I stood up, placed my hand gently on her elbow and said,

“Lord, I just thank You for Your supply of grace. I just thank You that there’s more grace here than her pain. I just thank You that You are healing her back now, adjusting and restoring whatever needs adjusting and restoring. I thank You that she’s completely healed in Jesus’ name.”

No fanfare, no feeling holy goose bumps running up and down my arms, just a simple, honest prayer. In the midst of the setting of that ordinary, noisy food court, I just saw the supply there for her healing.

After praying for this precious lady, I said to her, “Okay, don’t worry about the pain anymore. Don’t be conscious of it. Just ignore it. The Lord has healed you already.” She thanked me and went on talking about her family and other things. Then, all of a sudden, she said excitedly, “Oh, hey, it’s gone! The pain that’s been there for a number of days is GONE!”

I remember just standing there, looking at her, warmed by God’s love for the dear lady and amazed at the sheer simplicity of His grace toward us.

My friend, right in the ordinariness of everyday life, you can receive from the supply that is constantly flowing toward you. Do you need healing today? Do you need wisdom? Peace for a troubled heart? You can receive it right now if you can see His supply all around you, giving you what you need. It doesn't matter where you find yourself. You don't have to wait for the "right" time, place or external circumstances when it comes to asking and receiving from God. Simply look away from the demand, see His supply and receive by grace what you need.

Grace Over-Supplies Your Need

Jesus walked in supply-consciousness. In the account of the feeding of the 5,000, we see how the Lord was clearly conscious of heaven's supply in the face of scarcity. **(John 6:1–13)**

When Jesus saw the five loaves and two small fish, unlike His disciples, He didn't see the impossible demand placed on Him—feeding more than 5,000 hungry people with a boy's small lunch. He saw the supply. His disciples, on the other hand, saw the demand. It bothered them so much that they urged Him to send the people home. They were concerned that they did not have enough food for everyone nor did they have enough money to buy that much food.

But because Jesus saw the supply, He was able to thank the Father for the little that was in His hands, and the little multiplied and multiplied and kept on multiplying! Not only were the people fed till their bellies were bulging, but there were also 12 baskets full of leftovers! What an awesome miracle! When grace supplies, it's always exceedingly, abundantly and above all you can ever ask or imagine! **(Ephesians 3:20)**

Pause and think about this for a moment. Are you facing a five-loaves-and-two-small-fish situation in your life right now? Is there a situation of scarcity in your finances or family life? Are you struggling to find enough time to get your work done as well as spend quality time with your family? Whatever your area of lack, take some time to reread the last two paragraphs, and saturate your heart and mind with the largeness of God's heart and supply toward you. See the abundance Jesus wants to bless you with instead of your impossible situation and receive His supply with "12 baskets full of leftovers" in every area of insufficiency!

The Reason For Our Supply

Do you know why we can see that the supply is all around us? It's not because we are good or deserving. It's because 2,000 years ago, a lonely and beaten-beyond-recognition figure hung on Calvary's cross. Jesus chose to take our place and become a curse for us. Bearing our sins and our curse, He was cut off from all the blessings of God. He was cursed so that we can be blessed. He cried out, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" **(Matthew 27:46)** so that today, you and I can say, "My Father, my Father, why have You so blessed me?"

He was in darkness, so that we can be in eternal light. He took all that we deserved, so that we can be supplied with and receive all that He deserves **all the time!**

Grace Supplies Because Love Is Always Giving

My friend, it's not hard to understand how the grace of God is always supplying when you know that the essence of God Himself is love and that LOVE GIVES. The Bible says in two places "God is love". (**1 John 4:8, 16**)

John 3:16 tells us "For God so loved the world that He GAVE His only begotten Son..." Love **gives!** Love doesn't take. Love gives! In fact, love gives more than you can take! So God, who is defined as love, and who personifies perfect love, is always giving, giving, giving.

If you read the Gospels, you'll find that during His earthly ministry, God the Son was always giving. Jesus meant every word He said when He said, "...the Son of Man did not come to be served, but **to serve**, and **to give** His life a ransom for many." (**Matthew 20:28**)

Even in His glorified, resurrected form in heaven, He remains a servant forever, signified by the golden girdle around His waist. (**Revelation 1:13, KJV**) Yes, He is Lord of lords, King of kings, but according to His Word, He is also a servant who delights in serving and giving to you!

“Grace Supplies, Love Gives, Faith Takes”

The Lord said this to me once: "Grace supplies, love gives, faith takes". What does faith do? Faith takes. That's our part as believers. Our part is to take. I'm not talking about greed. I'm talking about understanding what faith simply is—faith is the hand that takes from the hand of God.

"But Pastor Prince, the Bible says that it is more blessed to give." (**Acts 20:35**)

Yes, that's true when it comes to our relationship with man. With our fellow man, it is more blessed to give than to receive. But when it comes to God, we please Him when we receive from Him. The Bible says that the lesser is always blessed by the greater. (**Hebrews 7:7**) Obviously, between God and us, God will always be the greater one. So when we humble ourselves and take our place as the receiver, we're letting God be God in our lives and He loves that.

Living A Life Of Thanksgiving

So here's the bottom-line: In God's kingdom, the supply never runs out. It only stops, as far as you are concerned, when you tell God to stop supplying. **You** decide. As your loving heavenly Father, God gives lavishly and freely to you. And He can do this judiciously because of His Son's finished work at the cross. God does not give with a miserly hand. He is not cheap or stingy. God loves you and His love gives. ***His love over-supplies.***

Your part is just to exercise faith by taking from God. People often say, "Depend on God. Depend on God." Sometimes, this sounds a bit abstract. How do you depend on God? You choose to see His loving heart and generous supply when others see only the demand. And you reach out in faith and take from God.

When you realize that it's all about God's love and undeserved favor toward you, you'll be thanking God all the time. Instead of complaining and being stressed out when you are demand-centered, you'll be at rest and have more than enough to give to others. My friend, may you choose to live in the realm of God's constant supply and lavish love!

Grace Through Faith

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast." **Ephesians 2:8-9.**

We have an abundance of grace available to us. More than we can ever use. However, that grace is hidden in the promises of God. It is our faith that appropriates the end result as we hook our faith onto the promise. By doing so, the grace of God fills our situation.

I can example this by showing you a scripture and how it brings the grace of God to us. Let's look at **Isaiah 53:5**

"But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed."

The scripture is a prophecy of Jesus' cross experience. Note that with His stripes we are healed. We gain our healing with the death of Jesus and His resurrection from the dead. If we hook our faith on this scripture and begin to thank God for healing us through the stripes of Jesus, we create a flow of Grace that will be sufficient for any situation. It will heal the broken heart, restore the soul, and mend the broken body.

Biblical Truths Associated With The Concept of Salvation By Grace.

In the New Testament, “grace” (156 times) takes on a special redemptive sense in which God makes available his favor on behalf of sinners, who actually do not deserve it.

There is tremendous emphasis in the New Testament upon the fact that human salvation is the result of Heaven’s grace. This beautiful truth should never be minimized. At the same time, it must not be perverted.

Let us consider some of the precious Bible truths associated with the concept of salvation by grace.

- 1. God’s Grace is freely given to all peoples.** It is not limited to a select few. “For the grace of God hath appeared, bringing salvation to all men” (**Tit. 2:11**).
- 2. God’s Grace is conditional upon Faith.** We must receive it by exercising our faith. The principle is illustrated by the example of Noah, who “found grace in the eyes of the Lord” (**Genesis 6:8**); and yet, as the writer of Hebrews shows, the patriarch and his family were saved by preparing an ark in obedience to God’s instruction (**Heb. 11:7; cf. Gen. 6:22**). Jehovah offered the grace. Noah, by faith, obeyed the Lord, and so was blessed. While God extends grace, human beings must be willing to receive the favor (**2 Cor. 6:1**).
- 3. God’s Grace is not earned.** We must constantly remind ourselves that humanity is not deserving of salvation. No one can “earn” pardon by works of human merit. If such were the case, we could boast regarding our redemption; however, that is impossible (**Eph. 2:8-9**).

Grace Verses Law

The Meaning of Law

Most people when they think of the law immediately think of the Ten Commandments. It is true that the Ten Commandments are a part of the law, but the law consisted of many more commandments and precepts besides the Ten Commandments. So when you read the word "law" in the Bible, it doesn't necessarily mean the Ten Commandments. When you read the expression, "the law," it means the entire law that God gave to Israel through Moses--ceremonial laws, judicial laws, morals laws, etc.

Never once do we read in the Bible of "moral law" and "ceremonial law." The Seventh-day Adventists, the Armstrongites, and other legalizers make a lot of to-do over the terms "moral law" and "ceremonial law." They contend that the ceremonial law was abolished

at the cross while the moral law still remains. But the Word of God teaches nothing of the kind.

Take a few examples of the use of the term "the law." In **I Corinthians 14:34**, women "are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law." Where does the law say this?... In **Genesis 3:16**. So Genesis is in the law. Again: "the law had said, Thou shalt not covet." (**Romans 7:7**) Where does the law say this? ...In **Exodus 20:17**. So Exodus, also, is in the law. Once more: "Master, which is the great commandment of the law?" (**Matthew 22:36**)

Jesus then makes two quotations from the law: *First*, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart." This is taken from **Deuteronomy 6:5**. So Deuteronomy, too, is in the law. *Second*, He said, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." This is from **Leviticus 19:18**. So Leviticus, likewise, is a part of the law. And then again: "Have ye not read in the law, how that on the Sabbath days the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath, and are blameless?" (**Matthew 12:5**) This is from **Numbers 28:9**. So it is plain to see that "the law" simply means all of the commandments that God gave to Israel through Moses.

Don't pay any attention to those false cults who try to pigeonhole the law. **James 2:10** says: "Whosoever shall keep the WHOLE LAW, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all."

There is no such thing as part of the Law of Moses being abolished, while a part remains. Either it is all done away or it is all in force.

The Beginning of The Law

When did the law have its beginning? The answer is found in **John 1:17**. *Notice*: "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." Could anything be more plainly stated? Could anything be more understandable? The law--all of the law--was given to a specific people, Israel, at a specific time. Moses gave the law to Israel exactly as he received it from Almighty God.

Does that mean that there was no law before Moses? Indeed it does not. God commanded Adam to eat freely of every tree in the Garden of Eden except one...the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. (**Genesis 2:17**) God's command to Adam was law--not the Law of Moses--but a command from God is Law! And if broken, judgment must follow.

However, there was no written law prior to the time of Moses. It is true that people sinned and their consciences convicted them. (**Romans 2:15**) But the written law of God did not come until the time of Moses.

The Law was never given to any other nation or people but the children of Israel. This is the statement of the Apostle Paul. He says: "When the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto

themselves." **(Romans 1:14)** This language admits of no misunderstanding nor quibbling. Speaking by the Holy Spirit, the Apostle authoritatively says: "The Gentiles, which have not the law."

"The Gentiles, these having not the law." This is the Holy Spirit's definite, dynamic declaration that in Paul's day the Gentiles did not have the law. If they did not have it in Paul's day, they did not have it before his day, because there is no account of it having been taken away from them at any time previous to his day. If they neither had it in his day, nor before his day, they have never had it at any time since his day.

If they did not have it before his day, in his day, nor since his day, they do not have it in this day.

The Law Was Given Not To Keep But To Break

Now I am going to make a statement, which no doubt will be, a shock to many of you. Did you know that the law was given to the children of Israel, not to keep but to break?

Listen:

"Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made." **(Galatians 3:19)**

Please notice--the law was added "because of transgressions." In other words, the law was added to reveal the true nature of unregenerate man.

There is no place in all the Word of God where the purpose of the law is more clearly set forth than in this verse.

God did not give the law to save men. The law has never saved a man and the law never will save men. Why? Simply because Jesus Christ is the only person who ever lived upon the face of this earth who kept God's law. And he kept it for us and died for us because we couldn't keep it.

If people want to know the truth concerning Christianity and the law, they could learn the truth by reading **Romans 10:4** and believing it:

"For Christ is the END OF THE LAW for righteousness to everyone that believeth."

When Christ died at the cross, He fulfilled the entire law. **(Matthew 5:17)** He said, "Not one jot or one tittle shall pass TILL all be fulfilled." **(Matthew 5:18)** Yes, Jesus came to fulfill the law, and He did exactly that. He fulfilled every jot and every tittle of the law. He satisfied the demands of God's holiness and God's purity. In the closing hours of His earthly ministry He said, "I have glorified Thee on the earth: I HAVE FINISHED THE WORK WHICH THOU GAVEST ME TO DO." (John 17:4) Again, just before He

bowed His head on His pulseless breast, He cried out from the cross, "IT IS FINISHED!"
(John 19:30)

Jesus did for us what we could never have done for ourselves. Jesus came to fulfill all the law because sinful man could not keep it.

The Purpose of The Law

Perhaps you are asking the question, "If the law does not save us or help to save us, what is the purpose of the law?" The only place to find the right answer is in the Word of God.

Notice:

"...By the law is the knowledge of sin." **(Romans 3:20)**

The law, therefore, is a revealer of sin. Sin was in the world before the coming of the law. **(Romans 5:13)**, but when the law came it drove sin out into the open.

The law is like a mirror. When we look in the mirror, we see the dirt on our face. The mirror cannot cleanse your face. It takes soap and water to do that. The same thing is true of the law. The law shows us that we are covered with the rottenness and filth of sin, but it cannot cleanse from sin. It takes the blood of Jesus Christ to do that. Here is a verse that sums up the whole purpose of the law:

"Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God."
(Romans 3:19)

Paul tells us here that the law was given to Israel to stop the mouth of every person who would teach salvation by the law. The only nation who has ever had the law was Israel. See **Romans 9:4, Nehemiah 9:13-14 and Exodus .**

The law was given to one nation to prove that the law could save no one. God tried it out on the Jewish nation for 1,500 years and proved that not a single, solitary person on the face of the earth is able to keep the law.

Yet, there are great religious denominations that are built on the idea that man can live according to the law and keep the law. In spite of this, Jesus said to the Jews in **John 7:19**: "...NONE OF YOU KEEPETH THE LAW..." What Jesus said to that group of religious leaders at the Feast of Tabernacles is just as true today. No one really keeps the law.

Notice--the Scripture refers to the law as a mouth stopper, not a heart opener. The law of God is the best mouth stopper on earth. When a man reads the law, it will immediately shut his mouth.

The law says: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." (**James 2:8**) How many of you would say that you love your neighbor like you love yourself? When you buy a new suit for yourself, do you buy a new suit for your neighbor? When you buy a new hat for yourself, do you buy a new hat for your neighbor? When you bake a cake for yourself, do you bake a cake for your neighbor? Do you see how the law tells you to shut your mouth—that you are not nearly as good as you think you are. This is God's mouth stopper.

Remember the rich young ruler who came to Jesus inquiring about eternal life? He had the popular idea that somehow he could be saved by keeping the law. But notice how quickly the law stopped his mouth. When he told Jesus that he had kept all the law from his youth up, he seemed to overlook what the law required. It demanded that he love the Lord with all his heart, soul, strength and mind. So Christ put him to the acid test.

He told him to go sell all he had, give to the poor and come follow Him. And the young man broke under the test because the Scripture says, "When the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful; for he had great possessions." (**Matthew 19:22**) You see how the law stopped his mouth. It showed him where his treasure was. It showed him that he loved his gold more than his God. He came to Jesus confident; he went away condemned. He came speaking; but he went away silent. The law had done its work. It proved itself to be God's mouth stopper.

The End of The Law

How long was the law to continue? This question is very plainly answered in God's Word. *Notice:*

"Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, TILL THE SEED SHOULD COME to whom the promise was made." (Galatians 3:19)

Now we know that the law was given to the nation of Israel. The Jews [Israelites] asked for it and they got it. (**Exodus 19:8**) For 2,000 years God had been dealing with the human race on a grace basis. Adam lived under grace. Noah lived under grace. Abraham lived under grace. But like so many people today, the Jews preferred law to grace so God let them have it.

Notice that Paul says the law was "added because of transgressions TILL the seed should come to whom the promise was made." Now Paul makes it crystal clear that the law had an end just as it had a beginning. "IT WAS ADDED...TILL THE SEED SHOULD COME." When the seed came (the Lord Jesus Christ), the law came to an end.

**"Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth."
(Romans 10:4)**

What The Law Cannot Do, Jesus Christ Did

In **Romans 8:3** we have this enlightening truth. *Please notice:* "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:" (**Romans 8:3**)

Now let us notice that God's saving grace goes further than the law ever did or ever could! Here it is expressly said that there were some things "the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh."

Some Things The Law Could Not Do

1. **The law could not give life****Galatians 3:21** says: "If there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law."

The law could not give life because it could not be kept. If you think you can keep the law, then you are better than the Jews who tried to keep it for 1,500 years and failed. They broke every law God ever gave them. In fact, Peter said at the church council at Jerusalem when discussing the Christian's relation to the law: "Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which NEITHER OUR FATHERS NOR WE WERE ABLE TO BEAR (keep)?" (**Acts 15:10**)

No, the law cannot give life, but Jesus came to give us His life. He said, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." (**John 10:10**)

2. **The law could not give righteousness...** It could not give righteousness for the same reason it could not give life--because it could not be kept. And so Paul says: "If righteousness comes by the law, then Christ is dead in vain." (**Galatians 2:21**)

If keeping the law could make us righteous before God, then the death of the Cross--was the most criminal blunder ever committed, the most useless shedding of blood God ever permitted.

No, the law could not give righteousness, but what the law could not do, Christ did. Christ is the righteousness of God; and when we are saved, His righteousness is imputed to us₆ so that God no longer sees us as the sinners we are by nature--but He sees us through the righteousness of His Son. (**Romans 3:21**)

3. **The law could not grant remission of sins...** Under the law the only blood ever shed was that of animals. But listen to what Paul says regarding such sacrifices:

"For it is NOT POSSIBLE that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins." (**Hebrews 10:4**) In **verse 11** we have this further statement, "And every priest stands daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, WHICH CAN NEVER take away sins."

Perhaps you are asking the question, "Are all those who died under the law of Moses lost?" No, because when Jesus shed His blood on the cross, it reached in both directions. It reached back to the creation of man and forward to the last man who shall ever be saved within this world. (**See Hebrews 9:15, Galatians 4:4-5 and Romans 3:25.**)

Conclusion

I will conclude with excerpts from an article I found on the Internet. It speaks to Grace as our teacher. I agree with all that is said.

Grace Is Our Teacher

Since we are not under law, how does God expect us to live today? The Word of God is very clear on this point. Notice: "This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh." (**Galatians 5:16**) "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." (**Romans 8:14**).

According to the New Testament, born again believers are to be led by the Holy Spirit. We are not to be led by the law or by the preacher in the pulpit or by a denominational machine. We now have the Spirit of God indwelling us to convict us of things that are wrong and to comfort us when we are walking in the steps of our Lord and Master.

In **Romans 8:2** we are told that the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made us free from the law of sin and death. We are now under a higher law, a better law, a greater law--*the law of the Spirit*.

When we believe on Christ, we receive a new teacher--one who not only will teach us what to do, but will give us the strength to do it as well. Listen to these Scriptures: "For the grace of God that brings salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world." (**Titus 2:11-12**)

Here we are told very plainly that God's grace is now our teacher. It says, "For the grace of God that brings salvation teaches us." It doesn't say, "The law of Moses that brings salvation teaches us." No! No! It says, "THE GRACE OF GOD...TEACHES US."

The law is not the rule of life for the Christian. The law served until the coming of Christ. When Christ came and was made a curse for us, He redeemed us from the law; so today we have a new teacher--GRACE!

It is the grace of God that teaches us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts. It is the grace of God that teaches us to live soberly and righteously and godly. The law was Israel's

schoolmaster, but "Grace" has become our teacher. Oh, how I praise God for that day when He delivered me from the thundering of the law and put me under His marvelous, matchless grace.

Beloved, if you want to be saved, do not trust in yourself to keep the law. The Lord Jesus Christ has already kept it to the letter and fulfilled it for you. He cried out at Calvary, "IT IS FINISHED!" And the work of redemption was finished. There is absolutely nothing that you can do, except acknowledge your lost condition and ask Him to save you. In His marvelous grace He will save you, for He has said, "Whosoever will may come." Won't you come to Him right now?

Excerpts from
Exit And Support Network, World Church of God
November 16, 2006

The Atonement

Introduction

The Bible's central message is atonement, that is to say, that God has provided a way for humanity to come back into harmonious relation with Him. This is apparent everywhere in Scripture. From the first stories in Genesis to the last visions of Revelation, God seeks to reconcile His people to Himself.

The Old Testament

In the Old Testament atonement, and related phrases, such as sacrifice of atonement, most often translates "mercy-seat" or the place where the sacrifice of atonement happens. These occur with meanings related to atonement around 140 times. The breadth of the use of the concept in the Old Testament is striking.

Sacrifice accomplishes atonement "for sins." Of course, the majority of all the references are to atonement on behalf of people, either individually or as members of the community of Israel.

Atonement can be associated with houses, temples and other inanimate objects. However, primary among the objects of atonement in the Old Testament are the people of God, but the means of atonement can vary. Goats, sheep, and birds are listed among the acceptable animals to be sacrificed, but there were also grain, oil, and drink offerings.

Certainly the most frequently mentioned means of atonement in the Old Testament were the blood sacrifices, dominating the use of the term by constant reference in the books of Leviticus and Numbers. Atonement needed to be made for everything from heinous

crimes like idolatry (**Num 16:47**) to mistakes of intent, when the only sin was ignorance or error, not willful disobedience. (**Num 15:22-29**)

The Day of Atonement

Perhaps the heart of the Old Testament teaching on atonement is found in Leviticus 16, where the regulations for the Day of Atonement occur. Five characteristics relating to the ritual of the Day of Atonement are worthy of note because they are generally true of atonement as it is found throughout Scripture:

- (1) the sovereignty of God in atonement;
- (2) the purpose and result of making atonement;
- (3) the two goats emphasize two different things, and the burning another, about the removal of sin;
- (4) that Aaron had to make special sacrifice for himself
- (5) the comprehensive quality of the act.

Atonement is clearly the action of God and not of man throughout the Bible, but especially in Leviticus 16. Aaron's two sons, Nadab and Abihu, had been recently put to death by the Lord for disobeying his command by offering "unauthorized fire" before the Lord. (**Lev 10:1-3**) Here God gives Aaron precise instructions concerning how He wants the sacrifices to be made, down to the clothes Aaron is to wear, the bathing rituals in which he is to engage, and the types of sacrificial animals he is to bring. His sovereignty is further emphasized by the fact that the lot is used to choose which goat will be sacrificed and which goat will serve as the scapegoat.

The purpose for the ritual is made very clear in several places. It is to cleanse you "from all your sins" (**Lev 16:30**). Other passages make it clear that such cleansing results in saving the life of the participant (**Lev 17:11**). The restoring of pure relationship is an important result, too, since the atonement is for all "uncleanness and rebellion of the Israelites, whatever their sins have been" (**Lev 16:16**). Thus Israel is reunited in purity to its God by the atoning sacrifice for sins.

The symbolic import of the sacrifices is so detailed that three different actions were necessary to display everything that God apparently intended us to understand about the way He was to deal with sin.

- (1) The sacrificial death of the first goat showed clearly that the offense of sin requires the punishment of death (**Ezra 18:4**).
- (2) The sending of the second goat into the wilderness with the sins laid on the top of its head emphasizes that sin will be removed from the person and the community "as far as the east is from the west" (**Psalms 103:12**).
- (3) The burning of the sacrifice so that it is consumed shows the power of God over sin, completely destroying it so that it can bother the supplicant no more.

Particularly important for the full biblical picture of atonement as it is found in Christ is the sacrifice Aaron makes for himself and his family (**Lev 16:11-14**). Everyone, even the high priest, is guilty and needs atonement that can only be provided by God Himself. The author of Hebrews emphasizes this point to make clear his doctrine of the purity of Christ as both the true and perfect sacrifice and the true and perfect priest who performs the ritual of atonement (**8:3-6 ; 9:6-15**).

The Old Testament sacrifices are shown to be but shadows of the real sacrifice of Christ on the cross by the fact of Aaron's sinfulness; an imperfect high priest cannot offer a true sacrifice, just as the blood of bulls and goats could never truly pay for the offense of human sin or substitute for the shedding of human blood.

Atonement covers all sins: intentional, unintentional, heinous, and trivial of those for whom it is intended. The comprehensive nature of the sacrifice of atonement prefigures the shedding of Christ's blood on the cross, but it limits its effects in the same way the Old Testament limits the effects of its sacrifice on the day of atonement to the people whom God has elected to call His own and to them alone.

The New Testament

The “ransom saying”, found in the Gospel of **Mark (10:45; and the parallel saying at Matt 20:28)**, offers a bit more insight into the atonement. Speaking in the context of the apostles' dispute over which of them is the greatest, Jesus relates His mission. Two things become apparent:

- (1) Serving all peoples.
- (2) Giving His life as a ransom for many.

Like many of the teachings of Jesus, the saying dramatically extends the answer to an immediate question (that of the selfishness and pride of the apostles) to include something that no one would have linked to that answer (the ransom nature of the cross). The saying primarily relates the death of Christ to the metaphor of service; giving His life is the greatest example of servanthood that can be imagined. The fact that His death is also a ransom links the idea of atonement to the servant spirit of the Christ.

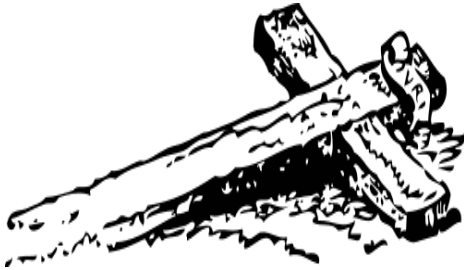
Crucifixion

Crucifixion is an ancient instrument of capital punishment: the method of slow and painful execution in which the victim is tied or nailed to a large wooden beam and left to hang for several days until eventual death from exhaustion and asphyxiation. This is what Jesus faced. He had to endure the cross, despising the shame in order to pay the penalty of our sins. The fact that it was during a feast and that He was already dead stopped him from being on the cross for days.

Benefits of The Atonement

Jesus was crucified to save those that believed in Him. If we qualify as a, “Whosoever Believes”, we are entitled to all the benefits that come with the plan. (**John 3:16**) tells us, **“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”** We can see by what Jesus said in this verse that the 1st two benefits of His death, burial and resurrection are a pardon from death...will not perish and the second being everlasting life.

It should be noted that the meaning of “Everlasting” is life without end. That only happens in God. His life never ends and He alone is life. Without Him, there is no life. So to have everlasting life is to be connected to the life-giver. Thus when we, as Christians, are “In Him” we are connected by faith, which is the same as believing.



I know that you may be questioning my premise and might feel that this looks like a limited grace designed for an elect few. However, that’s not what I mean. The call is open to WHOSOEVER WILL, which encompasses all of humanity. The sad part about it is that there will be only a select few that accept the invitation. This select few is prophesized as a, “Remnant”. That Remnant will

still be millions because they have been gathered from every county, every walk of life, and every century.

Other Important Benefits

1. Justification...Mankind’s sinful ~nature~ began in the Garden of Eden through Adam. It is through this genetic lineage we are forever cursed to be separated from God. But God had a plan to correct this sinfulness and the separation from Him through the atonement of sin, and avoiding the rightful and just punishment these murderous actions deserve.

Through the atonement given to us by the Grace of God the Father, through the death of His son, the Lord Jesus, we are no longer unjust in our sinfulness; we are changed and become justified through His shed blood. We then receive forgiveness of our sins and not the wrath of God as the righteous and just punishment; and once again we “man” can walk in harmony with God and with and within the rest of His creation. This is demonstrated in a number of Biblical passages. For those who are unfamiliar with Hebrew, the name Jesus or in the original Hebrew Yeshua, is translated as “salvation” or as “the salvation of Yah”.

Job 13:16-18... He also shall be my salvation, for a hypocrite could not come before Him. Listen carefully to my speech, and to my declaration with your ears. See now, I have prepared my case I know that I shall be vindicated.

Titus 3:7... that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

Romans 5:18.... Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life.

Galatians 2:16... knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.

2. Reconciliation...Being reconciled to God is to return to a friendship with our Creator. Just as God was with Abraham, His friend:

2Chr 20:7... "Are you not our God, who drove out the inhabitants of this land before your people Israel, and gave it to the descendants of Abraham your friend forever?"

James 2:23... "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."

By reconciliation, we return to that ability to walk with God as Adam walked with God in the Garden. We once again have a personal relationship with the Father through the Son.

Rom 5:10... For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

2 Cor 5:18-20... Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Not then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us; we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.

Eph 2:16... and that he might reconcile them (Jew & Gentile) both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity.

Col 1:19-22... For it pleased the Father that in Him (Jesus) all the fullness should dwell, and by him to reconcile all things to himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross. And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight.

3. Adoption... Another aspect of the Atonement is our becoming adopted heirs of the inheritance God has promised. God adopts each and every one of us who puts their trust in the Lord Yeshua and His sacrifice.

Mt 12:49-50... “And He stretched out his hands toward His disciples and said, “Here are My mother and My brothers! For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother.”

And thus we are adopted into God’s Righteous and Holy Family, and become heirs of His kingdom.

Rom 8:15... For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of Adoption by whom we cry out, “Abba, Father.” The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.

Rom 8:23... Not only that, but we also who have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.

Gal 4:5... “to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons”

Eph 1:5... Having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself according to the good pleasure of His will,

4. Sanctification... Sanctification, to be sanctified, made Holy, pure; this occurs only through the Atonement, which was made by the death of Jesus, the Messiah. It is through His death we are once again made pure in the sight of God the Father; we are then worthy of entering into the righteous Kingdom of Heaven.

John 17:19... “And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth.

Acts 20:32... So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.

Acts 26:18... “to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me”

1 Cor 1:2... To the church of God, which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints with all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:

1 Cor 6:10-11... Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortionists will inherit the kingdom of God and such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified in the name of Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.

Heb 2:11... For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren.

Heb 10:10... By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

Heb 10:14... For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.

Jude 1:1... To those who are called, sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ:

5. Access to God... As was mentioned before, once again we are able to approach God and able to speak to Him as children to their father. It was only through the shed blood of the Messiah and the Atonement, which that carried with it, was this made possible.

Rom 5:1-2... 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.

Eph 2:18... For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.

Eph 3:11-12... according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through faith in Him.

6. The removal of the Fear of Death... One of the most famous Biblical quotes is *John 3:16* "For God so loved the world He gave His only begotten Son to the end that all who believe in Him shall not die but have everlasting life" This exemplifies the removal of death and thereby the fear of it. We know from the fact of the Resurrection, we too shall be resurrected in due time at the last harvest. We know our souls can no longer be destroyed by anyone or anything and our eternal future is guaranteed in the Messiah. **Mt 10:28...** "And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both the soul and body in hell."



Mt 4:16... The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and upon those who sat in the region and shadow of death, Light has dawned.

1 Cor 15:21-26... For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. But each one in his own order; Christ the First fruits, afterward those who are Christ's at his coming; Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the

Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign till He has put all enemies under his feet, the last enemy that will be destroyed is death.

1 Cor 15:54-57... So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written “Death is swallowed up in victory” “Oh death, where is your sting? Oh Hades, where is your victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Hosea 13:14... “I will ransom them from the power of the grave, I will redeem them from death. Oh death I will be your plagues! Oh Grave I will be your destruction! Pity is hidden from My eyes”

2 Cor 1:9-10... Yes we had the sentence of death in ourselves that we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead, who delivered us from so great a death, and does deliver us; in whom we trust that He will still deliver us.

2 Tim 1:10... But has not been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel

2 Tim 2:11... This is a faithful saying: For if we died with Him, We shall also live with Him.

Heb 2:14-15... Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

1 John 3:14... We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren.

Rev 21:4 ...And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.

Our Glorious Inheritance

By becoming an heir through Jesus’ sacrifice, we then also become heirs of His Kingdom. God does not break His promises or covenants. That alone should be a comfort to all believers, (as well as to those who are seeking to believe).

Mt 19:29... And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My name’s sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life”

Mt 25:34... Then the King will say to those on his right hand, “Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world;

Heb 6:11-12... And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end, that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

1 Pet 3:8-9 ... Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous, not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing.

Rev 21:7... He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son.

Acts 20:32... So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.

Acts 26:18... “To open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified in Me.

Eph 1:11-14... In him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, that we who first trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of his glory.

Eph 1:18... the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,

Col 1:12... giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light.

Col 3:24 ... knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance, for you serve the Lord Christ.

Heb 9:15... And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.

1 Pet 1:3-4 ... Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the

resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you.

What has just been shown is how the Atonement made for our sins by the Lord Jesus carries with it many different aspects and rewards. From being justified, made pure and righteous, to becoming an adopted child of God and thereby becoming an heir to His kingdom; God has reconciled man to Him to once again be able to walk in the Garden in harmony with God. What an amazing statement that is, to be able to walk again in harmony with God.

It is almost inconceivable to think anyone can be in harmony with God, that awesome Creator with endless love for His creation. Boundless enough to take upon Himself the form of man and suffer the ultimate cruelties man can put another man through. The horrific and inhuman act of crucifixion; but God showed nothing is impossible as three days later He rose from the dead. One day we too shall be raised from the dead to be with the Lord in His kingdom. Bless His most Holy Name now and forever; amen.

Conclusion

As we have discussed, the Atonement is a Hebrew term, established by God for the salvation of His children. The premise for such an action is twofold.

1. Man was created as a sinless being but fell from that state into sin and must now embrace death as a penalty.
2. God, the creator new man would fall into sin and established a plan of salvation through His only Son, Jesus, the Christ.

All the Old Testament sacrifices were nothing more than a foreshadow of the ultimate sacrifice of Jesus. They could not atone for man's sin beyond one year. They were only a covering until the Lamb of God would come.

Old Testament saints had to put their trust in the atonement sacrifice in order to be forgiven and saved. They were trusting in an anointed one that would come. We trust in an anointed one that did come. His name is Jesus. Both Messiah and Christ are Hebrew and Greek names for Anointed. We should hold fast our confession of Christ and believe in Him forever for He is our Atoning Sacrifice that opens the door to heaven and a relationship with God.

**May the Lord bless you and keep you
in His Love & Grace**

The Sovereignty of God And Man's Free Will

Preface

This teaching will look at man's "Free Will" as it co-exists with "God's Sovereignty." We will explore Biblical definitions, examples and applications of how they operate in our lives.

We will call upon theologians, pastors and bible teachers for their impute so we get a really good picture.

The Bible will, however, be our main reference and when ever possible, we will be using the KJV.

We will try to answer theses questions and more as we get into the discussion:

1. Does God rule with an iron fist?
2. Does man really have a choice?
3. How does God know everything?
4. Can we really know God's will?
5. What does Sovereignty mean?
6. How does the nature of God determine His Will?
7. Why can't we just do our own thing?
8. Is there a way to align our will with God's?
9. Does God choose some and reject others?
10. Are bad things part of God's Sovereign Will?

Introduction

Am I in control of my own destiny or is it all planned out already and I am just a pawn in a much larger scheme? Sometimes I feel like I have no control over my life. Do you feel that way? The issue is of "Free Will" verses the Sovereignty of God. This has been a source of controversy in the church for centuries. Is God in control or am I? Can my will and God's will operate in the same moment of time?

God is the Potter and we are the clay, and the clay, Adam and Eve, were created with free will to have a loving, meaningful relationship with God and with each other. God did not create man in the image of a robot, without free will. God created Adam and Eve to reflect the most important characteristic of God, which is love. God is love and He is free to show His love to all of His creation. Likewise, He made Adam and Eve in His own image so that they could freely show their love to God and to each other, without sin. However, when Adam and Eve sinned, giving way to the temptation of Satan, their

free will became marred by sin. Of course, God knew beforehand that Adam and Eve would succumb to the temptation because He knows the end from the beginning.

God is the supreme Ruler over this universe that He created. His plan affects every detail of this creation. This plan is eternal, and there never was another plan. Thus, terms like purpose, foreknowledge, predestination, and election are logically related, and they are equally timeless.

Sovereignty And Foreknowledge

The **Sovereignty of God** is the Biblical teaching that all things are under God's rule and control, and that nothing happens without His direction. God works, not just some things, but all things, according to the counsel of His own will (see **Eph. 1:11**). His purposes are all-inclusive and never thwarted (see **Isa. 46:11**); nothing takes Him by surprise. The sovereignty of God is not merely that God has the power and right to govern all things, but that He does so, always and without exception. In other words, God is not merely sovereign in principle, but sovereign in practice.

I know what you may be thinking...how can God know everything about every creature. It's called Foreknowledge. He knows before it comes to pass. That is one of the ways that makes Him God and separates Him from us. There is a good example of foreknowledge in **Romans 8:29-30**. Here's what it says, "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.³⁰ Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

In plain English, this scripture says...God knew all of those who would come to Christ before they came to Christ. Because He knew ahead of time, He pre-determined their destination, which was to be like Christ. He did all of this so Christ could be the 1st born of many, a prototype. That's why we are justified by the blood of Christ and glorified with Him...because it is God's plan of the ages. All of this is done in the sovereignty of God. He alone has done this great thing for us who have believed.

"Although the sovereignty of God is universal and absolute, it is not the sovereignty of blind power. It is coupled with infinite wisdom, holiness, and love. This doctrine, when properly understood, is most comforting and reassuring. Who would not prefer to have his or her affairs in the hands of a God of infinite power, wisdom, holiness and love, rather than to have them left to fate, or chance, or irrevocable natural law, or to shortsighted and perverted self? Those who reject God's sovereignty should consider what alternatives they have left." Loraine Boettner. (There is none)

God created all beings including the angels but some have fallen. Let us be sure that this does not make God the author of sin, for, as man, they fell from their created state. This includes all false gods. But God is over them, whether they be angels, demons, or the god of this world, the devil. The Psalmist said, "..Thou are exalted far above all gods", **Psalm**

97:9, and again, "... Our Lord is above all gods," **Psalm 135.5**, and also "O give thanks unto the God of gods." **Psalm 136.2**.

Sovereignty And Omnipresence

The term omnipresent has caused trouble in Christian circles for years. Basically, being omnipresent means being present everywhere at the same time. Can this term be applied to God? What does Scripture tell us?

Ask yourself: is there any physical location in this universe where we can hide from the presence of God? The answer, according to Scripture, is a resounding "No!" In fact, King David posed this question directly, asking: "Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? If I ascend into heaven, You are there; if I make my bed in hell [the grave], behold, You are there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there Your hand shall lead me, and Your right hand shall hold me" (**Psalm 139:7–10**).

David answers the question beautifully: it is futile to search for a place to hide from the presence of God (and it is unwise to try—just ask Jonah!). In this sense, God's infallible word shows that He is omnipresent—within His vast creation, there is no place where you can hide from His presence.

Still, we must be careful with our terms! Many have tried to twist God's omnipresence to portray Him as some kind of shapeless "blob"—even though the Bible **clearly** shows that God has a body and a shape—and it is a shape like ours! Consider **Genesis 1:26**, which tells us that man is made in God's image and likeness—words that do convey a sense of shape. We do not use human philosophies to avoid the clear statements of Scripture! Consider, as well, the passage in which God says unambiguously that He has a face, a hand and a back (**Exodus 33:18–23**)! The only way to understand this passage from Exodus without making a mockery of God's word is to agree that God has a shape and a body!

So, how is God "everywhere"? We already read the answer, in David's words: "Where can I go from your Spirit?" (**Psalm 139:7**). It is by their Spirit that the Father and the glorified Christ have complete access to their creation! Through His Spirit, God's reach extends to every nook and cranny of the universe, and there is—as David wrote—no place to flee from His presence. Yet He still retains a shape—a body—ruling in glory from His throne in heaven. It is from there that "His eyes behold" the sons of men (**Psalm 11:4**).

We must also note that although God is omnipresent through His Spirit, we can become separated from Him. In fact, we are warned, "your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear" (**Isaiah 59:2**). Jesus Christ experienced this horrible separation during His crucifixion, when on our behalf He took upon Himself the full penalty of our sins (**cf. Mark 15:34; Isaiah 53:4–5**).

The world's scholars and theologians often have a wrong idea about God's omnipresence. But if we let God's flawless word teach us what God's omnipresence truly means, our footing is made sure.

Man may fight against God but he cannot win. He often uses evil men to accomplish His will in the battle. Jesus is said to have been slain from the foundation of the world, and the cross is one of the most credible evidences of God's Sovereignty. "Crucify Him," "Crucify Him", was their cry, but when they nailed Him to the cross, they did not realize they were fulfilling God's will for His Son. Peter said, "Him (Christ), being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." **Acts 2:23**. But this God of all power was not defeated in this evil act, for the Lord Jesus was raised from the dead. By it the devil was defeated and all his ministers of (self) righteousness. This is also a great example of Sovereignty and free will operating at the same time.

Judas, the one who betrayed him, had betrayed himself, and met his just due. John wrote, "...Jesus knew from the beginning...who should betray him. And he said, .. no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father .. Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil (i.e., slanderer) ... He spake of Judas ... for he it was that should betray him, being one of the twelve." (**John 6:64-71**.) Our God cannot fail, lie, or sin. Neither is He frustrated at man's failure.

God is the author of His sovereign grace and mercy. "For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy... And whom he will, he hardeneth." (**Rom. 9:15-16, 18**.)

This idea of God being in every place at all times is mindboggling. Think about it...as a believer, we know that we can walk with God, in His Spirit and communicate with Him in every situation. We trust that this is true because we believe that He is with us in everything we do and everywhere we go.

Now that you have a clearer understanding of the Sovereignty of God, let's talk about the Free Will of man. It's important to see that man is not sovereign. He is rarely in control of the events that shape his life. However, God has still given man a free will to choose his own lifestyle. In effect, we can be evil, nice, straight, gay or be and do anything we want. Our choices, however, comes with consequences. Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. (**Gal. 6:7**)

A Good Definition of Free Will

Pastor Steve Weaver writes, "A good definition of free will is the ability of the mind to make choices in accordance with our natures." This definition of "free will" also applies to God's free will. He too is bound by His nature. Therefore, He cannot sin! Why? Because it is not His nature! But God does have a free will and, unlike human beings, He has an accompanying good and holy nature."

Jonathan Edwards, a 17th century Christian preacher and theologian, said that the will is the mind choosing: though there is a distinction between mind and will, the two are inseparable in action. We do not make a choice without our mind's approving that choice. We choose according to our strongest inclination at a given moment.

The Bible teaches that I'm not free to choose God because it is contrary to my nature. That's why we need new natures that are given to us by the Holy Spirit at regeneration. Unless a man is "Born Again" he cannot enter or even see the kingdom of God (**John 3**).

Though man is commanded to seek the Lord while He may be found, and to come to Christ, we watch in vain for man to do so. **Romans 3:11** literally reads, "There is no God seeker." **John 6:44** says, "No one can come to Me, (Jesus), unless the Father who sent Me draws him and I will raise him up on the last day." Literally, the verse says, "no one is able."

Gerhard Kittel's Theological Dictionary of the New Testament says that the word translated draw in **John 6:44** means "to compel by irresistible authority." It was used in classical Greek for drawing water from a well. We do not entice or persuade water to leave the well; we force it against gravity to come up by drawing it. So it is with us. We are so depraved that God must drag us to himself." (Chosen by God)

The Controversy

The controversy is in whom God has chosen to be His sons and daughters. Hyper-Calvinists believe that some are chosen and some are not from the foundation of the world. Free Will folks, of which I am one, believe what Jesus said, as recorded in **John 3:16**, qualifies all that accept His invitation. Listen to the verse and pay particular attention to the word, "WHOSOEVER" "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that **whosoever** believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Jesus died for the sins of the whole world...every man, woman, boy and girl. The compelling call of God, through Jesus is an open invitation to whosoever will. These are the chosen of God that are pulled out of sin and given a new heart that can believe and worship Him.

Free Will & Sovereignty Working Hand And Hand

Now let's look at how free will and sovereignty work hand and hand in our daily lives to fulfill God's master plan for the ages. Miles Monroe, a famous evangelist, once explained it this way...when God created the earth; He drew up a master plan, like an architect, that took into account every soul and every action that man would take. Nothing was left out.

God is never taken by surprise because He saw it before the world was. It was put into His plan. Then He began to create, taking into account who would accept Jesus and who would not; who would need deliverance; who would need help, etc. Every prayer and every need was seen beforehand. Your provision was made way back then and is waiting for the right time. You just need to grab it by faith.

This pre-design gives us free will to choose without violating God's Sovereignty. I know that some will say, I prayed and believed but didn't get what I asked for. My provision didn't materialize. It could be as **James 4:3** says, "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts." David Wilkerson, the author of *The Cross & The Switchblade*, offers six reasons that prayers go unanswered.

1. Our Prayers Are Aborted When They Are Not According To God's Will.
2. Our Prayers Can Be Aborted When They Are Designed To Fulfill An Inner Lust, Dreams, Or Illusions.
3. Our Prayers Can Be Denied When We Show No Diligence to Assist God In The Answer.
4. Our Prayers Can Be Aborted By A Secret Grudge Lodged In The Heart Against Another.
5. Our Prayers Can Be Aborted By Not Expecting Much To Come of Them.
6. Our Prayers Are Aborted When We Ourselves Attempt To Prescribe How God Should Answer.

It is impossible for us to fully understand the dynamics of a holy God molding and shaping the will of man. Scripture is clear that God knows the future (**Matthew 6:8; Psalm 139:1-4**) and has total sovereign control over all things (**Colossians 1:16-17; Daniel 4:35**). The Bible also says that we must choose God or be eternally separated from Him. We are held responsible for our actions (**Romans 3:19; 6:23; 9:19-21**). How these facts work together is impossible for a finite mind to comprehend (**Romans 11:33-36**).

People can take one of two extremes in regard to this question. Some emphasize the sovereignty of God to the point that human beings are little more than robots, simply doing what they have been sovereignty programmed to do. Others emphasize free will to the point of God not having complete control and/or knowledge of all things. Neither of these positions is biblical. The truth is that God does not violate our wills by choosing us and redeeming us. Rather, He changes our hearts so that our wills choose Him. "We love Him because He first loved us" (**1 John 4:19**), and "You did not choose me, but I chose you" (**John 15:16**).

What are we to do then? **First**, we are to trust in the Lord, knowing that He is in control (**Proverbs 3:5-6**). God's sovereignty is supposed to be a comfort to us, not an issue to be concerned about or debate over. **Second**, we are to live our lives making wise decisions in accordance with God's Word (**2 Timothy 3:16-17; James 1:5**). There will be no excuses before God for why we chose to disobey Him. We will have no one to blame but ourselves for our sin. **Last but not least**, we are to worship the Lord, praising Him that

He is so wonderful, infinite, powerful, full of grace and mercy—and sovereign. (Got/Questions.org)

The Devil's Final Strategy

The devil's final strategy in deceiving believers is to make them doubt the faithfulness of God in answering prayer. Satan would have us believe God has shut His ears to our cry and left us to work things out for ourselves. *That's just not true.*

If you do not see the hand of God, you can bet that the problem is with you, not God. I'd suggest that you go back before the throne of God and stay there until you get an answer. Don't forget to take your Bible with you. "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." (**Hebrews 4:16**)

God dignifies us with free will, the power to make decisions of our own rather than having God or fate predetermine what we do. He desired freely given allegiance rather than robotic response to His will. Voluntary love and obedience are much better than automatic, predetermined responses. God created humankind with the option of loving and obeying Him, even though it meant that some would choose not to give allegiance to His rule. Freely given love is more valued than forced or parroted expressions. Since God has chosen to give humankind a free will, His sovereignty is not destroyed.

Consider now what the Bible teaches.

1. God created humans in his image. (**Genesis 1:26**) Unlike animals, which act mainly on instinct, we resemble our Creator in our capacity to display such qualities as love and justice. And like our Creator, we have free will.
2. To a great extent, we can determine our future. The Bible encourages us to "choose life . . . by listening to [God's] voice," that is, by choosing to obey his commands. (**Deuteronomy 30:19, 20**) This offer would be meaningless, even cruel, if we lacked free will. Instead of forcing us to do what he says, God warmly appeals to us: "O if only you would actually pay attention to my commandments! Then your peace would become just like a river."—**Isaiah 48:18.**
3. Our success or failure is not determined by fate. If we want to succeed at an endeavor, we must work hard. "All that your hand finds to do," says the Bible, "do with your very power."(**Ecclesiastes 9:10**) It also says: "The plans of the diligent one surely make for advantage."—**Proverbs 21:5.**

In God's great design for His creation, Free will is a precious gift from God, for it lets us love Him with our "whole heart"—because we want to.—**Matthew 22:37.**

The Trap of An Erroneous Conclusion

The devil will always seek to lead us into confusion where he suggests a course of action that is not correct. The trap of an erroneous conclusion is his first weapon of choice. Here's an example of an erroneous conclusion with a rebuttal.

Erroneous Conclusion: God cannot be trusted. He wasn't there when I needed Him. He is all-powerful, all-knowing and yet he did nothing. Trusting Him now seems pointless.

Rebuttal: Blaming God when things go wrong is a clear indication that you never really put your trust in Him to start with. God is in full control of His creation. Part of that control is to allow man to have a free will to also be in full control.

When you gather thousands or even a few folks together that are all exercising their free will, things can get ugly. Some will get drunk, others will kill or steal and yet others will exercise good judgment in life. All this interaction of free wills brings on different opinions, different lifestyles and different attitudes.

If God intervenes to stop the flow of our free will decisions, He tampers with the future and denies man his right to be a free moral agent. His actions would contradict His own will and plan for mankind. Man must be free to choose his own way in order to escape a robotic existence that is not what God or man wants.

The blame really lies with the free will decisions of mankind. That's why we have so many laws. We try to govern man's free will to diminish bad decisions that cause pain and suffering among the populace.

When you put your trust in God, you surrender your free will. He now is sovereign over your life. This is a huge commitment because you now desire to do the will of God and are willing to fore-go any and all self-rule. We call this, "Making Jesus Lord" over your life.

Allowing God to be sovereign over you does not stop the evil reign of Satan or eliminate bad things from popping up in your daily routine. It does, however, give you access to divine wisdom needed to handle a situation, power to withstand the temptations of the devil, weapons to wage war against the enemies of God and an assurance of ultimate victory.

You become a partner with your sovereign in the battle of the ages. Your faith in Him is essential. Without it, you cannot please him. **Hebrews 11:6** The apostle Paul said this, "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." **I Cor. 13:12**

To make judgments and assign blame when you do not see clearly is wrong. Sometimes it takes more faith to believe that God knows best than to draw an erroneous conclusion that blames God for the outcome of a life situation.

Just for the record, here's what the dictionary says about the word, "**Erroneous**" wrong; incorrect: "employers sometimes make erroneous assumptions" **synonyms**: wrong · incorrect · mistaken · in error · inaccurate · untrue · false · fallacious · unsound · specious · faulty · flawed · way out · full of holes.

Man's Free Will Can Keep God From Getting His Way But it'll All In His Master Plan

Listen to Kenneth Boa from Bible.org...The Bible assumes that people made in the image of the free Creator are capable of freely creating on their own. This is at least part of what Scripture means when it says that humans are made in God's image (**Gen. 1:26–27**). We reflect God's self-determination. We think, act and determine our destinies out of our "heart."

The Lord sets before us the possibilities of life or death. But we freely actualize whatever possibilities our "heart" desires. We can use our freedom of choice in ways that directly contradict the Lord's will or in support of His will. People are not puppets that God secretly controls, but free agents who possess significant control of their own lives, and can either cooperate with, or resist, the will of their sovereign Creator.

This contradicts the popular notion that everything in history reflects God's sovereign will. History rather frequently reflects the will of creatures who opposed the sovereign will of God. The Bible clearly teaches that God unequivocally does not will sin. But obviously sin still occurs. Similarly, the Bible explicitly states that it is not God's will that any person would perish (**1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Pet 3:9**).

But many nevertheless do perish. Hence, it is clear that God's will is not always accomplished, and God's heart is frequently grieved. Only in this light does Jesus' lament over Jerusalem make any sense: Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often I have desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! (**Matt. 23:37**)

The heart of God, clearly, is a heart which grants freedom, and which sometimes suffers profoundly because of it. In the case of **Matthew 23:37**, what the Son of God longed for He didn't get!

The fact that most theologians in the classical tradition found it necessary to attribute this lament not to the heart of the eternal God but only to the humanity of Christ simply testifies to the strength with which a non-biblical philosophical concept of God has held biblical truth hostage. However, It's all in God's Master Plan.

Reality In A Society of Free Wills

In any event, it is clear that the worldview of Scripture does not permit the assumption that the present reality (including sin and evil) can ultimately be explained by referring to a single divine will or mind. While the world as a whole has been created by God, the world as it is at any given moment is the result not only of God's will, but also the many other free will thinkers who possess the God-given ability to exercise their own wills, and thus to some extent determine the flow of world history.

The idea of reality or "the way things are" does not rest with God alone, but rather in the myriad of human wills that interact to shape the way things are at any given generation. This is not in contradiction to the Sovereignty of God that would say the God is in absolute control. He is, however, His control is self-determined by a nature of Love that allows man to think, make decisions and plan his own destiny, whether right or wrong.

I know what my Bible study friends will say next... They will refer to this scripture, "So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." **Isaiah 55:11**

It is true that God's word is supreme and absolute in every way. It is the very expression of His will. When He spoke in the beginning, it all came to pass. When He spoke through the prophets, it all came to be. Jesus is the Word incarnate or manifested in flesh. However, all of this does not alter the fact that God is sovereign and His will rules. The greatest thing I see is that, as recorded in Genesis, God rested on the 7th day from all, not some, but all His works. He saw you and me in all our rebellion, trying to shape our destinies but continually messing them up with a lack of vision and eternal insight. He rested from wrestling with our free wills in one big swoop, "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." **Romans 5:8**

God's sovereign will placed us in His Master Plan for redemption before He rested. If we realize this, we too can rest in the sovereignty of God's will that He knew what would befall our lives and how to help in times of need. We can rest in His love and trust in His will for us. When we do this, we come into agreement with God's will for us and immediately fall under His protection, provisions, counsel and grace.

Some Questions And Answers

- 1. Can we in any sense alter God's plan or will for our lives through our choices or our prayers?**

God in His providence always desires what is best for His children, in fact, for all of His creation. But He still recognizes our freedom to make choices, even when they are not in our best interest or in keeping with His desire that all persons would be saved. While our choices may keep us from reaching the high design God has for each of our lives, such willful failure in no way defeats God's greater design for His kingdom. He will

accomplish His larger purposes through other vessels if we choose not to respond to His loving overtures of salvation and righteousness. God is still sovereign, and neither Satan nor human free will can thwart that sovereignty. But God does not use His omnipotent sovereignty to violate the free will He has chosen to give all humankind. (Assemblies of God belief)

2. Do our prayers change God's mind or compromise His sovereignty?

Certainly not! God's foreknowledge of all that is going to happen assures that, while at the same time it does not negate the free will of humankind. It may appear to some that God changed His mind when in response to Abraham's request He promised to spare Sodom from judgment if there were sufficient righteous souls left in the city. But God knew all along how many there were, and His original intention was fulfilled. If prayer is made on behalf of a dying cancer victim, and healing comes, has God changed His mind? Again, certainly not. Into His relationship with His children, God has built a number of contingent promises. An example is **2 Chronicles 7:14**: "If my people...will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land." God in no way changes His mind nor gives up any of His sovereignty when He answers a prayer like that. And He tells us in His Word to pray for healing (**James 5:14,15**). His answer, whether yes or no, in no way changes His mind or threatens His sovereignty. (Assemblies of God belief)

3. What does divine sovereignty mean?

Divine sovereignty means that God is God in fact, as well as in name, that He is on the Throne of the universe, directing all things, working all things 'after the counsel of His own will' (**Eph. 1:11**)." "God's supremacy over the works of His hands is vividly depicted in Scripture.

4. Did God choose me or did I choose Him?

"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." **Romans 5:8**

John 6:44 says, "No one can come to Me, (Jesus), unless the Father who sent Me draws him and I will raise him up on the last day." Literally, the verse says, "no one is able."

God first chose us and we responded. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." **John 3:16**

Before creation, God chose us and made the provision, which was His only Son, to be the penalty for our sin. Then He left it up to us to respond to Him by exercising our free will.

5. How do we really know that God has a plan for us?

Jeremiah 29:11 gives us this insight: "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

Now this sounds like a really good plan and one that I want to be a part of. But is this plan one that will be carried out by God and unfold before us without us having to do anything? Do we just sit back and wait for good things to happen for us? God forbid!

Even though God wants great things for us, it is up to us to take the first steps to realizing the benefits of his plan. God may give us an initial push in the right direction but after that we are free to choose our own course. It is up to us to live up to our side of the plan.

There are many areas of the bible that we can look to and see how God wants us to hold up our side of His plan but one of the more pointed areas is in **Micah 6:8** where we are told: He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.

God has given us His ten commandments, which basically tell us to lead a morally pure life. He has asked us to take care of our fellow man and keep Him (God) foremost in our lives.

Even though God has asked these things of us, God does not control every aspect of our lives. We do have free will and we have the ability to exercise that free will. With that ability, when we chose to exercise our free will, we must also live with the consequences even if those consequences can be hurtful to us and those around us. (Excerpts from The Whisper of God)

6. How does God make all this happen?

Remember **Romans 8:28**? It says, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." Here's what it means to me:

- I am called by God according to His purposes.
- I do Love God and have exemplified it by my faith in Jesus.
- Even though I fall short of God's glory because of my sinful actions, He works it all together for good so I do not miss His blessings and that I stay on tract to inherit eternal life.

7. What role, if any, does Fate play in the Sovereignty of God?

A Full Definition of fate. 1 : the will or principle or determining cause by which things in general are believed to come to be as they are or events to happen as they do : destiny. 2 a : an inevitable and often adverse outcome, condition, or end b : disaster; especially : death.

There are those in Christian circles that believe that what happens in life, good or evil, is ordained by God. It is His Sovereign will. They say that God is responsible for all of life's situations. In this train of thought, Fate fits in well because, by definition, it is the cause of everything that happens and thus is another word for God's will. This type of thinking is not biblical. It has no place in reality.

Can you imagine God being the cause and responsible for over 50 million abortions, 29+ million killed by Hitler, a family's death in a house fire, and people killed in a plane crash? These things are not the work of God nor are they caused by His sovereign will. God allows man to think for himself and holds him accountable for his actions. If man does stupid things, it is not God's fault. It is man's fault.

Now let's look at Fate again. It has no foundation. It has no substance. It has no intelligence. It has no personality, compassion, love or even hate. It is only a hook for atheists to hang their hats on. They can say that they believe in Fate and not have to acknowledge the existence of God.

Conclusion

There should be no doubt in anyone's mind that the God of the Bible is absolutely sovereign over all. He is the creator of all things, living and non-living.

There is absolutely nothing that exists or can exist outside of God's sovereignty, including Satan. Good and evil are seen by God before they happen and are part of His plan for redemption or final judgment.

So, if your definition of 'free will' is the ability to make free choices, totally independent or outside of God's sovereignty, then there is no such thing as 'free will'. However, this is not how the Bible defines 'free will'. The Bible defines 'free will' as the freedom to make choices within the confines and boundaries set by God in accordance with His sovereign purpose for each individual and for all. Those who ignore God's Sovereign right and attempt to color outside the lines end up in a place the Bible calls, The Lake of Fire."

To believe that man has no free will is not an option because there are many verses in the Bible that support the concept of free will, for example: **Deuteronomy 30:19, John 7:17, 2 Corinthians 9:7, Galatians 6:7-10 and James 4:7-8**. It is important to believe in free will as taught in the Bible. Remove the concept of free will and we create a huge problem in understanding many aspects of life, including the understanding of God's love and His judgments. Without free will, our prayers and our relationship with God would become meaningless and we really would be reduced to mere robots. Yes, a robot can make choices, but it cannot have relationships.

The Bible makes it clear that we are not pawns in the hands of a deterministic and fatalistic universe. Every command in the Old and New Testaments is proof of the reality of human responsibility from God's perspective.

Though the human mind is inadequate to understand or explain the ways or mind of God, we have been given sufficient basis for placing trust in our sovereign, providential, personal, free-will granting Lord. He asks only that we trust Him, living by faith. We can confess with Paul, "We walk by faith, not by sight" (**2 Corinthians 5:7, KJV**). "Since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God" (**Romans 5:1,2, NIV**).

Therein lies our answer to whatever questions we have concerning God's sovereignty and providence in relation to our free will. (Assemblies of God belief)

One final thought. You may not be hearing the Lord because you are not "Born Again." Listen to what Jesus said, **John 10:26-27**, "but you do not believe because you are not part of my flock. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me." If you are not hearing His voice, well, what can I say? You are not of His flock? Only you can determine that.

It's a total life-changing commitment to follow Jesus. Maybe you did not make that kind of commitment. He must be Lord of all or He is not Lord at all. Here are a few scriptures to look up. I also have another eBook called, How To Be Born Again. It's in the text of Volume #1. Check it out..

**Check these out...John 3:16, Romans 3:3
and 3:23, Romans 5:8 and 5:12**

Building A Christian Mindset

Introduction

A Perspective Is A Mindset. It's How You Think.

The perspectives mentioned in this eBook are spiritual "Building Blocks". They will give you a mindset that will shape your thinking and change your reality. Each perspective is God sent and anointed so you can establish a way of thinking that honors your Heavenly Father and glorifies the name of Jesus. They are also "Spiritual Vitamins" that will strengthen your faith and shape your destiny.

All of the perspectives must be applied to your daily thought life in order to be of any benefit. Just knowing them will not accomplish any true mindset shift. You must take

them to heart and live in them. Make Them Your *Confession of Faith* and they will keep you walking in faith and doing God's will.

I have presented each perspective as my own confession of faith. I look at them often and believe them with my whole heart. I have noticed that this process has indeed caused me to walk in the Spirit, identify evil attacks and snares, and made it easier to discern the Will of God in my daily life.

It is my hope that those that read this eBook will study each perspective and make them their confession of faith too. They are life changing for sure.

We will be discussing many different perspectives. As I mentioned previously, each perspective is a "Building Block" that, when attached to each other, form a Christian Mindset. Listed below is an alphabetical listing of those perspectives. They are Life changing perspectives. If you see one in the Scriptures that I missed email me and I will review it for future additions. Here's my current list:

A "Can Do" Attitude
Accepted And Loved
Agreeing With God
All Things Work Together
Angels In Our Midst
Anger Management
Attaining God's Direction
Being Filled With God's Spirit
Being Happy In The Lord

Confusion Is Anti-God
Divine Healing
Divine Instruction & Counsel

Great & Precious Promises
Growing In God's \Grace
Jesus Is Coming Soon
Living By Faith
Opening Heavens Door
Overcoming Evil With Good
Rejoice & Be Glad

Doing My Best
Don't Worry About The Future
Every Need Met
Fear Is Not From God
Fear of Evil Dooers
Establishing Your Thoughts
Finding Rest
Finding Strength In Weakness
Forgiving Enemies
Giving Thanks
God's Peace Decides
God At Work In Us

Renewal of Strength
Spiritual Authority
Stopping The Reign of Sin
The Enemy
The Transformation Process
Things Have Reasons

Being Accepted And Loved

Perspective #1... I Am Loved And Accepted By God.

What Other Folks Think Just Doesn't Matter. Listen to what it says...

”For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” **(John 3:16)**

Sometimes we get all caught up in what other folks think. We even, at times, strive to fit in by doing things we ought not to have done. The need to be accepted is a powerful strain on our well-being. Once we realize that we are accepted and loved by God, things suddenly change. What others think just doesn't matter. We are free to live out our Christianity as the Holy Spirit directs. Having this mindset liberates us so we can soar like an eagle above all the negativity that life throws at us.

The Enemy of Your Soul

Perspective #2... The Devil Is An Evil Spirit.

I will resist the devil and his influence at all times. Here's what Jesus said...

”The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.” **(John 10:10)**

The devil is a real being and he is evil. Jesus refers to him as a thief that comes to kill, steal and destroy. Knowing this gives us a chance to defend ourselves. God will teach our hands to war and give us the weapons to fight the good fight of faith.

I Peter 5:8-9 tells us...”Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.”

The devil will use immorality, drugs, power, fame, riches or anything else he can find to capture us and convince us to do his will. If we know that he is behind a thing, we can protect ourselves before his kill, steal or destroy goals are accomplished.

Spiritual Authority

Perspective #3... I Have Authority Over Evil Spirits.

The devil and all his followers were defeated by Jesus and now must obey our commands. Listen again...

”For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalts itself above the knowledge of God” **(II Corinthians 10:4-7)**

Evil spirits are real and they are bent on attacking God's children. They don't want us to manifest the fruit of God's Spirit upon the earth. (See Galatians 5) However, they are not

more powerful than Jesus who gave us the keys to His kingdom and said to resist evil and it will flee from you. (I Peter 5:8) Thus we now have authority over evil spirits and they must obey us...as long as we speak the Word of God against them like Jesus did. He used scripture. Remember, the battle is for supremacy over your mind. Our bodies are temples that manifest good or evil.

Our weapons are such that we can cast down lies and imaginations. We actually dispel them by holding them up to the light of the knowledge of God that He has given us. We use the truth to dispel the lie. Thus...when we feel unloved, we take the truth of John 3:16 and speak it to ourselves until it takes root. We speak the scriptures.

God's Peace Decides

Perspective #4...I Will Allow The Peace of God To Be My Referee In All My Decisions And Life Experiences.

Listen... "And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful." (**Colossians 3:15**)

This scripture actually encourages us to let the peace of God rule. The peace of God rules by refereeing every situation. He tells us when to proceed and when to back off. If you lose your peace, stop. If your peace remains, proceed. It's not rocket science. It's actually easy as long as you put God's will before yours.

Confusion Is Anti-God

Perspective #5... When I Am Confused, I Will Stop All Decision-Making Activity And Seek The Lord For His Peace And Wisdom. Hear this..._Confusion Is Not of God.

"For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints" (**I Corinthians 14:33**)

Confusion is usually a result of going forward when you have no peace about the situation you are faced with. Realizing that your confusion does not originate with your loving Heavenly Father will shake you back into reality. The sobering fact is... the source of your confusion is most likely YOU, because you did not allow God's peace to rule in the first place. The most important thing to remember when you are confused is to STOP AND PRAY.

Fear Is Not From God

Perspective #6... I Will Not Be Afraid Because *Fear Is Not From My Heavenly Father.*

I Can And Will Overcome Those Things That Frighten Me. Listen...

”For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.” **(II Timothy 1:7)**

The scriptures tell us that God has not given us a spirit of fear but rather a Spirit of Power, Love and a Sound Mind. Knowing this assures us that when we fear, it comes from an evil source and we are to resist it in the faith and seek the Lord for protection. We are challenged to fight the good fight of Faith. “fear not” (“do not be afraid”, “do not fear”, “be not afraid”, “Fret not”) is used over 110 times in the Bible. God is with us so why be afraid?

All Things Work Together

Perspective #7... All Things Will Work Together For My Good.

I Reverence God And Have Been Called By God According To His Purposes. That qualifies me for this promise. This is what it says...

“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.” **(Romans 8:28)**

All things mean all things, no matter how terrible they may be. It does not say that God sent them your way. He is not the enemy. He does no evil. However, He does work evil things together with good things in an effort to nullify the work of evil and ultimately bless you. Say it with me, “Things will work out because God is in the midst of that thing.”

Things Have Reasons

Perspective #8... I Will Not Let Situations That Are Beyond My Control Frustrate Me Or Get Me Angry. Hear Jesus again...

”Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?” Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are ye not much better than they?” **(Matthew 6:25-26)**

Considering that God works all things together for good, I can relax when things do not go my way, knowing that there is a reason for what is happening. I just don’t see it right now. I need to trust in the Lord that He sees and is actively working in my best interest. Keep your cool and let God be God in your life.

******* There Must Be A Reason For That *******

Jesus Is Coming Soon

Perspective #9... I will make myself ready because Jesus Is Coming Soon.

He Will Set Everything In Order And Rid This World of Evil. I Will Look For His Return And I Will Be Ready.

Listen again ... “He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.” **(Revelation 22:20)**

There is no benefit in vengence or continual hate. Why?, because Jesus is coming soon and when He returns, He will set all things straight. Those that plot in secret to do you harm will be exposed in the light of God’s glory to their shame. They will not get away with anything.

Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, *Vengeance is mine*; I will repay, saith the Lord. **(Romans 12:19)**

That doesn’t mean we can not defend ourselves from an attacker. It does mean that we, when wronged by another, should not take revenge or seek to punish them for their actions. That is God’s job.

Angels In Our Midst

Perspective #10...I Can Relax And Feel Safe, Even Though Times Are Getting Worse Because God’s Angels Will Protect Me.

Listen to the scriptures... ”The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them. O taste and see that the Lord” **(Psalm 34:7-9)**

The Angel of the Lord actually sets up his camp of warring angels all around you, that is, if you reverence God. Note: all Christians are called according to His purposes. He has called us unto Himself and for His glory. However, not all Christians reverence Him. Some deny His Lordship, divinity, atonement and other fundamentals of the faith. The true nature of their beliefs is not rooted in Christ. If we love Him, we will obey His Word and follow Him in this life. When we do this, He sends His army of angels to deliver us.

Removal of Personal Sin

Perspective #11... I will confess my sins to God, knowing that He will forgive me and cleanse me from all unrighteousness.

This is what the Apostle John said...

”If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” *1 John 1:9*

Failing to confess your sins to God keeps you from His blessings...not because He rejects you but because you do not feel comfortable in His presence and draw back. It is called “Backsliding”. When you ask for forgiveness, you acknowledge your faults and seek to repent. This pleases God and keeps you in His grace. Thus you proceed with a clean heart and a clear conscience.

Rejoice & Be Glad

Perspective # 12...I will rejoice and be glad that I am alive because God made this day just for me.

Hear for yourself...” This is the day the Lord has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.”
Psalm 118:24

The Lord has made the day...this is that day. What shall we do with it? We shall rejoice and be glad because He is in control of the day and not the evil one. When I decide to rejoice and be glad, I personify His love and glory in a positive attitude that gives me strength. It’s all-good.

A “Can Do” Attitude

Perspective #13...I can do all things through Christ because He gives me strength to do so.

Listen to the Apostle Paul... “I can do all this through him who gives me strength”
Philippians 4:13

When we are faced with adversity, hard times, weak faith, doubt, confusion and negative feeling, we can speak forth what obviously does not exist but can if we fight for it. The phrase is, “I can”... I can be happy. I can get well. I can love again. I can, I can... I can do all things through Jesus who gives me strength.

Notice that you do not confess or even try to do anything in your own strength. You focus on Jesus and His strength to get it done or get through the day or change from sad to happy. Your faith is in His power not you abilities.

Finding Rest

Perspective #14... I will rest in the Lord, knowing that the battle is His to Fight and Win.

Listen...” The LORD will fight for you; you need only to be still.” **Exodus 14:14**
That was true for Old Testament saints and it remains true for us.

In a troubled world with uninvited experiences, it can get really hectic. However, if we know God, have seen His power in our lives and really trust in Him, we can rest from the worry, stress, fear, confusion or whatever. God is greater than all of this and He is working all things together for good, Right? Right!

Rest My Child

Rest, my child, sayeth the Lord
Take thy peace and be restored.
I have provided, thy mouth to feed.
From the beginning, I knew your need.

Do not worry, fret or even fear,
For my child, I am always near
To bless thy soul with love and grace,
To be with thee, face to face.

Come, my child, near to my throne.
Do not allow your faith to roam.
For those who will not believe
Can never find rest in times of need.

My Word shall see you through.
My grace I freely give to you
That you should rest, thy soul to keep,
Forever delivered from unbelief.

Written By Rev.
John Marinelli

Divine Instruction & Counsel

Perspective #15...I will take counsel and daily inspiration from the Bible, God’s Holy Word.

II Timothy 3:16 says...“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” & **Psalm 119:105** “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.”

God gave us His Holy Bible as a life-long resource. We can draw inspiration, faith, hope and power for every situation. If you discount the bible, you sign your own death warrant because that is where you discover the Christ of Calvary.

Remaining In Perfect Peace

Perspective #16... I will strive to keep my mind stayed upon the Lord so I can remain in perfect peace.

“Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee:” **Isaiah 26:3**

Remaining in perfect peace in a world of terrorism, political unrest, liberalism and the like is really hard. However, staying in the peace of God can be achieved. It takes only a concentrated effort to stay or focus continually on the Lord and His Will for your life. The question is, “*What Now Lord*” Keep asking and He will direct you. You do not have to make decisions on your own. The degree of your success is equal to your dependency upon the Lord.

Renewal of Strength

Perspective #17... I will wait upon the Lord until my strength is Renewed so I can soar with the wings of eagles, run and not be weary and walk and not faint.

Hear it again...“But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and walk and not faint” **Isaiah 40:31**

It’s fun to soar with eagle’s wings, run and not get tired and walk without being weary. It happens when we wait for strength, direction and power. It’s only then, when we have a goal, a plan of action and a vision, that we can move ahead. It all comes to us from God so we can accomplish His will. Waiting is not so bad.

Every Need Met

Perspective #18... I will seek first the Kingdom of God, knowing that God will supply everything else.

Here’s what 4:19 says, “But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus” **Matthew 6:33 & Phillipians 4:19**

Seeking the kingdom of God first is a matter of setting priorities in your life. Is He first or are you? Is He the source of your strength and very existence or is it something else? All

must come from God. When He is in control, He supplies all that you need and there is no sorrow or torment attached to it.

Opening Heavens Door

Perspective #19.....I will knock at the door of heaven, seek so I may find and ask that I may receive, knowing that God will open the door, hear my petitions and bless me with whatsoever I ask of Him.

“Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you” “And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive”
Matthew 7:7 & Matthew 21:22

We are instructed to “Knock”, “Seek” and “Ask.” God wants us to participate with Him in life’s every moment. We are not a robot. We are His children and He loves us and wants to bless us as we participate in His divine plan.

God At Work In Us

Perspective #20... I will trust always that the good work that God started in me will continue until the day of Jesus Christ.

Philippians 1:6 “Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:”

We can easily get discouraged, feeling that we failed the Lord, our family and even ourselves. The devil is known as the “Accuser of the Brethren.” He will try to cut us down and shame us if possible so we give up on our dreams and visions from God. However, God has not forgotten us. He is still at work causing that initial work that He placed in us to come to maturity. You can trust in Him to bring it forth and keep it alive until Christ comes again...

******* Don't Ever Give Up *******

Attaining God's Direction

Perspective #21... I will acknowledge the Lord in all things and trust in Him that He may direct my paths.

Proverbs 3:5-6 “Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.”

There is only one way to receive direction from God. That is... to acknowledge Him in everything you do...in all your ways. When you do this, you give Him control and crown

Him Lord over your life. It is only then that He can lead you out of all the difficulties and bring you to the still waters where He can restore your soul.

Stopping The Reign of Sin

Perspective # 22... I will not allow my body to be used as a instrument of unrighteousness.

Sin will not reign over my thoughts and actions. **Romans 6:12-12** “Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.”.

Body language is a big thing these days. It reveals how you feel or think. If you look hard enough, you’ll see clintched fists, squirming torsos, rolling eyes and so forth. Then there are the vocals that scream out hate and nasty language.

However, we are the temple of the Holy Spirit. We are to reveal His character, one of Love, Joy, Peace, Longsuffering, Kindness, Temporance etc. Our entire body, every member, is an instruments to sing the praises of God. To do otherwise would be treason against the Most High God. See the fruit of the Spirit and the deeds of the flesh in Galations 5.

Doing My Best

Perspective #23... Whatsoever I do, I will do heartily as unto the Lord and not unto men.

Colossians 3:23-24 “And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance.”

How many of us have seen others doing something for the applause of those around them? There are a lot of folks that give money, volunteer, visit the sick, do church work, etc for the praises of men. We are to do everything unto the Lord and with all our might.

A half-done job is just that. It blesses no one. But when we labor as unto the Lord, He becomes our boss and we rise to the challenge. Our work becomes full of passion and enthusiasm and without grumbling. That’s the way it should be.

Being Filled With God’s Spirit

Perspective #24... I will not become a drunkard but will instead be filled With the Spirit of the living God.

Ephesians 5:18 “And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;.”

Being filled with the Spirit is a conscious choice. It doesn't just happen to us. If it did, Paul would not have said for us to be filled. I realize that we receive the Holy Spirit at our New Birth and automatically become His temple. However, demonstrating His character every day requires a submission to Him and a fresh infilling or anointing. This is needed because our flesh wars against God's Spirit for control of our minds. The winner gets to reveal the good or evil therein...so we must yield ourselves to the Spirit and receive Him daily.

The Transformation Process

Perspective #25...I will not be conformed unto this world but instead I will be transformed by the renewing of my mind that I may reveal the perfect and acceptable will of God.

Romans 12:2 "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."

It seems that we are always in a struggle between good and evil. They fight for our approval and life applications. The World influences us with Power, Fame, Pride and, Riches. It says that we can have it all and be like God, a god unto ourselves. This is far from the truth.

The only way to escape its influence is to be transformed and that can only happen when we consciously renew our minds. How? By staying in the Word (Bible) and let it wash away bad thoughts, negative actions and wrong perspectives.

Giving Thanks

Perspective #26... I will *give thanks* in *everything*: for this is the *will of God* in Christ Jesus concerning me.

I Thessalonians 5:18 "In *every thing* give thanks: for this is the *will of God* in Christ Jesus concerning you."

God is so good. He is so kind and loving. His desire is to always bless us and not to harm us. He is worthy of our praise and obedience. It is only fitting that we give thanks to Him for all He does for us, even when we are caught in a trial or an evil attack. He will move mountains for us, making ways that do not exist if necessary.

Forgiving Enemies

Perspective #27... I will love my enemies and bless them that curse me and do good to them that hate me.

I will pray for them which despitefully use me and persecute me... that I may be the child of my Father which is in heaven: for He makes His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.

Matthew 5:44-46 “But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them, which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?”

Very few people can forgive an enemy or someone that has otherwise hurt them. I do not advocate blind forgiveness. Jesus said we were to forgive 70 X 7 but only when the violator has asked for it. I also feel that we do not have to stick around and hang out with someone who has a past history of offences. We should practice forgiving and going on to bigger and better things. We forgive because our heavenly Father forgave us. That’s what the children of God do...they forgive.

Overcoming Evil With Good

Perspective #28...I will not be overcome with evil but will instead overcome evil with good.

Romans 12:21 “Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good”

Doing good always overcomes evil because it blesses and builds up the one to whom you do good. On the other hand, evil can only Kill, Steal and Destroy. It will tear down instead of building up...but doing good restores what was broken.

Living By Faith

Perspective #29...I will live out my life here on earth by the faith of the Son of God, who loves me and gave His life for me.

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

We are not to live this life in our own strength. We are to live it by the faith of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. To do otherwise is to miss the point of our very existence. We, as Christians, are all given a measure of faith. This faith is God’s faith. It brings hope, trust, expectations and power. Releasing it is easy. We simply let go of our lives and let Jesus take the wheel. We stand in His faith, not ours. His faith is written on the pages of the Bible in precious promises that become hooks to hang our faith on.

Don't Worry About The Future

Perspective #30... I will take no thought of tomorrow, what I will eat or drink or wear because my Heavenly Father knows that I have need of these things.

Matthew 6:31-34 “Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.”

Worry is not cool. It strips us of our faith and binds us up with fear and confusion. The better thing to do is to not care about tomorrow, knowing God has it under control and will walk you into His blessings and keep you out of evil snares. When we trust in the Lord, we also Rest in His grace and look for His provision.

Anger Management

Perspective #31... I will not be quickly provoked in my spirit because anger resides in the bosom of fools and I am not a fool.

Ecclesiastes 7:9 “Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry: for anger rests in the bosom of fools.”

Anger is a terrible thing. It can escalate quickly and often ends in violence. There is a good reason why we should not allow it to reside in our hearts. It's because the Bible says anger rests or resides in the bosom of fools. Thus when we hang on to anger, we join the ranks of fools and miss out on the blessings of our Heavenly Father. Then we can not think straight and make poor judgements and mistakes that can be devastating to our future and family. A child of God should crush anger and cast it out of them when it raises its ugly head.

Divine Healing

Perspective #32... I will declare and receive my divine healing from the Lord, knowing that I am healed by His stripes.

“But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed” Isaiah 53:5 .

“Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.: **I Peter 2:24**

Isaiah 53 tells us that our healing is in the wounds and bruises inflicted upon Jesus with the “Cat of Nine Tails” whip that was used to beat Him before taking Him to the cross. This whip, the soldier’s beating Him, and the crown of thorns cause the wounds and bruises. However, what man did for evil purposes God used to bring about healing to those who receive it. All that is needed is to believe it, confess it and receive it as your promise from God. All of this is based upon the premise that God wants His children well.

Jesus said in John 10:10 that His coming at that time was planned by God to bring “Abundant Life” to His followers. Certainly that includes wellness, not just partially but completely...physically, emotionally, spiritually, economically and every which way...so, call upon the Lord, receive your healing and don’t let it go.

Agreeing With God

Perspective #33... I will believe God for things that do not exist, knowing that if He spoke them to me, He will bring them to pass.

“(As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickens the dead, and calleth those things, which be not as though they were.” **Romans 4:17**

We can take great pleasure in knowing that our Heavenly Father is all-powerful. He actually calls those things that are not in existence as they were in existence. The Biblical example is with Abraham. God said to Abraham that he would be the father of many nations. This “Fatherhood” did not exist, except in the mind of God.

If you read on in Romans 4:17-25 you will see that Abraham did not stagger at God’s word. He believed it and held on to it and saw it come into reality. God will speak a word to us as well. Abraham was not the only receiver of a divine revelation. God’s Holy Spirit will tell you things about you, your family and certain situations. You will know that what God said does not exist but you will be challenged to trust, believe, confess and hold on to them, knowing that God is all-powerful and will, in His time, bring them to pass.

Remember, you do not call forth new cars, money, fame and other stuff. You call into existence what God has said to your spirit.

Fear of Evil Doers

Perspective #34... I will not fret (worry) because of evil doers.

“Fret not thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity.” **Psalms 37:1**

We are all about worry, especially now that evil doers are trying to take over our country, turning it into a socialistic society with open borders, immorality, and heavy taxation. But God says that we should not be worried...why is that? Because of what He said in 37:2 *“For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb.”*

When we discover that God is all-powerful and that He is on our side, there is no need to fret about anything. We simply trust in the LORD, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed. 37:3

Being Happy In The Lord

Perspective #35... I will delight myself in the Lord at all times.

“Delight thyself also in the LORD: and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.” Psalm 37:4 Do you want the desires of your heart? Well, start delighting yourself in the Lord.

The word, delight means, a strong feeling of happiness: great pleasure or satisfaction. : something that makes you very happy : something that gives you great pleasure or satisfaction. The result of such actions and feelings is to gain the desires of your heart...not one but many. Delighting in the Lord is to be very happy that you are His child and love Him as He loves you.

Finding Strength In Weakness

Perspective #36... I will glory in my infirmities, knowing that my strength is made perfect in weakness.

“And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.” **II Corinthians 12:9**

We do not glory that we are afflicted but we do glory that God has chosen to increase our strength in the midst of the infirmity. This action shifts our attention from the trouble to the solution and as we praise God, we gain strength to overcome. It is not His will that we suffer. It is His will to equip us so we can be strong in faith. That’s why we look for His hand in the midst of the trouble.

Great & Precious Promises

Perspective #37..... I will search out and claim the exceeding great and precious promises given to me by God so I can apply them and escape the corruption that is in the world and be a partaker in the Divine Nature of God.

“Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.” **II Peter 1:4**

God has given us exceeding great and precious promises so we can join Him in His Divine nature and thereby escape the corruption of this world with all its lust. He left it up to us to search for them, discover them and apply them. They are great and precious. They are also in plain sight, written on the pages of the Bible. Someone once told me that there were over 3,000 promises. Read until you find one of them. Then memorize it, study it and apply it. Each one will change your life.

Relief From Burdens

Perspectgive #38... I will run to the Lord when I an burdened and heavy ladden that I mayfind rest.

“Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” Matthew 11:28-30

Jesus said, “come unto me” and so should we obey...because He is the only one that can take away our burdens, restore our strength and cause us to really rest. If He will do that for me, He will do it for you as well.

Growing In God’s Grace

Perspective #39... I will trust & hope in the Lord that I may grow in His grace and be fruitful.

“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.” **Jeremiah 17:7-8**

When God plants you by the waters, you have a continual source to help you to grow in His grace. You don’t wither in the heat. Your roots grow deep, causing stability. Your leaves stay green even in drought...and you yield fruit. This is a picture of an abundant life that is His blessing to all that trust and hope in Him.

Establishing Your Thoughts

Perspective #40... I will commit my works unto the Lord that my thoughts may be established.

“Commit thy works unto the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be established.” **Proverbs 16:3**

Unestablished thoughts are a breeding ground for confusion. When our minds entertain random thoughts, we become a playground for Satan. He generates evil thoughts and brings in negative feelings. All of this brings our souls into bondage and takes us away from knowing the Will of God.

Dedicate your thoughts to coincide with what you know to be true from God, and your thoughts will become established or locked in as a rule of practice.

A Way Where There Is No Way

Perspective #41... I will look for a way when there is no way to be found, knowing that God will make a way for me.

God will always make a way for His children. Listen to what the scriptures say...

“And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left. **Isaiah 30:21**

“Thus says the LORD, who makes a way in the sea, and a path in the mighty waters;”
Isaiah 43:16

“I, even I, am the Lord; and beside me there is no saviour. I have ... shall ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert”. **Isaiah 43:11**

“There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is ... with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.” **I Corinthians 10:13**

No matter what your situation is, God will make a way. When faced with a sea that is about to overwhelm you or the desert of despair or temptation, God will be there for you to show you the way out.

He will even make a way where there is no way, just like He did with the children of Israel when they were caught between the armies of Pharaoh and the Red Sea.

He made a way through the sea so they could escape on dry land. God is no respecter of persons. That means.... if He did such a thing for them, He will also do it for you.

The Greatest Perspective of All

*****Is Knowing That You Have Eternal Life*****

And Will Dwell In The House of The Lord Forever

There are many Christians that doubt their salvation. Some have told me that they can never really know for sure. Others put their hops in a church membership or a particular religion. Still others tell me that they are good, never hurt anyone and this should qualify them for eternal life.

How can we know for sure? It is very important because this is the greatest mindset ever established. It is how you will think and act over the course of your life.

The Bible is the only source of truth that can be trusted. Here is where we turn to find help. Listed below are a few scriptures that will clarify how a person gets saved and why it is necessary:

1. Salvation is a gift of God....” For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.” **Ephesians 2:8-9.**
2. Salvation is offered to whosoever believes... “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” **John 3:16**
3. Salvation requires repentance... “I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish.” —**Luke 13:3**
4. Salvation can only be attained through Jesus... “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is no other name under heaven given among men, by which we must be saved.” **Acts 4:12**

Salvation is necessary because man has a fallen nature and is spiritually dead. This is because of sin. Hear what the scriptures say, “And you has he made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins.” **Ephesians 2:1** Hear some more about this...

- “Wherefore, as by one man, sin entered into the world and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.” **Romans 5:12**
- “For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” **Romans 6:23**
- “As it is written, there is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understands, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.” **Romans 3:10-12**

Man is in need of a savior and God sent His only Son to be that Savior. He died for us and better yet to live for us so we can live with Him. “For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.” **Romans 5:10**

So, what do you think? Are you in need of a Savior? Read **Romans 10:10**. It is with the heart that we believe unto righteousness and with the mouth that we confess our salvation. It's that simple.

“For with the heart man believes unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” **Romans 10:10**

Conclusion

Life's battles are fought and won...or lost...in the mind. It is not always what happens to you that causes the most damage but how you react to what has happened. How you think is more important than what you are going through.

If you can develop a Christian mindset, it will see you through in times of distress. If you have a clear, more importantly, right perspective, you can overcome anything that befalls you.

As we read the scriptures, we see the “Hand of God” moving in the lives of those that believe and trust in Him. What we are seeing is one or more of these perspectives being applied to life situations.

If you believe and trust in the Lord, you will also see the “Hand of God” moving in your life. Just look for the perspective being applied.

I realize that it might be hard to memorize all the scriptures presented and to remember all the perspectives. However, you have to start somewhere to get somewhere.

I suggest that you start with these three building blocks: *God's Peace Decides, Fear Is Not of God and Spiritual Authority* and then let the Holy Spirit lead you to three more until you master them all. The Apostle Paul said to Timothy back in the 1st century...

“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” **II Timothy 2:15**

That's good advice for us today as well.

Manna In The Morning

Introduction

God rained down Manna from heaven to feed the children of Israel while they were in route from Egypt to the land of Canaan. This was just after God opened the Red sea and the Jews crossed over to safety on dry land.

Their 400+ years in bondage was over and they were heading to possess the “Promised Land” that God gave Abraham. They gave up the fleshpots, cool water and abundance of food, trusting God to provide for them as they entered and traveled through the wilderness.

It is believed that there were over 21/2 million in the caravan that Moses led out of Egypt. This would include men and women and children. They all left Egypt with hope, faith, and trust in God and were strongly committed to holding on until they made it to their Promised Land.

The Wilderness

And they took their journey from Elim, and all the congregation of the children of Israel came unto the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after their departing out of the land of Egypt. And the whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness:

And the children of Israel said unto them, Would to God we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh pots, and when we did eat bread to the full; for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger.

Manna From Heaven

Then said the LORD unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law, or no.

And it shall come to pass, that on the sixth day they shall prepare that which they bring in; and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily. And Moses and Aaron said unto all the children of Israel, At even, then ye shall know that the LORD hath brought you out from the land of Egypt: **Exodus 16:1-6**

This Manna was not only God's provision to keep the people alive but it was also a sign that proved that God was really leading them. It was a miracle that would show the Israelites God's love and mercy.

God made sure that the Manna was seen as an authentic miracle by raining it down from heaven. He did this for 40 years.

Manna looked like coriander seed and tasted like wafers made with honey (Exodus 16: 31). When the Israelites saw it, they asked each other, "What is it?" (Heb. man hu [aWh'm]). This led to the name "manna, " "what?"

It came each morning, except on the Sabbath day. It could be collected each day for that day alone, and only as much as could be eaten in one day. If a person tried to collect more than needed or to store the manna for future needs, it would grow wormy and foul (v. 20).

In this way it was impossible for the Israelites to evade total dependence on God or to use the manna greedily for personal gain. Miraculously, the manna could be preserved on the sixth day and eaten on the Sabbath, and it was not to be found on the Sabbath morning (vv. 22-29).

The Rebellious

Eventually, the rebellious Israelites grew tired of the manna and regretted the day they were delivered from their bondage (**Num 11:6**). They came to detest the manna and longed instead for the rich foods of Egypt (v. 5). But God continued to give the Israelites a steady supply of manna during their forty years of desert wanderings. When Joshua and the children of Israel crossed the Jordan River and entered the Promised Land at Gilgal, they celebrated the Passover and ate the produce of the land. On that day, the manna ceased, again illustrating its miraculous provision (**Joshua 5:12**).

The Purpose of Manna

The purpose of the Manna was to test Israel's faith, to humble them, and to teach them that one "does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord" (Deut 8:3,16). A hungry Jesus used this quote to refuse Satan's suggestion that he turn stones into bread (**Matt 4:4**). Like the Israelites in the desert, Jesus was totally dependent on the provisions of his heavenly Father while in the wilderness of temptation (**Matt 4:11**).

“Bread of Life” A Metaphor of Jesus

The people in Jesus' day misunderstood the significance of the manna. They longed for a physical miracle, like the manna, which would prove to them that Jesus' words were true (John 6:31). But Jesus wanted his disciples to seek for the bread of heaven that gives life to the world, instead of physical bread to satisfy their appetites. When they asked, "From

now on give us this bread, " he answered, "**I am the bread of life**" (vv. 32-35). To the church in Pergamos, Jesus encouraged faithfulness by promising that true believers would receive "hidden manna" to eat (Rev 2:17). Just as Moses' manna brought with it physical blessing, so this heavenly reward will bring eternal life. (Contributed by William T. Arnold...Baker's Evangelical Dictionary).

Manna Was The, "Bread of Heaven"

Manna was the "Bread of Heaven" it was a metaphor or picture of Jesus. He said this about Himself.

"I am the Bread of Life" (**John 6:35**) is one of the seven "I Am" statements of Jesus.

Jesus used the same phrase "I AM" in seven declarations about Himself. In all seven, He combines I AM with tremendous metaphors, which express His, saving relationship toward the world. All appear in the book of John.

John 6:35 says, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst."

A Basic Dietary Item

Bread is considered a staple food—i.e., a basic dietary item. A person can survive a long time on only bread and water. Bread is such a basic food item that it becomes synonymous for food in general. We even use the phrase "breaking bread together" to indicate the sharing of a meal with someone.

Bread also plays an integral part of the Jewish Passover meal. The Jews were to eat unleavened bread during the Passover feast and then for seven days following as a celebration of the exodus from Egypt.

Finally, when the Jews were wandering in the desert for 40 years, God rained down "bread from heaven" to sustain the nation (**Exodus 16:4**).

All of this plays into the scene being described in John 6 when Jesus used the term "bread of life." He was trying to get away from the crowds to no avail. He had crossed the Sea of Galilee, and the crowd followed Him. After some time, Jesus inquires of Philip how they're going to feed the crowd. Philip's answer displays his "little faith" when he says they don't have enough money to give each of them the smallest morsel of food.

Finally, Andrew brings to Jesus a boy who had five small loaves of bread and two fish. With that amount, Jesus miraculously fed the throng with lots of food to spare.

Afterward, Jesus and His disciples cross back to the other side of Galilee. When the crowd sees that Jesus has left, they follow Him again.

Jesus takes this moment to teach them a lesson. He accuses the crowd of ignoring His miraculous signs and only following Him for the “free meal.” Jesus tells them in **John 6:27**,

“Do not labor for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you. For on him God the Father has set his seal.”

In Other Words

In other words, they were so enthralled with the food, they were missing out on the fact that their Messiah had come. So the Jews ask Jesus for a sign that He was sent from God (as if the miraculous feeding and the walking across the water weren't enough).

They tell Jesus that God gave them manna during the desert wandering. Jesus responds by telling them that they need to ask for the true bread from heaven that gives life. When they ask Jesus for this bread, Jesus startles them by saying,

“I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.”

A Phenomenal Statement!

This is a phenomenal statement! First, by equating Himself with bread, Jesus is saying he is *essential* for life. Second, the life Jesus is referring to is not physical life, but eternal life. Jesus is trying to get the Jews' thinking off of the physical realm and into the spiritual realm. He is contrasting what He brings as their Messiah with the bread He miraculously created the day before. That was physical bread that perishes. He is spiritual bread that brings eternal life.

Third, and very important, Jesus is making another claim to deity. This statement is the first of the “I AM” statements in John's Gospel.

The Phrase “I AM”

The phrase “I AM” is the covenant name of God (Yahweh, or YHWH), revealed to Moses at the burning bush (Exodus 3:14). The phrase speaks of self-sufficient existence (or what theologians refer to as “*aseity*”), which is an attribute only God possesses. It is also a phrase the Jews who were listening would have automatically understood as a claim to deity.

Fourth, notice the words “come” and “believe.” This is an invitation for those listening to place their faith in Jesus as the Messiah and Son of God.

The Invitation

This invitation to come is found throughout John's Gospel. Coming to Jesus involves making a choice to forsake the world and follow Him. Believing in Jesus means placing our faith in Him that He is who He says He is, that He will do what He says He will do, and that He is the only one who can.

Fifth, there are the words "hunger and thirst." Again, it must be noted that Jesus isn't talking about alleviating physical hunger and thirst.

The key is found in another statement Jesus made, back in His Sermon on the Mount. In **Matthew 5:6**, Jesus says,

"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied."

When Jesus says those who come to Him will never hunger and those who believe in Him will never thirst, He is saying He will satisfy our hunger and thirst to be made righteous in the sight of God.

If there is anything the history of human religion tells us, it is that people seek to earn their way to heaven. This is such a basic human desire because God created us with eternity in mind.

The Bible says

The Bible says God has placed [the desire for] eternity in our hearts (**Ecclesiastes 3:11**). The Bible also tells us that there is nothing we can do to earn our way to heaven because we've all sinned (**Romans 3:23**) and the only thing our sin earns us is death (**Romans 6:23**). There is no one who is righteous in himself (Romans 3:10).

Our Dilemma

Our dilemma is we have a desire we cannot fulfill, no matter what we do. That is where Jesus comes in. He, and He alone, can fulfill that desire in our hearts for righteousness through the Divine Transaction:

"For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" (**2 Corinthians 5:21**).

When Christ died on the cross, He took the sins of mankind upon Himself and made atonement for them.

When we place our faith in Him, our sins are imputed to Jesus, and His righteousness is imputed to us. Jesus satisfies our hunger and thirst for righteousness. He is our Bread of

Life. GotQuestions.com) **Recommended Resource:** Jesus: The Greatest Life of All by Charles Swindoll

Modern Day Use of Manna A Spiritual Application

Jesus said He was the “Bread of Life” and the “Bread” that came down from heaven. We know from John chapter one that Jesus was pre-existent as God and became man so He could be our Savior. Thus the, “Bread of Heaven” was and is the Word that became flesh and dwelt among us.

If we go to the Word of God every day, like the Old Testament saints went out to gather Manna, we would be filled with all the spiritual nutrients necessary to live in the wilderness of this world.

The Bible is the Manna of our day. It took hundreds of years to grow and it is for everyone. We need only to open the Bible and gather the spiritual food (Bread) that God has waiting for us.

Never Too Much

I know that some will say, just like the Israelites in the wilderness, I am tired of this Manna. The literal Manna may have become unappealing after eating it for 40 years. However, the “Bread from heaven” does not get old; does not lose its flavor and will not cause you to wish for something else that is more satisfying.

The “Heavenly Manna” is the word of God and when it is sent from heaven it accomplishes all that God intended it to do.

“So shall my word be that goes forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.” Isaiah 54:11

We can trust that when God sends us Manna from heaven, it will arrive safely and be a blessing to us.

Conclusion

The provision of Manna was to sustain the children of God while traveling in the wilderness. The trip was only about 3 1/2 days. However, because of the rebellion and idol worship in the camp, God chose to keep them in a state of wandering for 40 years until a new generation could emerge.

The new generation, at the direction of God, went into the Promised Land and took it for themselves. Once settled and able to grow their own food, the Manna stopped falling

from heaven. This suggests several things that can apply to the Christian walk for faith. They are:

1. The Manna was only temporary. It was never given as a 40-year provision. It ended up being just that but it was not planned that way.
2. The purpose of the Manna was to teach faith and dependency to the newly founded nation. It was a way to test their faith on an on-going basis.
3. Manna from heaven is a metaphor for Spiritual sustenance but it cannot go beyond the physical realm... whereas the "Bread of Life" is an eternal provision.
4. The wilderness is a place of wandering for those that reject God's love and guidance. The rebellious go into it but never come out.
5. The Manna was a Sign from God that proved to the people that God was really leading them.
6. We, like Old Testament saints, have seen the promises of God afar off and now consider ourselves strangers and pilgrims in the earth. Hebrews 11:13... We too are on our way to the Promised Land.
7. The, "Bread of Life" being a type of Spiritual Manna, is designed to sustain us in a wilderness-world as we walk in the Spirit; fight the good fight of faith and stand fast in the liberty that we have in Christ...until we see Jesus face to face and are welcomed home by God, our Heavenly Father. When that happens, the need for Manna will be no longer because we will have arrived at our destination.
8. Dependence upon God will always be, whether we are in the wildernesses of life or home with Jesus in heaven. In any event, we are still the "Children of God" and it is His pleasure to love us and care for our needs.
9. The Bible is the Manna of our day. We will starve and even live life in a weakened state of mind and actions without it. It is our only source by which we can mature in Christ. It is the Manna that helps us to discover the promises of God, and commune with the Holy Spirit.

Read what the psalmist said about his spiritual Manna.

***"Thy word have I hid in mine heart,
that I might not sin against thee."
Psalm 119:11 kjv***

The Virgin Birth of Jesus Christ

Introduction

We all know that Jesus Christ was born into this world, being delivered by Mary. However, many folks question the claim that His birth was a virgin birth. That is to say, no human male was involved in His conception. Mary's pregnancy was due to an overshadowing by the Holy Spirit. Listen to what the scripture says.

“Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privately.

But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.

Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.” **Matthew 1:18-23**

A New Bloodline

The story of Jesus' birth tells us that Jesus came outside of the human DNA strain. His blood was not polluted by sin. It was pure and righteous in every way. He had a Holy bloodline. This made Him the first of a new race. He did not share the human DNA pool.

I know what you are probably thinking. So What! Why does that matter? It matters for these very important reasons:

1. The human DNA pool was full of sin. Had Jesus shared it, He would have been a sinner at birth. **Romans 5:12**
2. The entire Christian Faith rests on the Virgin Birth because it was the only way to produce an eternal spotless Lamb required by God to Atone for the sins of the world. **John 1:29**
3. The Virgin Birth was the only way to reproduce a 2nd Adam as the scripture teaches. Jesus could not be the last Adam, created sinless,

without escaping the human DNA pool. **I Cor. 15:45-47**

4. The prophetic voices of the Old Testament spoke of the virgin birth of the savior. **Isaiah 7:14**
5. Paul's allusion to the virgin birth in his letter to the Galatians. "Made, (Not born) of a woman) **Galatians 4:4**

The Last Adam

And so it is written, "The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven." **I Corinthians 15:45-47**

The Bible clearly teaches that there were only two men that walked the earth...Adam and Jesus. Adam causes his race to fall into sin and be cut off spiritually from God. We all were plunged into depravity and became slaves unto sin. Paul preached this to the 1st century Christian. **Romans 5:12** tells us, "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" However, Jesus did not sin and had no original sin in Him. His obedience restored us. **Verse 19** supports this, "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous"

By taking the sin away, Jesus freed us from ever having to serve sin again. We are no more slaves sold under sin.

Creation And The Virgin Birth The Creation Research Foundation Henry M Morris, Ph D

Dr. Morris is right on when it comes to the virgin birth of Jesus. His article for The Creation Research Foundation is excellent. Hear it now in part...

The incarnation of Jesus Christ is such an important doctrine of the New Testament that without it there can be no true Christianity. "Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God" (**I John 4:2,3**).

But how can the one who "was God" (**John 1:2**) from the beginning be the same one who "was made flesh, and dwelt among us?" (**John 1:1,14**). How can He truly be "Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us?" (**Matthew 1:23**). How can the infinite, eternal God become finite and temporal? Such a concept seems impossibly paradoxical, yet millions quite properly believe it to be a real and vital truth.

Perhaps the most amazing aspect of the incarnation is that a God who is absolute holiness could reside in a body of human flesh. Is it not true that "they that are in the flesh cannot please God?" (**Romans 8:8**). Our human bodies have been formed through many generations of genetic inheritance from Adam himself, and "in Adam all die" (**I Corinthians 15:22**).

The paradox is partially resolved, of course, when it is realized that Jesus Christ came in a body which was not of *sinful* flesh. His body was truly "in the flesh," but only "in the *likeness* of sinful flesh" (**Romans 8:3**).

But even this doesn't resolve the dilemma completely, for how could His body be of flesh (carbon, hydrogen, amino acids, proteins, etc.), received by the normal process of reproduction of the flesh of his parents, without also receiving their genetic inheritance, which is exactly what makes it *sinful* flesh? "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me" (**Psalms 51:5**). "Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble ... Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one" (**Job 14:4**).

The Problem of Inherent Sin

Not only is there the problem of inherent sin, but also of inherent physical defects. Over many generations, the human population has experienced great numbers of genetic mutations, and these defective physical factors have been incorporated into the common genetic pool, affecting in some degree every infant ever born. Yet the Lamb of God, to be an acceptable sacrifice for the sins of the world, must be "without blemish and without spot" (**I Peter 1:19**). The very purpose of the incarnation was that God could become the Saviour of men as well as their Creator, but this required that in His humanity He must be "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners" (**Hebrews 7:26**), and this would have been absolutely impossible by the normal reproductive process.

The solution could only be through a mighty miracle! He could not be conceived in the same manner as other men, for this would inevitably give him both a sin-nature and a physically defective body, and each would disqualify Him as a fit Redeemer. And yet He must truly become human. "Wherefore in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people" (**Hebrews 2:17**).

It is not surprising, therefore, that the Christian doctrine of the Virgin Birth of Christ has always been such a watershed between true Christians and either non-Christians or pseudoChristians.¹ Without such a miraculous birth, there could have been no true incarnation and therefore no salvation. The man Jesus would have been a sinner by birth and thus in need of a Saviour Himself.

The birth of Christ was natural and normal in every way, including the full period of human gestation in the womb of Mary. In *all* points, He was made like His brethren, experiencing every aspect of human life from conception through birth and growth to death. He was true man in every detail, except for sin and its physical effects.

The miracle was not His birth, but His conception. And here we still face a mystery. Conception normally is the result of the union of two germ cells, the egg from the mother and the seed from the father, each carrying half the inheritance and thus each, of course, sharing equally in the transmission of the sin-nature as well as all other aspects of the human nature.

The Necessity of Special Creation

Therefore, even though He was nurtured in Mary's womb for nine months and born without her ever knowing a man, it was also necessary for all this to have been preceded by supernatural intervention, to prevent His receiving any actual genetic inheritance through her. The body growing in Mary's womb must have been specially created in full perfection, and placed there by the Holy Spirit, in order for it to be free of inherent sin damage. Christ would still be "made of the seed of David according to the flesh" (**Romans 1:3**), because His body was nurtured and born of Mary, who was herself of the seed of David. He would still be the Son of Man, sharing all universal human experience from conception to death, except sin. He is truly "the seed of the woman" (**Genesis 3:15**), His body formed neither of the seed of the man nor the egg of the woman, but grown from a unique Seed planted in the woman's body by God Himself.

That is, God directly formed a body for the second Adam just as He had for the first Adam (**Genesis 2:7**). This was nothing less than a miracle of creation, capable of accomplishment only by the Creator Himself. "That holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God" (**Luke 1:35**).

Surely God would devote no more attention to the design and construction of the body of "the first man, of the earth, earthy" than He would to that of "the second man, the Lord from heaven" (**I Corinthians 15:47**)!

The Body of Christ

With such careful divine care and attention given to the development of every one of the billions of human bodies conceived since the days of Adam and Eve, how much greater must have been the extent of the divine preparation of the body of God's own Son! As a matter of fact, the design for His body was prepared before the very foundation of the world itself (**I Peter 1:20; Hebrews 10:5**). It is probable that, in some degree at least, God had this very body in mind when He undertook to make Adam "in our image after our likeness" (**Genesis 1:26**). That is, God formed for Adam a body patterned after that perfect body which had already been planned for the divine incarnation, when the time would come.

Then, "when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman that we might receive the adoption of sons" (**Galatians 4:4,5**).

"Wherefore when He cometh into the world, He saith, sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me" (**Hebrews 10:5**). The verb "prepared" in this verse is striking. It is the same word in the Greek (i.e., *katartizo*) as used in the next succeeding

chapter in Hebrews, in one of the greatest of all those verses in the Bible describing the Creation. "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear" (**Hebrews 11:3**).

The "preparation" of Christ's body by God was the same process as the "framing" of the worlds by God! As the latter were created *ex nihilo* ("not out of things which do appear"), so must have been the former. The word is also translated "make perfect" (**Hebrews 13:21, etc.**).

Thus, the body of Christ was prepared by the great Creator, with no dependence on prior materials, and was made in total perfection, ready to receive Him as its occupant. In that perfect body, which would one day be "made sin" and would "bear our sins" on the tree (**II Corinthians 5:21, 1 Peter 2:24**), He would dwell forever after its resurrection and glorification (**Revelation 1:14-18**).

The Virgin Birth of Jesus Was Believed Universally By The Earliest Christians

The virgin birth was universally believed by the earliest Christians. This is verified by "The Apostle's Creed," an early confession of faith that dates from the second century and was used throughout the church.

By including the virgin birth in their credal statement, these early believers made clear that they considered it an essential doctrine of the Faith. The Creed reads in part:

"I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth; And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord: Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary" (emphasis added).

This belief in the virgin birth was confirmed by the Nicene Creed of A.D. 325 and has continued to be the belief of most Catholic, Eastern Orthodox and Protestant Christians.

Most Relevant Bible Verses Concerning The Virgin Birth

Matthew 1:23... "BEHOLD, THE VIRGIN SHALL BE WITH CHILD AND SHALL BEAR A SON, AND THEY SHALL CALL HIS NAME IMMANUEL," which translated, means, "GOD WITH US."

Luke 1:27 ...to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the descendants of David; and the virgin's name was Mary.

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

Matthew 1:18-25 ...Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: when His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit. And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man and not wanting to disgrace her, planned to send her away secretly. But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. "She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins."

Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet: "BEHOLD, THE VIRGIN SHALL BE WITH CHILD AND SHALL BEAR A SON, AND THEY SHALL CALL HIS NAME IMMANUEL," which translated means, "GOD WITH US." And Joseph awoke from his sleep and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took Mary as his wife, but kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a Son; and he called His name Jesus.

Luke 2:1-7 ... Now in those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus, that a census be taken of all the inhabited earth.

This was the first census taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. And everyone was on his way to register for the census, each to his own city. Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, in order to register along with Mary, who was engaged to him, and was with child. While they were there, the days were completed for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son; and she wrapped Him in cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

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

1 John 4:9 ...By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him.

Luke 1:34 ...Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?"

Genesis 3:15 ...And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel."

Conclusion

73% of all Christians in the United States believe that Jesus was born to a virgin, although many do not understand the primary significance of the supernatural event. Skeptics say that the word, “Virgin” means a young girl. The arguments continue within the colleges and churches of our country. However, any true believer that reads the Bible will quickly gain the knowledge and confidence to believe in the virgin birth of Jesus Christ.

This supernatural event is the foundation of our faith. Here’s why:

1. Without a virgin birth, Jesus would be a sinner and not suitable to be our redeemer.
2. Without a virgin birth, there would be no last Adam that began a new race of Righteousness.
3. Without a virgin birth, the creation of a sinless body for Jesus would not have happened.
4. Without a virgin birth, our faith would be in vein and we would still be lost and dead in our sins.
5. Without the virgin birth, there would be no eternal spotless Lamb to be sacrificed as the penalty for our sins.

Praise be to God who before the foundation of the world established and secured our redemption through the virgin birth of His only begotten Son.

We hold this truth to be self evident and well documented in Biblical antiquity. By this miracle of God’s grace we can rest in the fact that God loves us and has made provisions for us to be with Him.

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ

Introduction

We will look at the concept of transmigration of a person’s soul. We will answer the question, “Can a human soul transmigrate from one body after a death experience into another human body there by being reborn?”

To understand Reincarnation we must first define “Incarnation.” The Bible gives us a clear example of Incarnation.

In the **incarnation**, as traditionally defined by those Churches that adhere to the Council of Chalcedon, the divine nature of the Son of God was united but not mixed with human nature in one divine Person, Jesus Christ, who was both "truly God and truly man".

The **incarnation** of Christ is a central Christian doctrine that God became flesh, assumed a human nature, and became a man in the form of Jesus, the Son of God and the second person of the Trinity.

The "carn" in "**incarnation**" refers to flesh or meat (of the human body). Thus, "**incarnate**" means "**in the flesh**". =**REINCARNATION** is a word that means, "to be born again (**in the flesh**)". It refers to being reborn, and is generally associated with the belief that, when people die, they will be born again into a new body.

"Reincarnation " refers to the Hindu or Buddhist doctrine, that states that a person may be reborn successively into one of five classes of living beings (god or human or animal or hungry ghost or denizen of hell) depending on the person's own actions. It is an embodiment in a new form.(a second birth).

"Incarnation" refers to the Christian doctrine of the union of God and man in the person of Jesus Christ.

To draw a comparison between them within the Buddhist doctrine, the 'reincarnation' refers to the reappearance of the person in another form, the transmigration itself while the 'incarnation' refers to the divine taking upon itself human form. It is a one-time event whereas reincarnation is a continual experience.

Arguments Against Reincarnation

There are many arguments against reincarnation. There is simply no way to prove that the "past life experiences" that these people talk about are in fact true and not simply the developments of an active imagination. From a strictly logical viewpoint, since no one has ever died and come back to life (except our Lord, Jesus Christ) there is no empirical proof of the claims of those who say they have been reincarnated into this day and age.

Putting aside the lack of empirical data, the Bible provides many arguments against reincarnation. First of all it says,

"Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment" (**Hebrews 9:27**).

This makes it pretty clear that man only dies once and is not given a second chance at life or to redeem him/her self through reincarnation.

The next argument against reincarnation comes from Jesus Himself. It is found in the

story of Lazarus. In this story, Lazarus is a poor beggar whose pleas for assistance are ignored by a rich man. When they both died, Lazarus went to heaven, but the rich man went to hell. The rich man begged for water from Lazarus, but without avail. Jesus tells the story:

"But Abraham replied, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony. And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us'" (**Luke 16: 25-26**).

In this story, we see concrete images of the afterlife. It is a strong argument against reincarnation for the rich man reaps what he sowed immediately after death. There was no chance of redeeming himself through reincarnation. Likewise, the poor beggar, Lazarus gained comfort in the afterlife, a comfort he did not have while living. In addition, Jesus speaks of a gulf that is fixed which does not allow the souls to pass through from one life to the next.

Another argument against reincarnation lies in the story of the witch of Endor. In this Old Testament story, King Saul asks the witch to call up the spirit (or ghost) of Samuel because he desires to know the future since God is no longer speaking to Saul because of his disobedience. The witch, or medium, does as King Saul asks and the ghost of Samuel appears and says to Saul,

"The LORD will hand over both Israel and you to the Philistines, and tomorrow you and your sons will be with me. The LORD will also hand over the army of Israel to the Philistines" (**1 Samuel 28:19**).

This story provides not only one but two arguments against reincarnation. First, if reincarnation is a legitimate fact, the ghost or spirit of Samuel could not be "called up" as it would have already been reincarnated into another body. Second, Samuel tells Saul that both he and his sons would join him in the realm beyond death. He does not say that they would die and be given another chance at life. He says simply, "you and your sons will be with me."

Finally the Bible teaches that we are all sinners. "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). And the penalty for sin is death, not reincarnation.

"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

This verse from **Romans 6:23** is the best argument against reincarnation. For Jesus died for our sins that we might have eternal life in heaven, not eternal reincarnation.

It is God's love for us that is the final proof and argument against reincarnation. God loved us so much that He sent His only Son to redeem and save the world.

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him" (*John 3: 16-17*).

We are not saved through reincarnation, but saved through God's love, mercy, and grace.

Reincarnation Its Background

Reincarnation comes from the Hindu-buddhist philosophy of soul transmigration. This is the "religious" concept of the eternal birth-death-birth cycle, where a soul moves from body to body. The status of each successive body, whether human or animal, is the direct result of the quality of the life the soul led in the previous body. Thus, a "good" life results in rebirth to a higher quality form, and a "bad" life results in rebirth to a lower quality form.

This forward and backward progression is based on the Law of Karma, a central foundation of Hinduism and other Eastern-based philosophies. As most of us know, Karma teaches that good deeds are rewarded and bad deeds are punished. The ultimate goal in this Karma cycle is for the soul to progress to the highest level of existence and become one with the universe.

Reincarnation is taught side-by-side with "Pantheism"; the belief that everything is God and God is in everything. Reincarnation and pantheism are the central doctrines of Hinduism and occultism, variations of which have grown popular in the Western world in recent decades.

Reincarnation Its Impact on Western Thought

Reincarnation appeals to Western "religious" thinking, such as the New Age philosophies, because the life cycle concept provides people with unlimited chances to get life right.

With reincarnation, we have no imminent or compelling reason to figure out the meaning of life with respect to God and fellow man.

We can feel our way through existence, and, if need be, "get it right in the next life." Remarkably, recent surveys reveal that nearly 60% of Americans believe reincarnation is possible.

Not only has reincarnation entered Western thought through various New Age teachings, reincarnation has surfaced in the Christian church and certain "Christian" variants. Actually, the Bible is sometimes cited to support a belief in reincarnation, or at least the possibility that reincarnation can coexist with Christianity.

The remainder of this piece will address four biblical citations used by reincarnationists to support this misguided doctrine.

Reincarnation Its Misuse in Christianity and Elsewhere

Reincarnation in Matthew 11:14:

Reincarnationists cite Jesus' statement in Matthew 11:14 that John the Baptist was Elijah. However, this is not the complete context of the scripture. Luke 1:17 tells us that John the Baptist would precede Christ "with the spirit and power of Elijah." In addition, John the Baptist himself denied that he was Elijah in **John 1:21**. We must also remember that Old Testament scripture teaches that Elijah never experienced physical death (**2 Kings 2:11**). This fact is again stressed in the New Testament when Elijah appears with Moses at the Mount of Transfiguration (**Matthew 17:3**).

Reincarnation in John 3:3:

Jesus tells Nicodemus that to see the Kingdom of God one must be "born again." Here, many reincarnationists declare that Jesus is supporting the idea that a series of rebirths is necessary to achieve life cycle "perfection." Of course, one must read the entire passage to understand the complete context. When Nicodemus expresses his bewilderment about a second physical birth, Jesus immediately sets Nicodemus straight. In John 3:4-5, Jesus specifically refutes the concept of physical rebirth, and is very clear in stating that this "rebirth" is a spiritual one.

Reincarnation in John 9:1-3:

This scripture tells of a man born blind and deals with the question of whose sin was the cause of his blindness. Reincarnationists say this biblical question is in line with the Law of Karma. However, the scripture does not end with this question. Rather, it ends with the reply of Jesus -- that the man's blindness was in no way related to sin. Therefore, we see no connection whatsoever with any Karma-like doctrine.

Reincarnation in Hebrews 7:2-3:

Reincarnationists maintain that this scripture portrays Jesus as Melchizedek in a previous incarnation. However, a very simple review of the scripture will show that Melchizedek was "made like unto the Son of God," not that he was the Son of God, Jesus Christ. The scripture merely says that there is no record of Melchizedek's birth or death, and that his unique priest-hood was not transferable to another. Melchizedek is only being compared to Jesus, not being declared a previous incarnation of Him.

Reincarnation: What the Bible Does Say

Hebrews 9:27 clearly refutes the doctrine of reincarnation -- "it is appointed for men to die once, and after this comes judgment." Simply stated, reincarnation is not compatible with Christian doctrine. In fact, the Bible clearly teaches that the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23). Reincarnation is the same deception used by Satan in the Garden of Eden when he told Eve, "You surely shall not die." The Bible teaches that eternal salvation from sin is a gift from God through Jesus Christ. Reincarnation is a myth, which teaches that "salvation" will ultimately come to those who have perfected themselves at the end of their Karma-based life cycle.

Text taken from "All About Spirituality."

Laws of Karma

According to the basic Sanskrit **definition** of **karma**, it simply means "action". **Laws of karma** are all about the positive or negative valance of our words, thoughts, and deeds. In essence, everything we do creates a corresponding energy that comes back to us in some form or another.

Most people have a basic concept of karma. For example, you've likely heard the phrase "what goes around comes around". Perhaps you have an intuition that we get what we deserve in life. But what is the law of karma? And, what do you need to do in order to make sure you don't attract bad karma? As it turns out, there are at least twelve distinct laws of karma.

Once you know how each of these laws works, you can learn how to live in a way that creates good karma in all areas of your life. This can help you with everything from your relationship to your career, your financial situation and your self-confidence.

Twelve Distinct Laws of Karma

1. The Great Law

Sometimes called "the Law of Cause and Effect", the Great Law tells us that in order to get the things we want, we must also embody those things.

The message here is similar to that of the Law of Attraction. In other words, whatever you give out is also what you will receive, whether it is positive or negative. So, if you want love in your life, be loving. If you want to enjoy financial abundance, be generous. And if you want to have honest, open relationships then you need to offer authenticity and honesty to the people you care about as well.

Note: This law can even be found in the Bible. **Galatians 6:7-8**

“Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.”

Realize that harvesting what you plant is guaranteed by God. He insures that it happens. If you take God out of the equation, what do you have? Simply this, man planting to the “Flesh” and reaping corruption. In this law of karma, there is no planting to the spirit. It is defined as positive and negative. It is still “Flesh” Tim Maas puts it this way...

As Paul says, those who "sow to the Spirit" by allowing Him to guide and control their actions through loving and serving God and others will reap a reward (eternal life), while those who focus on satisfying only their own sinful fleshly nature will finally reap destruction and death (things that will pass away or be destroyed, even if they may seem to provide transient pleasure or happiness).

Eternal life is the reward, given by God for living life in the Spirit or under the control/influence of the Holy Spirit. Positive thinking cannot provide life eternal. It has no power to do so in itself. Only God can cause life to be eternal.

2. The Law of Creation

According to the Karmic Law of Creation, we need to be active participants in our lives if we want to get what we desire. We cannot simply wait for things to happen to us. We should aim to surround ourselves with what we want in our lives and look to our environments for clues about what we need.

A major part of understanding the Law of Creation is seeing that things outside ourselves tell us what’s going on inside. So, if you don’t like the way your life looks right now, look within and ask yourself what needs to change.

Note: The problem with such a law or practice is that because we want wealth, power or really anything in life doesn’t mean we will think it into existence. We do not have that kind of power. This is no more than the power of positive thinking which is no power at

all our thoughts are not eternal and possess no power in themselves. It takes a God-thought and a human belief/faith to bring change into reality.

3. The Law of Humility

Out of the 12 laws of karma, Buddhism can be seen as often emphasizing the importance of the Law of Humility. What you need to remember about this karmic rule is that you need to accept the true reality of something before you'll ever be able to change it.

For example, if you constantly blame others for things that you created or you see anyone who disagrees with you as a villain, you're out of step with reality. You will, therefore, find it very difficult to make the shifts you need. Consistent self-reflection can help you make the most of the Law of Humility.

Note: Consistent self-reflection is futile because it centers on self and sets man as the god of his own destiny. Plus, many things in us are evil and cannot be changed. They have to die in order for us to be free. Read what the Old Testament prophet wrote...

***“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?”
Jeremiah 17:9***

We need to be “Born Again” of God’s Spirit and let the sins pass away with the death of the Flesh.

4. The Law of Growth

If you’ve ever heard the famous saying, “Wherever you go, there you are”, you’ve already thought about the Law of Growth in a certain sense.

The message here is that you need to expect a change of yourself before you expect it of the world around you (or indeed the people in the world around you). Ultimately, you only have control over yourself. Therefore, it is how you use this control that shapes how the universe responds to you.

So, focus on your development before trying to control or change others; let them come to their own conclusions about what needs to change.

Note: *The universe has no power in itself to responds to you.* It is a dying thing that will one day pass away as God makes all things new. There is no eternal matter. Stars burn out. Planets get pulled into black holes and the universe is in a state of violent chaos. It controls nothing, has no power and cannot help in man’s quest for life.

5. The Law of Responsibility

In terms of meaning, karma is often thought of in terms of The Law of Responsibility. In particular, it's helpful to remember that you are the source of what happens throughout your journey. What is happening around you is a mirror for what is happening within you; that is the sense in which you are responsible for all of your life experiences, whether fantastic or unpleasant.

Like the Law of Growth, this karmic law aims to teach you that you should be looking to take ownership of the good and bad things you create, rather than constantly looking outside yourself to find excuses.

Note: We are not the only source of what happens to us in life. Ask those that die in hurricanes, car or aircraft accidents or shark attacks or military conflicts. We should never take ownership for what others do to us. This Law negates "Free Will" which is given of God to mankind. Our responsibility is to love the Lord God with all our hearts and our neighbor as ourselves.

6. The Law of Connection

If you reached this guide because you were wondering how to remove bad karma of past life experiences, remembering the Law of Connection can help you. This law emphasizes the interconnected nature of the past, present, and future, and reminds us that our control over the present and future can help us to obliterate the bad energy of the past (whether it is from our current life or a previous life).

Another point made by the Law of Connection is that it takes time to redress karmic wrongs from the past. However, each small step can have unexpectedly powerful effects.

Note: The past is not connected to the future. There is no previous life before the one you are currently living. Bad energy can come from demonic forces that are attacking our souls. I Peter 5:8 says...

"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world."

7. The Law of Focus

According to the Law of Focus, you will do better in life if you can follow a single train of thought to the exclusion of others. Our minds are not equipped to follow multiple trains of thought with equal competency.

So, if you have several important goals, try to follow them in a linear, ranked order rather than giving each goal only a fraction of your energy.

Another vital lesson here is that if you focus on your higher values; you won't be able to focus on "lower" emotions or thoughts like those that come from resentment, anger or possessiveness.

Note: Focus is important but the Bible tells us how to focus. It is not through an elaborate set of goals and objectives that even id in a liner rank and file all center on us. Here what Jesus said...

"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.: **Matthew 6:33**

8. The Law of Giving and Hospitality

In Hindi, karma meaning is closely tied to the Law of Giving and Hospitality. This law teaches that if you believe a certain thing, then you will naturally be called upon at some stage to demonstrate your commitment to that truth. The focus here is on the link between belief and practice. It suggests and encourages the importance of ensuring that your actions reflect your deeper beliefs.

This law is also about the way in which the universe will "test" you. Life gives us opportunities to put learned lessons into practice (and showing you when you need to do further work.)

Note: Again, the universe is not a living entity like God. It has no ability to test anyone. It does not think or feel or display power at all. Only God, who created the universe can do these things.

9. The Law of Here and Now

As noted above, in Buddhism, karma is connected to ideas about accepting the truth of your reality. Equally, Buddhists typically link karma to the theme of truly living in the present moment. If you cling too hard to past feelings, experiences, and beliefs, you will always have one foot in the past. Likewise, if you focus on anxiety or on greed, you will always have one foot in the future.

Following the Law of Here and Now means reminding yourself that the present is all you really have and that it is there to be fully engaged with and enjoyed.

Note: The present is not all there is. Jesus said...

“Lay **not** up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. **Matthew 6:19-21**

Jesus wanted us to focus on the future and live as sojourners in this world knowing that we will one day be dwelling with Him in heavenly places.

10. The Law of Change

When you think about the Law of Change, you connect with the message that the universe gives us what we need. So, you will find that history continually repeats itself until you demonstrate that you’ve learned what you need to in order to create a different future.

If you notice that you seem to be stuck in a loop, this is because there’s something fundamental that has not yet been addressed.

Meanwhile, if things around you begin to change in sudden and dramatic ways, take this is a sign that you have recently taken significant steps in your growth.

Note: The universe cannot give us what we need. This is the responsibility of God who created us. He alone knows the beginning from the end and what will befall us whether good or bad. He alone will work everything out for good to them who love him and are called according to his divine purposes. **Romans 8:28**

11. The Law of Patience and Reward

To put it succinctly, the Law of Patience and Reward claims that all of your greatest successes require consistent hard work. This means that you need to be patient, regardless of your goals in life.

If you expect immediate results, you will ultimately be disappointed; your successes will be minor in comparison to what you’re capable of achieving.

Instead, look to figure out your true purpose. Act in accordance with that purpose and enjoy the reward of knowing you are doing what you are supposed to with your current life. In time, associated successes (emotional and material) will follow.

Note: Consistent hard work is good but it is not the end all of life. Again Matthew 6:33 tells us that our ultimate effort is to seek the kingdom of God and He will add to our lives all that we ever need and desire.

12. The Law of Significance And Inspiration

Last but not least, the Law of Significance and Inspiration is a good law to reflect on when you need a motivational boost or start to feel like you don't matter.

This particular aspect of karma stresses that every contribution you make will influence the Whole, however small or great that contribution may be. Whenever you make creative, loving contributions to the world around you, your act inspires similarly positive behavior from others and attracts more positivity back into your life.

You may not always feel significant, but you always are. Without your presence, the energy of the universe would be fundamentally altered.

Note: There is no energy of the universe. It is not alive to have energy, speech, independent thought or power in itself. Plus, your energy cannot add to the Whole because there is no such thing. It is God's creation, not yours. His energy can add to or take away from but not ours.

All of these Karmic laws emanate from self to ultimately benefit self. It is all of the "Flesh" as the Bible puts it. We, as Christians, are encouraged to walk in the Spirit.

"I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law." **Galatians 5:16-18**

Meaning of Nervanah

The name **Nervanah** has the following meaning; "Blowing of the wind". An ancient Sanskrit compound name, it refers to a state free of suffering, in Hindu philosophy. In Buddhism, it represents a state of mind free from lust, anger, desire.

Origins...The name Nervanah is very likely a(n) Hindi variant of the name Nirvana.

Reaching "Nirvana," in theory, completes the life cycle and attains oneness with the universe as part of a cosmic life force. This is supposed to retire the soul from the endless reincarnation process. It has attained moral purity.

The problem with such an idea is...there is no proof that the universe is or could ever be morally pure. It is, as I have said before, a created handiwork of God. It never existed separate from God or had any consciousness of its own. Thus, it is impossible to attain oneness with an inanimate object.

The Problem With Reincarnation

Alex Lickerman M.D.

The problem with reincarnation as that explanation, however, is twofold: 1) we have, as of yet, no way to verify it prospectively in an objective manner, 2) we have no mechanism to explain how reincarnation might occur. Though reincarnation is indeed a central tenet of all sects of Buddhism, no sect of Buddhism posits the existence of a non-corporeal "soul"—an eternal, unchanging version of ourselves that's capable of living independently of a brain and a body. Rather, in Buddhism, the self is viewed as something that has no "absolute" existence, as something that changes constantly from moment to moment, as well as something that's capable of existing *only* within the confines of a physical brain.

Yet *something* of us, Buddhism argues, continues from life to life, something that makes us uniquely *us*. The sect of Buddhism I practice argues this "something" is our karma: the sum of all the effects we ourselves have created within our lives (like unexploded mousetraps that will be triggered at some point in the future) as a result of all the things we've ever thought, said, and done—not just in the past of our current life, but in all the pasts of all our previous lives.

Now let's be real. We are not the sum of all our thoughts. We were created in the image of God, in His likeness. Read it for yourself...

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

“And the LORD God formed *man* of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.” **Genesis 2:7**

Our existence is a direct act of God, not the sum total of many life experiences. Our soul is alive because of God, not transmigration.

Here are a few excerpts from Reincarnation Exposed.

- 1) If Reincarnation is true, mankind should be progressing. Human nature and conduct should be improving. However, the truth is, moral depravity is worsening as the Bible anticipates (**Matthew 24:12; 2 Timothy 3:1-5; etc.**).
- 2) The vast majority of the population has no memory of their prior lives. If we're all a product of previous life-cycles, why don't we remember our previous lives? How can we work off bad karma if we don't recognize our prior mistakes?
- 3) Though there are some who claim to recall past lives, the Bible reveals that demons have existed for millennia. These demons are able to place thoughts in a

person's mind in order to deceive (**1 Chronicles 21:1; 1 Timothy 4:1-2; Revelation 12:9; 16:14; etc.**).

- 4) If we are all being recycled, where are all the new babies coming from? There were an estimated 100 million souls a few thousand years ago, but today we're approaching 7 billion people. Reincarnation denies a Creator God, so where are all these souls coming from?
- 5) India is the cradle of Reincarnation, yet India is one of the world's most woeful nations. Though the people are intelligent and industrious, and natural resources abound, cows and rats eat their fill while many humans starve. Countless city streets are awash with filth, lined with starving beggars, and suffering is everywhere. With thousands of years to perfect Reincarnation, and countless gurus and holy men, why isn't India the shining star of human progress and spiritual evolution?
- 6) Gandhi stated that Reincarnation is a burden too great to bear. He saw the fruits of this practice around his country. All abroad was hopelessness and despair.
- 7) To break free from Reincarnation, one must live a harmless life. You can't even kill a microbe. Yet our immune system kills millions each day. This means there is no hope of ever escaping the wheel of Karma.
- 8) If you see a beggar wallowing in the gutter don't you dare help him! He is working off bad Karma. If you help him now, he will just have to come back in another lifetime to work off his bad karma all over again. This is why India had no hospitals or charitable institutions until the coming of Christian missionaries.

Throughout God's Word, the resurrection is taught – which directly refutes Reincarnation (**John 11:25; 1 Corinthians 15; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17; etc.**). Jesus' resurrection is testified to by Old Testament prophets and many New Testament witnesses.

The historical and eyewitness testimony for Jesus' resurrection is extensive and irrefutable. In fact, after His resurrection, Jesus was seen by over 500 eyewitnesses at one time (**1 Corinthians 15:6**).

Finally, the resurrection not only agrees with the evidence, but it offers true hope. Jesus promises all who will trust and follow Him: "Because I live, you will live also" (**John 14:19**).

"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live" (**John 11:25**).

Scripture also explains that Jesus died once – never to die again (**Romans 6:9**).

Conclusion

Reincarnation is a trap of the Devil that acts as a snare to capture the souls of men by thinking that they must work to attain salvation and eternal life. However, the Bible tells another story. It says...

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast” **Ephesians 2:8-9**

Salvation cannot be earned. **Hear what Jesus said...**

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.” John 3:16-17

This means that we must exercise our free will and receive the free gift of salvation that is being offered to us by God. He knows that we are dead in our sins and cannot get free without His help.

Join me in receiving Jesus as Savior and Lord, trusting in His death for our redemption and His life for our righteousness.

God bless you as you make Jesus Lord.

The Incarnation Of Jesus Christ Introduction

I have chosen to use much of the text being offered by Got/Questions.org to start off this teaching. They do an excellent job of explaining, far better than my attempt. However, I will interject here and there with comments in red.

Incarnation is a term used by theologians to indicate that Jesus, the Son of God, took on human flesh. This is similar to the “Hypostatic Union”. The difference is that the

hypostatic union explains how Jesus' two natures are joined, and the Incarnation more specifically affirms His humanity.

The word *incarnation* means “the act of being made flesh.” It comes from the Latin version of **John 1:14**, which in English reads, “The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us.” Because of the near-exclusive use of the Latin Vulgate in the church through the Middle Ages, the Latin term became standard.

Biblical support for Jesus' humanity is extensive. The Gospels report Jesus' human needs including sleep (**Luke 8:23**), food (**Matthew 4:2; 21:18**), and physical protection (**Matthew 2:13-15; John 10:39**). Other indications of His humanity are that He perspired (**Luke 22:43-44**) and bled (**John 19:34**). Jesus also expressed emotions including joy (**John 15:11**), sorrow (**Matthew 26:37**), and anger (**Mark 3:5**). During His life, Jesus referred to Himself as a man (**John 8:40**), and after His resurrection His humanity was still recognized (**Acts 2:22**).

The Purpose of The Incarnation

But the purpose of the Incarnation was not to taste food or to feel sorrow. The Son of God came in the flesh in order to be the Savior of mankind.

First, it was necessary to be born “under the law” (**Galatians 4:4**). All of us have failed to fulfill God's Law. Christ came in the flesh, under the Law, to fulfill the Law on our behalf (**Matthew 5:17; Galatians 4:5**).

Second, it was necessary for the Savior to shed His blood for the forgiveness of sins (**Hebrews 9:22**). A blood sacrifice, of course, requires a body of flesh and blood and this was God's plan for the Incarnation: “When Christ came into the world, he said: ‘Sacrifice and offering (under the Old Covenant) you did not desire, but a body you prepared for me’” (**Hebrews 10:5**). Without the Incarnation, Christ could not really die, and the cross is meaningless.

God did an incredible work in sending His only begotten Son into the world and providing us with a salvation we do not deserve. Praise the Lord for that moment in which “the Word became flesh.” We are now redeemed “with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect” (**1 Peter 1:19**).

The Hypostatic Union



The hypostatic union is the term used to describe how God the Son, Jesus Christ, took on a human nature, yet remained fully God at the same time. Jesus always had been God (**John 8:58, 10:30**), but at the incarnation, Jesus became a human being (**John 1:14**). The addition of the human nature to the divine nature equals

Jesus, the God-man. This is the hypostatic union, Jesus Christ, one Person, fully God and fully man.

Jesus' two natures, human and divine, are inseparable. Jesus will forever be the God-man, fully God and fully human, two distinct natures in one Person.

Jesus' humanity and divinity are not mixed, but are united without loss of separate identity. Jesus sometimes operated with the limitations of humanity (**John 4:6, 19:28**) and other times in the power of His deity (**John 11:43; Matthew 14:18-21**). In both, Jesus' actions were from His one Person. Jesus had two natures, but only one personality.

The doctrine of the hypostatic union is an attempt to explain how Jesus could be both God and man at the same time. It is ultimately, though, a doctrine we are incapable of fully understanding. It is impossible for us to fully understand how God works. We, as human beings with finite minds, should not expect to totally comprehend an infinite God.

Jesus is both God and man. Jesus has always been God, but He did not become a human being until He was conceived in Mary. Jesus became a human being in order to identify with us in our struggles (**Hebrews 2:17**) and, more importantly, so that He could die on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins (**Philippians 2:5-11**).

So, the hypostatic union teaches that Jesus is both fully human and fully divine, that there is no mixture or dilution of either nature, and that He is one united Person, forever.

The Importance of God In The Flesh

Since Jesus' conception by the Holy Spirit in the womb of the virgin, Mary (**Luke 1:26-38**), the real identity of Jesus Christ has always been questioned by skeptics. It began with Mary's fiancé, Joseph, who was afraid to marry her when she revealed that she was pregnant (**Matthew 1:18-24**). He took her as his wife only after the angel confirmed to him that the child she carried was the Son of God.



Hundreds of years before the birth of Christ, the prophet Isaiah foretold the coming of God's Son:

"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace" (**Isaiah 9:6**).

When the angel spoke to Joseph and announced the impending birth of Jesus, he alluded to Isaiah's prophecy:

"The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel (which means 'God with us')" (**Matthew 1:23**).

This did not mean they were to name the baby Immanuel; it meant that "God with us" was the baby's identity. Jesus was God coming in the flesh to dwell with man.

Jesus Himself understood the speculation about His identity. He asked His disciples, "Who do people say that I am?" (**Matthew 16:13; Mark 8:27**). The answers varied, as they do today. Then Jesus asked a more pressing question: "Who do you say that I am?" (**Matthew 16:15**). Peter gave the right answer: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (**Matthew 16:16**). Jesus affirmed the truth of Peter's answer and promised that, upon that truth, He would build His church (**Matthew 16:18**).

Nature & Identity

The true nature and identity of Jesus Christ has eternal significance. Every person must answer the question Jesus asked His disciples: "Who do you say that I am?"

He gave us the correct answer in many ways. In **John 14:9-10**, Jesus said, "Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you I do not speak on my own authority. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work."

The Bible is clear about the divine nature of the Lord Jesus Christ (see **John 1:1-14**). **Philippians 2:6-7** says that, although Jesus was "in very nature God, He did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness." **Colossians 2:9** says, "*In Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form.*"

Jesus is fully God and fully man, and the fact of His **incarnation** is of utmost importance. He lived a human life but did not possess a sin nature as we do. He was tempted but never sinned (**Hebrews 2:14-18; 4:15**). Sin entered the world through Adam, and Adam's sinful nature has been transferred to every baby born into the world (**Romans 5:12**)—except for Jesus. Because Jesus did not have a human father, He did not inherit a sin nature. He possessed the divine nature from His Heavenly Father.

(This could have only happened through a "Virgin Birth")

Jesus had to meet all the requirements of a holy God before He could be an acceptable sacrifice for our sin (**John 8:29; Hebrews 9:14**). He had to fulfill over three hundred prophecies about the Messiah that God, through the prophets, had foretold (**Matthew 4:13-14; Luke 22:37; Isaiah 53; Micah 5:2**).

Since the fall of man (**Genesis 3:21-23**), the only way to be made right with God has been the blood of an innocent sacrifice (**Leviticus 9:2; Numbers 28:19; Deuteronomy 15:21; Hebrews 9:22**).



The Final Sacrifice

Jesus was the final, perfect sacrifice that satisfied forever God's wrath against sin (**Hebrews 10:14**). His divine nature made Him fit for the work of Redeemer; His human body allowed Him to shed the blood necessary to redeem. No human being with a sin nature could pay such a debt. No one else could meet the requirements to become the sacrifice for the sins of the whole world (**Matthew 26:28; 1 John 2:2**).

If Jesus were merely a good man as some claim, then He had a sin nature and was not perfect. In that case, His death and resurrection would have no power to save anyone.

Because Jesus was God in the flesh, He alone could pay the debt we owed to God. His victory over death and the grave won the victory for everyone who puts their trust in Him (**John 1:12; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4, 17**).

Both God & Man At The Same Time

The Bible teaches that Jesus Christ is both God and man. Many Christians are understandably confused when it comes to understanding how Jesus can be God and man at the same time. How could our divine Creator become a human? Could a first-century Jewish man really be God? While a certain amount of mystery will always accompany this issue, both Scripture and, to a lesser extent, church tradition provides for us important distinctions to help us make sense of this matter. While previous church councils had deliberated over issues pertaining to the nature of Christ and His relationship to the Father, it was the **Council of Chalcedon** (AD 481) that affirmed that Christ is “the same perfect in divinity and perfect in humanity, the same truly God and truly man.” This statement is not true simply because the council taught it. Rather, the council’s declaration was authoritative only insofar as it aligned with what the Bible teaches on the subject.

Scripture is clear that Jesus is God (**John 20:28; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 1:8**), and it is equally clear that He is truly human (**Romans 1:2-4; 1 John 4:2-3**). Jesus claimed the divine name (**John 8:58**) and did things that only God can do (**Mark 2:1-12; Luke 7:48-50**). But Jesus also displayed the weaknesses and vulnerabilities common to humanity (**Luke 19:41; John 19:28**).

The belief that Jesus is both God and man is of fundamental importance. The apostle Paul wrote that an affirmation of the



divinity of Jesus is required to be saved (**Romans 10:9**), and the apostle John provided a sober warning that those who deny Christ's true humanity are promoting the doctrine of antichrist (**2 John 1:7**).

The Triune God of the Bible has existed and reigned from all eternity, and the second Person of the Trinity, the Son, took on human flesh at a particular point in time (**Luke 1:35; Hebrews 1: 5**). God, the Son, added a sinless human nature to His eternally existent divine nature. The result was the Incarnation. God the Son became a man (**John 1:1, 14**). **Hebrews 2:17** gives the reason that Jesus had to be both God and man: "He had to be made like them, fully human in every way, in order that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that He might make atonement for the sins of the people." The Son of God took on human flesh to provide redemption to those under the law (**Galatians 4:4-5**).

At no time did Jesus ever cease to be God. Although He was made fully human, there was never a point when He abrogated His divine nature (**see Luke 6:5, 8**). It is equally true that, after becoming incarnate, the Son has never ceased to be human. As the apostle Paul wrote, "For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, *the man*, Christ Jesus"

(**1 Timothy 2:5**). Jesus is not half-human and half-divine. Rather, He is *Theanthropos*, the God-man. The Lord Jesus Christ is one eternally divine Person who will forever possess two distinct yet inseparable natures: one divine and one human.

First Born Theology

*Here's what Biblestudyguide.org has to say...*Under the law of Moses, the term "firstborn" was used literally and figuratively, expressing a relationship, an inheritance, preeminence, and privileges.

The firstborn son's inheritance was a double portion. He had special privileges as the firstborn male of the family.

"But he shall acknowledge the firstborn, the son of the unloved, by giving him a **double portion** of all that he has, for he is the beginning of his strength; to him belongs the **right of the firstborn**" (**Deut. 21:17**).

God called Israel His firstborn son. This communicates the relationship He had with Israel, and the preeminence, privileges, and inheritance He granted the nation.

"Then you shall say to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the LORD, "**Israel is My son, My firstborn**"'" (**Ex. 4:22**).

God calls David, who was a type of Christ, His firstborn. This communicates the relationship of David with God, looking forward to the relationship Jesus would have with God.

"I also shall make him *My* firstborn, the highest of the kings of the earth" (**Ps. 89:27**).

In Scripture, God uses the term "***firstborn***" to communicate several things about Jesus and Christians, which we'll investigate.

Jesus: Firstborn, Preeminent

Jesus is the firstborn of all creation. "He is the image of the invisible God, he firstborn of all creation" (**Col. 1:15**). The phrase "firstborn over creation" does not mean that God created Jesus, because He's divine and therefore eternal (**John 1:1**). Rather, it means that He's preeminent.

"For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities -- all things have been created through Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything" (**Col. 1:16-18**).

"And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church" (**Eph. 1:22**).

Jesus: Firstborn From The Dead

Jesus is firstborn from the dead. In other words, He was first to resurrect from the grave, having conquered death.

"He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything" (**Col. 1:18**).

"And from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us and **released us** from our sins by His blood --" (**Rev. 1:5**).

Because Jesus conquered death, and rose by the power granted Him by God (**Jn. 10:18**), we too will resurrect to eternal life by the power of God if we obey Jesus (**1 Cor. 6:14; Heb. 5:9**).

Jesus: Firstborn Among Many Brethren

Paul says that Jesus was the firstborn among many brethren.

"For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren" (**Rom. 8:29**). Since we are flesh, Jesus became flesh to author our salvation, and save us.

"But we do see Him who was made for a little while lower than the angels, namely, Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone. For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to perfect the author of their salvation through sufferings. For both He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all from one Father; for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren" (**Heb. 2:9-11**).

Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives" (**Heb. 2:14-15**).



As Christians, we follow in the footsteps of Jesus (**1 Pet. 2:24**). Therefore, we are His brethren because we have conformed to His image, making Satan powerless against us in respect to death (**Heb. 2:9-15**).

This means that every "Born Again" believer also has two natures. From God's viewpoint, our body has been redeemed by the sacrifice of Jesus. He became sin for us that we might be the righteousness of God in Him. (Jesus). **II Corinthians 5:21**... "For he has made him, who knew no sin, to be sin for us; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." Then He filled us with His very own Spirit. Like Adam, He breathed into our nostrils the breath of live (His Holy Spirit) and we became alive spiritually. Thus we now are His brethren, Man & God in the same place at the same time.

We are and can never be gods. Some folks have espoused such a notion but that is not so. We are fully mankind being filled with God's Spirit. We are the image and likeness of God through Jesus. We can never attain a god status.

Church of the Firstborn

Since Jesus is the firstborn, His church is called "church of the firstborn" in Scripture. "To the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect" (**Heb. 12:23**).

Members of the church of the firstborn have a relationship with God, an inheritance from God, preeminence in the world as God's people, and privileges given to them by God. They're enrolled in heaven, and possess eternal life.

If you're a Christian, you're a member of Jesus' church, the firstborn's church, and have all these blessings from God. But if you're not a Christian, you're missing out on the most precious things of life.

Conclusion

The literal meaning of, “Incarnation” is Jesus, the Son of God, taking on human flesh.” He did this through the virgin birth. The result of that event was multi-purpose:

1. To redeem mankind.
2. To destroy the works of the devil.
3. To bring many sons into glory as His Brethren.
4. To seek out and save that which was lost, His image and likeness on the earth.
5. To become the mediator between God and man.
6. To bring the kingdom of God here on earth.
7. To reestablish fellowship between God and man.

I am sure you will come across more benefits to add to this list. This is enough to strengthen our faith and become the basis for our praise and adoration.

Let us always give praise to God, who came from Heaven to become the God-Man for us. He didn't have to do it, yet He did. He is God. We are not. He is not God and Man mingled together. He is fully God dwelling in a fully human body. The only difference between His body and ours in His has no sin.

Do not think that you will ever become a god to rule over nature or any other realm. God is God over everything. If we rule over anything, it will be at His direction and with His guidance. We are joint heirs with Christ, poised to inherit the kingdom of God that will come here on earth, as it is in Heaven. This is our destiny.

Praise The Lord

The Mystery of Godliness

Preface

We will explore the “Mystery of Godliness” in hopes of discovering the basis for human righteousness. We will seek to learn the formula to attain self- righteousness and any associated factors that may enhance or hinder our efforts. We will determine what man has to do or not do in order to become righteous and sustain righteousness. We will learn the meaning of righteousness and why it is so important.

Introduction

What is “Righteousness? How does one attain it? Can it be turned on and off at will? Who determines the standard by which righteousness is measured? Are there degrees of Righteousness? How does a person know if they are righteous or not? What is “Unrighteousness? Can man be unrighteous and righteous? Is righteousness the same as “Godliness?

Paul, the apostle wrote this to Timothy in the 1st century:

“And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory. **I Timothy 3:16**

The Mystery Revealed

God was manifest in the flesh. That was and is still the “*Mystery of Godliness.*” However, to understand why God took on human flesh and what that means to humanity, we will have to search the scriptures.

When you think of God, being all powerful, all knowing, supernatural and able to create things like the universe out of nothing, it seems logical to say He can do anything He wants at anytime. If that is so, why would a Spiritual supernatural being of such greatness want to be clothed with a frail, non-supernatural body? What’s the point?

The only way to really understand is to know more about God. Yes, He is all-powerful, all-knowing but He is also, gentle, loving, kind, longsuffering, joyful and compassionate. Hear what Paul, the apostle said in his letter to the Galatians:

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.” **Galatians 5:22**

This description of fruit is in fact the character of God who is the Creator of all things. He is Love. He is Peace. He is Joy. He is Good. He is Faithful. He is Gentle. He is Kind. He is, and that says a lot.

Notice that there is no selfishness, no ego, no pride, and no bad stuff at all. If folks knew this, they would stop blaming Him for doing all the evil in this world. That stuff is not in line with God's nature. He is *morally pure*.

The problem with man is that he is not morally pure. He is immoral. Being immoral is to be sinful and it is focused against God, who is moral. It is an act of rebellion because man was originally created as a morally pure being like God.

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

The Good, The Bad And The Ugly

The Bible tells us that man's heart is really bad to the bone. Hear what it says:

“The heart is deceitful above all things, *and desperately wicked: who can know it?*”
Jeremiah 17:9

It wasn't always that way. Man was morally pure, good in every way. He was created in the image of God. He was the very likeness of God...all good. When anyone looked at man, they saw God's reflection.

So what happened?

“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:” **Romans 5:12**

One man, Adam, decided to do his own thing instead of what he was created for. God told him that if he disobeyed, he would die. Adam's rebellion against the will of God caused him to fall from an eternal morally pure being into an immoral state. He became toxic with sin, unrighteous and unholy.

If that wasn't enough, his sin brought death that was never in God's plan and that death passed upon all men. Evil was now in the DNA of mankind.

Here are a few other scriptures on man being sinful.

As it is written: “None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks after God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, no not even one.” **Romans 3:10-12**

“For the *wages of sin is death*, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”
Romans 6:23

Get the point? Without the image of God in us, we are nothing more than walking dead men and women. However, if we accept the gift of God, which is eternal life, found only in Jesus, we shall overcome death and be kept from the final judgments of God..

Great Is The Mystery

Revealing the mystery is like peeling an onion. There are several outer layers to go through before you get to its core. So it is with the “Mystery of Godliness” Lets peel the onion:

Layer #1.....Moral Purity = Righteousness

1. Godliness is explained as God-like. If you possess Godliness, you are God-like which is to say, “Morally Pure”
2. Morally pure is the essence of “Righteousness.” If you are righteous, you are morally pure or God-like.
3. Being righteous is the same as being moral. Thus, a righteous lifestyle is a life dedicated to being moral.

Layer #2.....Sin = Immorality

1. All sin can be boiled down to rebellion against God. He is the one we offend.
2. Sin earns a wage that God has declared. That wage is physical death and separation from God eternally.
3. Everyone is bound by the sin principle. No one is exempt or capable of not sinning against God. It is our very nature to rebel.

Layer #3.....Salvation Is A Gift

1. Salvation is a gift from God. He offers it to every human being.
2. Being saved is the same as being delivered from the penalty of sin, which is death.
3. God’s love for His creation is the foundation on which salvation stands. Good works or trying to be good in order to attain favor with God is not Biblical.
4. Man cannot please God enough to earn His favor. God’s grace is unmerited favor. We did not earn it. Nor do we deserve it. But we can receive it as a free gift.

Layer #4.....The Why Factor

1. **We are blessed with God's unmerited favor because He loves us.**

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life. ... For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. **John 3:16**

2. **God planned it this way before the world was even formed.**

According as he hath chosen us in him *before the foundation of the world*, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: **Ephesians 1:4**

3. **God's plan to save us was enacted while we were yet sinners.**

But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. **Ephesians 2:5-9**

Layer #5.....God's Eternal Purpose

1. That we should be holy (Morally Pure) & without blame.

According as he hath chosen us in him *before the foundation of the world*, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: **Ephesians 1:4**

2. God wants us to be with Him in eternity.

And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: **Ephesians 2:5-9**

3. God wants to display His mercy through our redemption.

That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ. **Ephesians 2:5-9**

4. God wanted Jesus to be the 1st born among many brethren. He is a prototype of a new race of beings that are all raised from the dead to be the children of God...Christ first. Then all those that believe in Him.

For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he (The Son) might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. **Romans 8:29-30**

Level #6.....Our Response

How can we walk away from so great a blessing? God loves us with an infinite love He is even now calling and saving all who will receive His plan of salvation. To reject so great a blessing is to commit spiritual suicide. We can only receive Him and make Jesus Lord of our lives and let God conform us into the image of His dear Son.

The Mystery of Godliness

So what is the real “Mystery of Godliness: that has been hidden for all these centuries? It is, **“Christ In You.”** This was not an easy thing to accomplish, even for God. It took thousands of years and many hidden clues found in prophecy and even clear annunciations.

Let’s take a walk through history and read what was foretold.

1. The messiah or Christ was foretold in the Old Testament as one that would come and save His people. (The words Messiah and Christ mean Anointed One. They are Hebrew and Greek expressions)
2. His death as a penalty for sin was known and proclaimed by Isaiah.

Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. ⁵ But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. **Isaiah 5:4-5**

3. His mission, divinity and Lordship were clearly revealed.

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, Counselor, 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 forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this. **Isaiah 9:6-10**

4. His virgin birth was also known ahead of it happening.

Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. **Isaiah 7:14**

This scripture tells us that a Virgin, not a young woman, as some would say, conceived and gave birth to a son who shall be known as “Emmanuel” Emmanuel literally means, “God With Us”

The virgin birth was essential in God's plan because He required a pure sacrifice for sin. It had to be the innocent for the guilty. Throughout Old Testament history, God required an innocent lamb as a sacrifice for the sins of the people. The problem with that was it was only good for one year. The blood of Christ was a, "**Once For All**", thing. No more every year sacrifices. His blood met God's standard for their atonement.

If Jesus were to have been just another man like the rest of Adam's descendants, he would have been under the sentence of death like all of us are now. His blood would be toxic with a sinful DNA. That's why God's Holy Spirit overshadowed Mary and she, as a virgin, conceived and bore a son. That's why He could be called, "Emmanuel" or "God With Us." He met the requirements of the pure spotless Lamb of God.

John, the Baptist knew that the innocent had to die for the guilty and that Jesus was God's sacrifice. You'll remember that when Jesus came to John's Baptist, John saw him approaching and shouted, "Behold, the Lamb of God." The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. John 1:29

John commented that he saw the Spirit descend upon Jesus. That's how he knew that Jesus was the "Anointed One" that was foretold by the prophets. John knew his preaching was in advance of the coming of this anointed one. He knew that the mission of Jesus would be to die as a sacrifice for sin.

Questions & Answers

I am sure that you probably still have some unanswered questions. I did when I first started studying this subject over 45 years ago. I will pose a few questions and answer them so there will be no misunderstanding as to the mystery of Godliness.

1. If Jesus did not have Adam's DNA, how did He differ from Adam?

The Bible talks about the 1st and the last Adam. Remember, Adam actually means Man. Adam was a prototype from which a race would come forth. However, that entire race fell short of God's glory. Death passed upon every Adamic descendant because of sin.

The Bible presents Adam as the first man, and gives the Lord Jesus Christ the curious title of 'the last Adam' (1Corinthians 15:45). Listen to how the scriptures explain it.

For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. I Corinthians 15:22-23

And so it is written, the first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. I Corinthians 15:45-47

The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. I Corinthians 15:49

Adam was not, “God With Us”. He was a reflection of the original. He was created in the image of and likeness to God. Jesus was and still is the original. He is the “God With Us” man who was never created. He was and always will be God who spoke everything into existence.

See John chapter one. It tells of the beginning and you will see the WORD as being with God and was God. It was He who called into existence everything. Read that entire chapter.

2. If Jesus lives in me through His Holy Spirit, why do I still have problems with sin?

We cannot help but to sin. Our righteousness is equal to dirty old rags. We are a fallen race that is ruled by evil. When Adam fell from God’s holiness, his nature changed from holy or pure to unholy or toxic. He lost the indwelling of God’s Spirit that made him a living soul. He took on the nature of evil. Multiply that by millions and you have our society today, full of murder, lust, greed and other evil desires.

When Jesus comes into our hearts, we received the Holy Spirit and ended up with two natures that war against each other for rule of expression in our lives. Hear what the Bible says...

For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. Galatians **5:17**

This is why we are encouraged to allow Jesus to become Lord of our lives...so He can win the battle and lead us into glory. It’s a matter of exercising our free will and make choices that are against the flesh. Galatians 5:22 and continuing will list the two natures. One is the works of the flesh and the other is the fruit of the Spirit. The apostle Paul tells us; This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. **Galatians 5:16**

3. What will happen if I allow Jesus to express His nature in me?

Your life will drastically change. Instead of living and expressing Lust, Pride, selfishness, hate and all the other deeds of the flesh, you will begin to express love, peace, joy, self control, kindness, and other fruits of God’s Spirit. Life will take on a true sense of meaning as you discover God’s will for your life. You will realize your divine destiny.

Conclusion

The mystery of Godliness is that we can join ourselves with our creator by allowing His Holy Spirit to dwell in us. God wants to fellowship with us on His level, in the Spirit. He

made a way, where there was no way, for us to be with Him on this earth and be free from the evil that is in us and in this world. He even sees us as righteous, because of what Jesus did, His death for our sin, His resurrection from the dead and His pure life while here on earth gives us access to God.

For he hath made him (Jesus) to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. **II Corinthians 5:21**

God went to great lengths to bring us back to Him. We, like sheep went astray but God did not forget about us. He loved us and calls all of us to salvation. All we have to do is accept it and join our hearts with His.

Here's how you can be delivered from sin, death and hell:

1. **Repent** for without repentance, there is no salvation. It is vital to acknowledge that you are sinful and of a fallen race. You are a prisoner of sin and in need of a Savior.
2. **Believe** that Jesus is the only begotten Son of God who came from heaven to die for your sins, was raised from the dead and now is seated at the right hand of God, The Father.
3. **Receive** Jesus into your life and make Him Lord so He can set you free, give you direction & wisdom.

“For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation...for the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. Romans 10:10-11

I Find Myself In God

I find myself in God.
He is my, “Everything”
I know that He is Lord,
My Life, my Hope, and King.

I find myself in God,
Not the ways of Sin.
Nor do I look to others,
To know who I really am.

I find myself in God,
To whom I bow on bended knee

