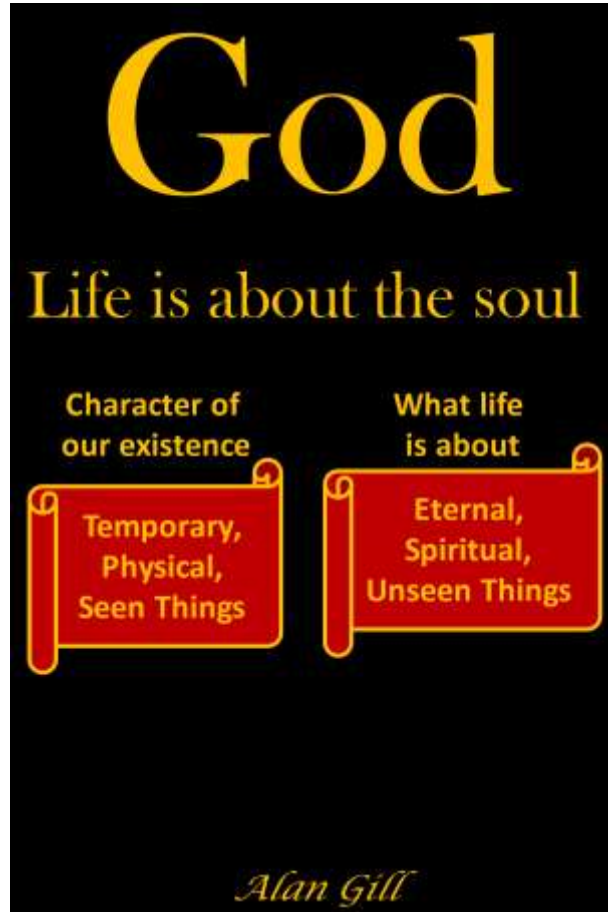


Life is About the Soul



Alan Gill

Copyright © 2022 Alan P. Gill
Copyright Certificate of Registration: TXu 2-306-724

God – Life is about the soul
by Alan P. Gill

“No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means, including photocopying, recording, or other electronic or mechanical methods, or by any information storage and retrieval system without the prior written permission of the publisher, except in the case of very brief quotations embodied in critical reviews and certain other noncommercial uses permitted by copyright law.”

ISBN: 978-0-578-26351-9

Publisher: SITDN Books LLC

Authors relevant websites
www.heavencoach.com
www.catholicsquestion.com

Table of Contents

Chapter 1 About the author	1
Chapter 2 About the five books in this study of God	3
Chapter 3 Overview of the five books	5
3.1 Book one: God	5
3.2 Book two: God, Catholic Audacity – The origin of the Catholic Church and the loss of the gospel message	7
3.3 Book three: Life is About the Soul	9
3.4 Book four: God is the Perfect Absence of Evil	12
3.5 Book five: The End of the World	13
Chapter 4 Preparing you for something entirely different – the truth	16
4.1 What does it mean to be spiritual, and is it important?	17
4.2 Getting to the truth	20
4.3 The only source of truth	22
4.4 Happiness – God’s point of view	24

4.5 The truth about life and salvation is simple to understand but commonly rejected	27
4.6 The magnitude of deceit	28
4.7 Here is the problem	30
Chapter 5 Before we begin: A high-level overview	31
5.1 Overview the chapters	32
5.2 The right way to bring the truth	33
5.3 The “unsaid”	34
5.4 There is error and usually associated treachery	35
5.5 More about this book	37
Chapter 6 Life is About the Soul	39
6.1 Life is about the soul – What does that mean?	40
6.2 God and His purpose	43
6.3 Understanding God means you understand the truth	44
6.4 Salvation	46
6.5 Sin is possible after salvation is received in obedience to the gospel	49
6.6 A concise description of salvation from God	52
6.7 The horrible, despicable, pathetic “so-called Christian” religions of the world	56

6.8 The origin of God’s solution for sin	57
6.9 A little more preparation for the truth	58
6.10 Overview of the kingdom and the church	61
6.11 More about the kingdom and the church for clarity	61
6.12 Introducing the kingdom and how and when it arrives	64
6.13 Finally, the reconciliation with God	70
6.14 People in the kingdom	71
6.15 The process of conversion	72
6.16 The seriousness of baptism	76
6.17 Important understandings in relation to conversion	78
6.18 Everything is about the soul, some life-changing thoughts (How awareness of “Life is about the soul” is helpful)	78
6.19 Dealing with life when you know everything is about the soul	80
6.20 The God of Love and Justice are not in conflict	82
6.21 Life is about the soul, and that defines what is important in our life	83
Chapter 7 The Church is the Kingdom	85
7.1 The Catholic teaching of the kingdom/church	86
7.2 Everything about the kingdom Jesus preached and the church He built is easily understood and perfectly explained	89

7.3 Here is why the Kingdom has come and why it is the church	91
7.4 Old Testament prophecies/promises related to the kingdom and their fulfillment in the New Testament	93
7.5 A brief timeline from the introduction of the kingdom to its fulfillment	96
7.6 Luke 24:44-49: Jesus opens their understanding	97
7.7 Then in Acts 1:3: About the kingdom of God	98
7.8 Now in Acts 1:8: Jesus tells the apostles of the Power they will receive when the Holy Spirit comes upon them	98
7.9 Acts 2:1-13: Power from on High	99
7.10 Acts 2:36 is the conclusion of verses Acts 2:14-35	99
7.11 Acts 2:37-38: What shall we do?	100
7.12 Acts 2:40-47: People obey; God adds them to the church	100
7.13 General clarity regarding the kingdom/church	101
7.14 The truth regarding binding and loosing – a little more detail than when this was mentioned above	102
Chapter 8 The Conversions of the New Testament	105
8.1 The meaning of conversion	105
8.2 The road to heaven in its commands is a change process	106
8.3 Summary	109

8.4 God's requirements for conversion and actual examples of conversions	110
8.5 Conversions of the New Testament	113
8.6 Calling on the name of The Lord	113
8.7 About Confessing Jesus	114
Chapter 9 What it means to BELIEVE	116
9.1 What "Believe" means or how God defines believe	116
9.2 How badly do you want heaven? This is what we are talking about - believing God or believing men/women	120
9.3 Catholic and Protestant conversion processes	125
9.4 Born again of incorruptible seed	126
9.5 Predestined – The meaning defined by God	128
9.6 Continuing the discussion of predestination	130
9.7 Proceeding to a better understanding of the errors of Luther and Calvin	132
9.8 I will take God at His word (i.e., John 3:16)	136
9.9 Martin Luther's private interpretation	140
9.10 Verses are taken out of context, that is, out of context of all scripture	143
9.11 Once more, does John 3:16 mean I believe, and I receive salvation?	146
9.12 Faith is from God's word for Abraham and for you	148
9.13 The Effort to Avoid Obedience	150

9.14 Can You Imagine Anyone Denying the Necessity of Baptism?	153
9.15 Conversions of the New Testament	155
9.16 A final comment about conversions	155

Chapter 10 The fall of Catholicism and Protestantism in one simple lesson	159
10.1 Giving truth a chance	159
10.2 “What does the Bible teach about Inherited sin / Inherited depravity?”	160
10.3 One Overwhelming Aspect of the Truth is Dread and Anxiety	161
10.4 The terror of original sin and inherited depravity doctrines	165
10.5 Differences in Catholic/Protestant teaching of Original Sin and Total Inherited Depravity	166
10.6 A pause to address a possible concern	170
10.7 The two most significant proof verses are: Psalm 51:5 and Romans 5:12	171
10.8 Rules of study	172
10.9 Focus on Psalm 51:5 as claimed evidence for original sin and inherited depravity	173
10.10 Focus on Romans 5:12 as claimed evidence for original sin and inherited depravity	185
10.11 The evolution of Catholic doctrine due to original sin doctrine	188

10.12 The Immaculate Conception of Mary - Mary, mother of Jesus, conceived without original sin	193
10.13 The next big “inference” is the Assumption of Mary (into heaven)	194
10.14 The evolution of Protestant Doctrine due to inherited sin nature	195
10.15 The horror of humankind speaking for God	199
 Chapter 11 Summary of “Life is about the soul”	 201
11.1 Commitment to the truth, not a commitment to a person or group	205
 Chapter 12 Final thoughts for this book	 206
12.1 Explanation of the book’s cover	208
12.2 Helping to visualize, “Life is about the soul”	209

Chapter 1

About the author

About the author

The author has a singular focus, namely, to determine the indisputable truth about life, about our existence. His background is not theological and in fact he is certain such backgrounds complicate coming to the truth. This can be correctly observed as theologians believe quite differently. Nonetheless, people assume such persons are knowledgeable and needed in “godly matters.” In contrast, the scriptures indicate that the truth is open to persons based on their character and attitudes. This is quite different from humankind's thinking who seek highly educated religious persons. As mentioned, these theologians believe quite differently along the lines of their varied religious training and yet accept one another without much apprehension.

Consequently, there is a willingness to find common grounds and co-exist. This attitude may have a root cause belief that there are many different routes to heaven or that there is insufficient reason to hold that their beliefs are much better than others or that the beliefs of others are close enough. Yet God is very clear that there is truth, and it is very narrow.

In God’s creation, it will be the decisions of each person concerning God-defined sin that determine a person’s eternal success or failure. One thing immediately clear from the scriptures is that God wants each person to succeed and that His way is the only way, and it is simple to understand but can be difficult to achieve. The author teaches these easily understood things about God and life and is thankful for the truth but is saddened by a “world of religions” that confuse the things most important to each person. If the truth were not so straightforward and the lies so ridiculous, it might be hard to convince. The author realizes that he cannot benefit in any “meaningful earthly manner” from teaching the truth, i.e., riches. After all, the script did not originate from the author, and

it is not supernaturally received except in a sense it was delivered from God a very long time ago. In this “author mode,” he lives a frightening existence, terrified of teaching something different than God’s meaning. There is nothing more serious than the soul, and indeed life is about the soul, and in some way the soul is the reason for everything.

Note about notes:

There are considerable notes, comments and so-on in italic throughout this book to support, clarify the subjects discussed. They are just as important as the regular text inasmuch as understanding what you believe is the only reason to believe.

Chapter 2

About the five books in this study of God

There are five books in this study, not really a series but just a group of books focused on the truth about life, about God. The goal is stated to be the same in each book: to help people succeed in life – heaven, eternal life, sharing in the Divine Nature. This is the third book and the first time I have mentioned the books and their connectivity. Indeed, the five books provide a good characterization of God and His purpose and the associated purpose for His creation. There is a certain melancholy in writing these books since they are only needed due to humankind's failure to respect God, specifically respect God's word. In the background is a history of prideful, selfish people who claimed relationships with God but were centered on personal gains. I continuously question my audacity in writing about God and can only write by recognizing and declaring I deserve no credit. God knows this, and so do I, and any who might appreciate what is written needs to know I have no such capability to write the truth. At the same time, there is nothing directly supernatural in the things I write. No one directs my hands, my mind. However, **indirectly** the things I write are supernatural since they originate in the word of God, which most definitely is supernatural. They are from God. I have tried to understand why I have been so blessed to know the truth, especially in my self-assessment, which is not very favorable. I can say it seems God appreciates three good things about me. So, I pass them along to the reader with the caveat that it is just what I think while also being something the scriptures appear to support.

First is the knowledge that I have from the life of David. I will summarize God's positive view of David that David was a man after God's own heart. One looks at David, sees his failures, and wonders how God can view David positively. Then one notices that David was not a person who tried to hide his faults, tried to blame others, and thus this must be what God appreciated, and I like to summarize this by saying David would say, "I did it, I sinned." The world, in general, does not exhibit this degree of honesty but immediately looks for excuses, for blaming. When I came to this understanding, I

immediately became very critical of myself and reached a point where I came to believe that it would be wise to look to oneself first in terms of any problem they faced. I created a rule (for myself) that says never blame others because you do not know – only God knows a person's heart.

The second thing has to do with forgiving others, and this needs to be sincere, although the lesson learned should be remembered.

The third thing was to realize, as I have mentioned here, that God is behind the true things I write about Him and life, and if there is any credit for the writing, it all belongs to God. Things that are not true (hopefully, there are none) belong to the human author.

Thus, in searching for and then attempting to live in a way that pleases God and praying continually about achieving His acceptance, I rationalized God's graciousness towards me. I share this because it puts me in my place of insignificance while also suggesting something that might be helpful to the readers. In case it is not apparent, pleasing God involves obedience and that must be the basis, namely a dedication to do the will of God.

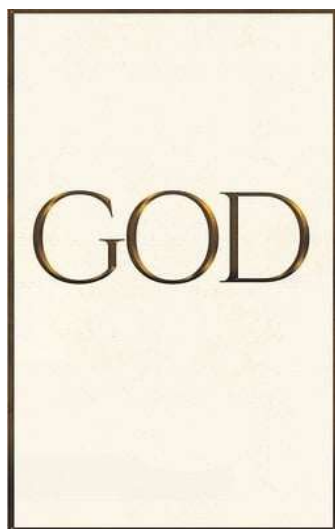
Everything else seems trivial if you realize the truth about God and life. The eternal overwhelms all the temporary, present, and near future "stuff" that fills our days. It is natural to want to achieve a great eternal end, and if you have empathy, there will be a desire that none will fail. Living in the truth, you cannot avoid the terror that will be faced by the unrighteous. Yet you would be short-sighted not to observe the masses who do not care, living without the awareness of a terrible fate they are racing toward day by day. The only thing that binds all people in the seriousness of life is their shared knowledge of death's certainty. Some aggressively seek a more profound meaning, and others conclude they can do nothing to affect their outcome. The comfort for the righteous is the knowledge of God's perfect justice because not only does God exist, but He is the God of the Bible, and judgment is perfectly aligned with what is contained in the scriptures. Such understanding limits what is important, worthwhile in terms of writing. Thus, this book, "Life is about the soul."

Chapter 3

Overview of the five books

It is almost inconceivable the confusion in the world regarding God and life's purpose. Who are we, where are we going? Many assume everything is just an accident. It is reasonable to believe we are much more, and book one named *God* supports that premise. Five books by the author are independently powerful in bringing the truth to a world living in gross misconceptions about God and life. Each book stands alone in its subject, yet all have the same purpose with the connectivity of a consistent message. This is the first book (*God*) in the group, and all five will be published in a 24-month timeframe.

3.1 Book one: God



This book title, "*God*" was published on November 30, 2020. It provided information/evidence/thinking that indicated the "religions of the world" had no association with God. It also dealt a severe blow to atheism by **logically** indicating the Genesis 1 account was true or at least for some, how it could be true. The basis for understanding that God was the God of the Bible was to understand God and His purpose as He has revealed those things. One evidence for the claims was related to God's

perfection in everything, and specifically how the scriptures fit everything together perfectly. The remaining books in this group include the recently published “God, Catholic Audacity” and this one (Life is about the soul) and the two following are written to help people to understand God’s perfection, God’s truth and ultimately to help each person to a successful life – heaven. Thus, the idea is to correctly understand God and His purpose, and of course, your life. When God’s word is **taken seriously**, there is a growing assurance in the truth of scripture. All five books address significant issues about life regarding the confusion brought by religion versus the clarity brought by the truth and explicitly gaining a better understanding of God. One emphasis throughout these books will be the nonsensical, the uncertainty, and the awkwardness brought by the so-called Christian religions.

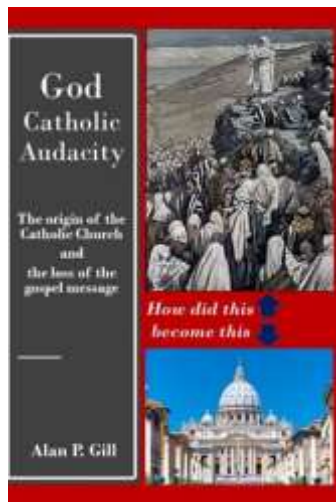
I do not like saying, “when God’s word is **taken literally**,” because that is misleading. Those who rightly divide God’s word correctly understand God. Some things are literal, and some are metaphors or symbolic and maybe best-called representations. There are times when the revelation was limited, and some things are designed such that persons with certain characteristics will NOT “hear,” also, there are mysteries and times when those things are revealed. The attitudes held by persons can allow or disallow their understanding, and everything is by God’s design. As is frequently mentioned in the book *God*, the magnificence of God’s physical creation is no greater than the things put in place to achieve His purpose. God accomplishes His purpose by getting the right persons via their free will choices to share in the Divine Nature. I suggest that those things God designed to allow success in sharing His Divine Nature are as creative or more so than the physical creation.

One of the ways these books demonstrate how everything fits perfectly together will be to show how the inventions of humankind’s religion do not fit anything together. The private interpretations of humankind are quite disjointed. There will be quite a dramatic comparison in terms of how THE TRUTH fits God’s plan perfectly together.

One of the things emphasized in the book *God* was that life was about the soul and basically about nothing else. This book continues to emphasize the soul by using the

title, “Life is About the Soul.” An equivalent title could be, “Everything is about the soul, and I use the words “life” and “everything” somewhat interchangeably. I will overview some things with this book and then mention how the remaining books also continue to support the things of God that are true. There is only one purpose for these books, and it is to bring the truth; we might say bring the gospel message to the world. The Bible does this perfectly, and this book only helps inasmuch as it addresses the deceit in religion brought by persons who have changed God’s meaning. Nothing is more important for each person than the truth – life is indeed about the soul.

3.2 Book two: God, Catholic Audacity – The origin of the Catholic Church and the loss of the gospel message



Catholicism **cannot be justified** using only the scriptures. They indicate two paths of truth and consequently look very different than the church of the scriptures. Catholics have no idea how far their beliefs and practices are from the truth. We can easily show using the scriptures how they are the opposite of what God has revealed on all issues. However, the most important thing is that those following Catholicism will not be successful in life. It is terribly simple to demonstrate there is only one path and it is the inspired scriptures. It is easy because we are dealing with God and His perfection allows

those that love the truth to sort truth from error. The second path used by Catholicism in no way justifies anything Catholic since the scriptures alone are in total opposition to the Catholic teachings.

Note: The second path for Catholics is a combination of accepting traditional things corresponding with the period of the so-called early fathers of the church and the associated Catholic invention of apostolic succession, allowing them to make the rules.

This book addresses the abhorrent use of the early church fathers to justify the practices of the Catholic church. Also recently complicating the landscape of truth has been the movement of various Protestants to the Catholic church. Typically, these Protestants correctly realize the fundamental errors of Luther and Calvin while seeing Catholicism as a historical path closer to the origin of the church, namely closer than the sixteenth century founding of Protestantism.

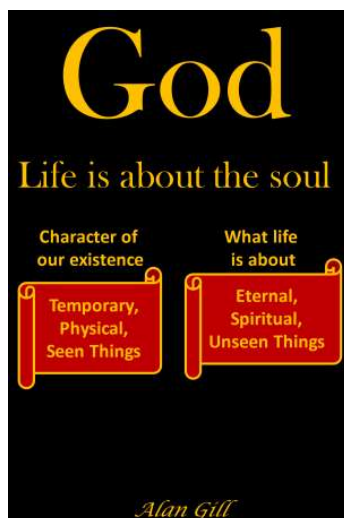
Unfortunately, finding obvious errors in Protestant beliefs is a poor reason to become a Catholic. They often share their thought processes in leaving Protestantism and becoming Catholics. It is easy to dismantle their analysis, and this book does that systematically. I reluctantly use this approach because the best response to error is to simply provide the truth. Nonetheless, a combination of delivering the truth and pointing out errors may help some.

Note: It may not be clear why it is important to take this approach in exposing Catholicism, that is, the approach of disputing ex-Protestant's reasoning in becoming Catholics. Certainly, Catholicism is easily shown to be the opposite of the truth, which has been done in many ways. However, these Protestants have taken an approach that is more appealing to non-Catholics and brings a more powerful way of promoting Catholicism to Catholics. Thus, these ex-Protestant teachers are well appreciated by Catholics. There is a significant background knowledge regarding Catholicism known to older Catholics but not to "younger" Catholics. Catholics have a solid historical

animosity against Bible use by anyone except certain of their hierarchy. That might seem strange and even unbelievable to many persons, especially to “younger” Catholics, since Catholicism strongly promotes Bible use today. Future generations of Catholic hierarchy will be better versed in the scriptures, and they will have some of these Protestant converts to thank. Here is the point, in the different historical eras of Catholic persuasion (which are discussed in this book), there have necessarily been transitions when current methods failed. This latest approach needs to be identified, and its weakness revealed.

This book was much needed to give Catholicism its correct place in history. It does much more since in the process of showing Catholicism to be “the falling away,” the truth is revealed. Catholicism is a travesty that has damaged so many souls and has negatively touched all religions. The book is thorough in its revelation of Catholicism and includes the unavoidable conclusion that Protestantism has no connection with God.

3.3 Book three: Life is About the Soul



In addition to the title chapter of this book, every person desiring to be or claiming to be a Christian should understand four additional topics of significance. Again, if it were not for all the corrupt teaching on salvation the understanding being provided would not be necessary. In your walk as a Christian in obedience to the gospel, you would learn these things in the normal course of your study. You would understand them correctly as you read about them. Unfortunately, unscrupulous persons in teaching error regarding salvation use the scriptures to support many false teachings. After Chapter 6, “Life is about the soul,” the following topics enhance our understanding of God’s means of establishing salvation.

- The Church is the Kingdom
- The Conversions of the New Testament
- What it Means to BELIEVE
- The Fall of Catholicism and Protestantism in One Simple Lesson

It is fair to say that 99% of the people in some way related to Christianity do not correctly understand these subjects. As you study each of these topics, you will come to believe there has been considerable deception in your “religious training.” I am confident of your response because the teaching of “religion” is illogical, very supportive of humankind’s ideas, and somewhat silly compared to the simple truth. Once again, the only issue in your acceptance of these truths will be, “how badly do you want to go to heaven” versus how much you cherish current beliefs.

This third book in the group of five books provides the truth regarding God and life. This book proclaims the only important issue of life is that “life is about the soul” and absolutely about nothing else. In other words, our physical life is ultimately about something not physical, that is, about our post-death state. That state has no end, or we can say it is eternal. This is the subject and emphasis of religion **or should be** but seldom is a priority. The religious narrative has seldom if ever, helped people in the manner it should. Life is serious business and needs to be lived day by day considering its ultimate purpose, namely your soul.

Indeed, God has done His part in supplying our existence and defining **His purpose** and, consequently, **our purpose**. God provided the truth in the best way to accomplish **His purpose**. That purpose was to share in His Divine Nature. This book is written to display the **deceit of religion** – meaning teaching in opposition to the truth delivered by God. This is only important for one reason because it is the **most crucial thing** in the life of each person. Namely, providing the truth that people need to be eternally victorious.

The truth should be cherished, but for very selfish reasons, it has been distorted and done in the name of religion. It is almost incomprehensible that the thing most needed has been changed to be ineffective. A Bible verse says, “Let God be found true and every man a liar,” which seems a little extreme. However, it is the truth because whenever men/women become involved in godly matters, they get it wrong. The outcome is the religions of the world. God points out the seriousness of changing His meaning by indicating “every man a liar.”

The book was written to help people who love the truth and are faced with a lot of deceit, a lot of confusion. Religion has failed but that is not apparent from their ability to accumulate many converts and achieve considerable assets. Passing along truthful information is the best reason to write. In short, it is passing along the truth about God and life while exposing teachings that are not true. The massive worldly religious enterprise provides no help but deceives people such that all seems well. One thing will be apparent, namely the **simplicity of God’s way** to achieve success versus the complication brought by the “religions of the world.” The truth is powerful, simple, makes perfect sense, and therefore can change any person regardless of their current belief to embrace that which provides the most essential thing in their life.

3.4 Book four: God is the Perfect Absence of Evil

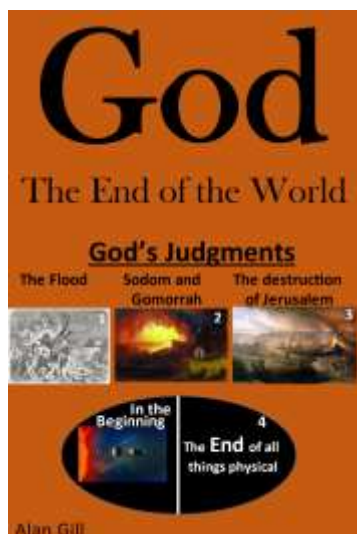


God as the perfect absence of evil is an important concept and for many an obvious aspect of God – but not for all. Some suggest the opposite in support of their preferred understanding of life and their inability to otherwise explain evil in the world. The scriptures present God as the opposite of evil, and thus the focus chapter of this book, “God is the Perfect Absence of Evil,” effectively validates the title of the book. In support of that, there are four additional chapters that help our understanding of God and consequently His goodness.

- Atheist Dilemma
- Fear and Understand God
- Blaming and Excuses
- Will, only a Few, Achieve Heaven and If So Why

Everything in these books is related to helping people achieve heaven. “God is the Perfect Absence of Evil” is a title that might seem to be designed to show that God is not the source of suffering, and that is one outcome of this understanding, but there is much more. For instance, the reason for the test and the character of the test to achieve God’s purpose are closely associated with this “no evil” characteristic of God.

3.5 Book five: The End of the World



There is always a great deal of interest regarding the end of the world. The Bible is very clear, but what is typically taught, believed, and claimed to be Bible-based is indeed dramatic and enticing but full of deceit. As always, the truth from God is simple and “not missed” **when the fundamentals are right**. This book is comprehensive in gaining the correct understanding of how God will bring an end to the world and all things. The “world of religion” has brought confusion in their stories of the rapture, physical wars, and an earthly thousand-year rule of Christ and can only rightly be described as nonsense or, more kindly, as pathetic scholarship.

As with other Bible subjects (such as salvation and the church), there remains no mystery concerning how God will end the world or the nature of signs regarding the end. It is all terribly clear. The “so-called Christian” religions do not even understand the plan of salvation and genuinely struggle with the end of the world. They teach an incredibly complex and even mystical, almost magical end time. Most of the things related to the end of the world amount to nothing different than what those “in Christ” know and understand as the gospel message. There is no particular emphasis on the end of the world, but it is just in the progression of Bible events discussed and expected. If there is

an emphasis that is important, it is that for each person, the **days are evil**. This, of course, means that as days pass, everyone gets a day closer to their end. In that sense, for so many, the days are evil. Those outside the body of Christ are nearing a terrible end, and those “in Christ,” although headed for a wonderful eternity, realize that they must remain faithful and take advantage of their lifetime to serve God. **The fundamental gospel message dominates everything in life, and indeed that message remains that “life is about the soul.”** There is not much reason to act or think any differently because of the things related to the end of the world. There is **no special knowledge regarding the world's end** except that it is coming. That is why the timing is unimportant, including any understanding of the timing. God has a purpose, and it begins with creation, and it will end with destruction. God purposely has not revealed the time of the ending. People envision all kinds of things about the end, but it is a wasteful effort. That ending will be very bang-bang, and it will be over. God has a reason for everything, and there is no additional purpose for the “end of everything.” There is nothing different leading up to the end. Jesus will return in the air and take the church (His spiritual body), the world and the works therein will be destroyed, and then the judgment. All the invented “end of the world teachings” by the “so-called Christian” churches has no purpose. There is nothing you could do in advance if you knew more, well yes, there is, and it is to obey the gospel and live faithfully. The timing for the end event seems to be of most interest, and it is not known or are there any signs, but everyone ought to think as the scriptures admonish that **today is the day of salvation** and that is the wisdom from God.

The problem of getting to the truth is always the same. People do not understand God and His purpose as He has revealed. In addition to providing a false narrative for salvation and the end of the world, these religionists bring incredible confusion, and people conclude there is no understandable truth. People need the truth, and it needs to be simple and not believed to be exclusively the property of some elitist group of “theologian-types.” The false narrative about “the end” is a tremendous disservice to those taught, and the damage is seldom realized by these “great” philosophical teachers. Those of the truth know of their responsibility to bring the gospel message, which is

indeed simple, straightforward, and able to move truth-loving persons into the kingdom of the Son of God's love. There is no single thing that needs to be said about the end of the world except that it is coming at any time and thus live accordingly.

Chapter 4

Preparing you for something entirely different – the truth

We live in a world where the truth, especially in religion, has a doubtful existence. How can anyone be blamed for being cynical as the religions present themselves as the truth while exhibiting many different “beliefs.” This book points to the singular nature of truth and, even more, reveals that THE TRUTH is critical to your life's success. Therefore, being quite different, this chapter (“Preparing for something quite different – the truth” and chapter 5 “Before we begin – A high-level overview”) prepare you for the remaining chapters and provide an overview that should be helpful.

How badly do you want to go to heaven? There is a significant difference between those who want to go to heaven (most everyone) and those willing to do something to achieve it. Life can get in the way. The largest category of people seems to be those willing to wait and see what happens after death. Even the most ardent atheist still wonders, “what if I still exist after death.” If I still exist, will the quality of my new existence be determined by how I lived my life? This can be confidently answered during your lifetime. This book will provide answers about life that are reasonable, logical, evidential, and consistent with all scripture.

The emphasis of this book is related to the God of the Bible, and we can refer to the significant “Christian” players as Catholic and Protestant. Atheism and the other religions of the world are the subjects of other books, such as the author’s book titled, “God.” The “so-called Christian” religions of the world have NOT produced Christians. They typically claim to provide spiritual guidance and some assurances regarding the next life but do not. These religious associations bring comfort, friendships, and support as needed, which satisfies many. **However, they do not provide the truth, and that should be the ONLY reason for anyone to have religious involvement.** It is almost inconceivable to think that essentially all these Christian religions of the world will fail you as they can appear to be so right. The errors originated many hundreds of years ago,

and effectively the doctrine of Christ was lost. The scripture meanings have been changed, and people are left with a hope that will not be attained. Once the fundamentals were lost mainly due to private interpretations of scripture, the careless pattern continued to produce more errors. Essentially, God's word is disrespected, although continuously claimed as authority to maintain membership. Seldom is there any suspicion that there are problems with the teaching, and thus these "so-called Christian" religions enjoy a loyal following. In the first century, Jesus warned of this viciousness, and Paul said some were changing the gospel. We live in a world of theological wrangling, and it is equivalent to a terror for souls. There should be none of this because the gospel message people need is simple, but people have constructed religions distant from God.

4.1 What does it mean to be spiritual, and is it important?

The truth as presented in this book does not consist of some grand theological discussion or have the appearance of a debate or a word study based on the original languages. Such materials are already in existence in hundreds of thousands of volumes over hundreds of years. Indeed, the philosophies from religious universities and religious apologists have evolved to be relatively trivial, largely insignificant in terms of the "big picture" of succeeding in life. In other words, these "theological matters" are typically not of any importance.

It seems that each different "Christian group" assumes their members have a good understanding of "salvation" as they teach it. Thus these "so-called Christian religions" sustain their membership with many non-spiritual matters that may address personal problems, world, and social issues, and perhaps believed to be of some religious significance. Much of the work of the "religions of the world" involves physical matters, and they may be helpful, even valuable but without a spiritual focus. Here is the distinction: Spiritual matters are directly related to the soul, which means the truth and involves doing what God has directed. To serve God appropriately and have this spiritual focus, **one must be spiritual**. We will learn this is necessary because God is perfectly

absent of evil. The road to restoring the spiritual relationship with God is well defined and is tied to the forgiveness of sins. God is holy, and there is nothing **YOU can devise** to have a relationship with Him or a means **YOU can devise** to worship Him. Those that worship God must do so in spirit and truth.

John 4:24

24 "God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

You need to be spiritual, having a relationship with God. Few people calling themselves “Christians” understand what it means to be spiritual. Spirituality to the world and even to religion is frequently seen as something mysterious and not in any way genuinely spiritual but defined in terms of interactions with the physical world – often “disturbing, even occult.” Most “so-called Christians” associate spirituality with something they attained when they became Christians. Specifically, it would be a relationship with God through Christ. **In essence, that is correct;** however, by what means did they become Christians? **Did they become Christians?** Although it is quite simple to understand the true meaning of being spiritual, the means of getting into the relationship with Christ has been well hidden by the “religions of the world” – we might even say hidden by theology. Their purpose was not to hide but that is what happened by teaching something different than God’s design.

You were created differently than other living beings since you are eternal – you have a soul, a never-ending life force. Outwardly that eternal nature is locked in a physical body and cannot exit your body until you die. The spiritual nature OF VALUE is something you achieve while in your body and is a relationship with God achieved in obedience to the gospel. The spiritual connection with God was lost when sin occurred in the Garden of Eden. We know every person sins, and thus there has never been such a spiritual relationship with God since it was severed with the first sin. Now “in Christ,” the reconciliation has occurred in obedience to the gospel. In that process, sins are forgiven, making the relationship possible again. The Lord Himself adds you to His

spiritual body, the church, due to your obedience. It is the only way a person can attain this valued spiritual nature. Nothing is disconcerting, eerie, or scary about “spirituality” as the world might view being spiritual. The correct view relates to achieving a relationship with God through Christ, and again this occurs only in obedience. We will sort through the errors taught regarding establishing a relationship with Christ and point out the clear path provided by God. The evidence will be overwhelming but may require overcoming your personal history with false doctrine. This book is only interested in the spiritual, in the salvation of souls, in the truth.

Gaining a better understanding of what it means to be spiritual is worthwhile as it will assist in arriving at the truth. There are three verses in 2 Corinthians where Paul writes to those “in Christ” to provide insight into their spiritual existence by contrasting physical and spiritual existence.

2 Corinthians 4:16-18

*16 Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our **outward man** is perishing, yet the **inward man** is being renewed day by day.*

17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory,

*18 while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are **seen are temporary**, but the things which are **not seen are eternal**.*

Our physical existence is slowly moving towards corruption, that is, death, while with age, our inward man (spiritual) is approaching its goal, i.e., heaven. Then Paul compares the “struggles” of life (physical) to that eventual eternal weight of glory (our final spiritual state). Finally, Paul points out that the **seen things (physical) are temporary**, and being spiritual (“in Christ”), we focus on the unseen things because they are eternal. Eternal, unseen things are for instance, God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, heaven, our soul, a place of lost souls, and so-on. Only those in this spiritual state “in Christ” by

their continued faithfulness will achieve the final spiritual state to be with Christ forever. As the scriptures say, at the end of the world, those “in Christ” will “always be with the Lord.”

There is no visible appearance of being spiritual except perhaps in the outward God-pleasing obedient character of a child of God. Thus, a person knows of their relationship only in their continual pleasing God in thoughts and actions. The “religions of the world” fail to see the surety of the relationship achieved by obedience and must create some outward way to continually validate the relationship. Their world is still a world where signs are needed. Such signs can be as simple as a person in religious authority **designating** you are now in a relationship with Christ. There are more extravagant signs at times such as apparitions or claimed conversations with God or revered persons such as Catholicism’s saints or Mary. Thus, the spiritual connection is outwardly made. This is not spirituality but misleading and is simply deception/fraud.

There is a substantial difference between the truth and what “so-called Christians” have been taught to become spiritual. They are “so-called Christians” because they are not spiritual. No relationship has been established with God. How can that be? Simply, **they have not done what God requires to become spiritual**. This is easily demonstrated; however, the overwhelming thing is how for centuries, the things believed to establish a relationship with God were untrue. We are talking about simplicity from God versus the confusing, ever-changing ideas of men and women as they violate God’s most fundamental principle by dishonoring His word, thus dishonoring God.

4.2 Getting to the truth

We will go slowly in providing the truth by beginning with understanding God and His purpose and how God goes about achieving His purpose. Then we will address some of the most common issues with Christian teaching on salvation. You might wonder why anyone would want to deceive people concerning eternity. It is not always intentional, but possibly just devotion to error going back many centuries.

A significant difference in this book is that the matters presented are not **physical or trivial**. There is a focus on the soul. The “so-called Christian” world brings confusion and may even minimize the importance of the next life. One way to reduce the importance of the soul is to seldom talk about it or rarely refer to God-defined sin. In other words, the message of the “religions of the world” does not fit everything together, or do they even try. Whatever they teach concerning salvation is like a cookbook since here are the steps to follow. How do you know they are the proper steps? Do you understand each step's significance, whether it makes sense, and does everything fit together? The truth includes everything perfectly fit together, and for a perfect reason, that is because the truth comes from God, who is perfect.

The work of theologians and apologists is disconnected, meaning there are pieces claimed to be true that do not fit into the “big picture of God’s purpose.” There is also a progression of error that reflects error built on error resulting in teachings exceptionally far from the truth. God has fit everything together to achieve His purpose, and His word reflects this perfect continuity. The things of God’s message all have a singular focus on the soul. Instead of bringing the truth, these theologians and apologists bring defenses of the long-held errors of their respective religions. How can Catholic teaching have anything right when their foundation is built on grievous error, such as an earthly head of Christ’s church? How can a person of authority in the Protestant hierarchy get anything right when the basis of their beliefs is the private interpretations of a few men such as Luther and Calvin? There is no defense for the most basic errors, and consequently, they are easily exposed. “Everyone” assumes the fundamental doctrines are true. The membership never encounters the truth. Sadly, souls are destroyed since error never sets a person free from sin.

Be prepared to find the truth quite disagreeable unless you correctly understand God’s purpose and character. God’s perfection in how He is going about achieving His purpose while being the perfect absence of evil means a perfect (thus fair) test for humankind. Many shudder to think the scriptures are the truth because they are

personally problematic. The world loves the private interpretations of scripture and seeks religions that present doctrine favorable to their earthly requisites.

This book speaks in “common language” and not the frequently built-in ambiguity and vagueness of “theologian or apologetic speak.” This book respects God’s word since it does not filter (with various prejudicial filters) God’s word but realizes God means what He says. The book does not contain seemingly endless references to prior theological works but only uses the divinely inspired word of God. That word of God fits everything together from Genesis to Revelation, and in your love of the truth, you can understand God’s purpose, God’s nature. You will see the consistency of the doctrine once you have this correct understanding of God.

The “religions of the world” provide many good things that are physical, such as friendship, support in various matters, and perhaps religious teaching that gives comfort. Unfortunately, without awareness and serious reflection that life is about the soul and having the appropriate respect for God’s word, religions fail to bring the truth people need.

4.3 The only source of truth

A typical perception is that most people are fundamentally good, and even the troublemakers may exhibit a gentle and kind heart. The truth about all things comes only from God, while humankind makes many suppositions, guesses, and conjectures. God’s standard of goodness is measured concerning “God defined sin” and **thus is very objective**. God’s final judgment will be based on a person’s choices relative to **His standard**, which is revealed throughout scripture. Jesus said, “He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him—the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day.” Various scriptures indicate that God “will render to each one according to his deeds.” In another place, “God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel.” Many people judge themselves to be good or at least **comparatively good**. There is, however, a standard, and success requires meeting that

standard. It is fair to say that God's standards are quite high and may be considered difficult.

Note: A lot to overcome

*One of the most challenging things to overcome might be related to the high regard we hold for ourselves or our "group." This can make it very difficult to be **open** to anything different. Many men might associate with some macho attitude, whereas many women may hold to some feminist view, and within these groups, there is little room to think differently. People become very stubborn in defense of their beliefs. Religions often promote fierce loyalty in their membership, resulting in aggressive language and may even include verbal or physical actions towards any opposition. Religious instruction can deliberately and repeatedly (sometimes subliminally) suggest hostile responses to any opposition. People can be naïve when associating with a religion. People provide routine access to their minds and can be gradually overcome in a belief system. Religions should help develop certain admirable characteristics in people, as mentioned in the scriptures. The "religions of the world" typically do not emphasize the seriousness of God's requirements in terms of a person's character. The negative characteristics observed in people of religion are like those of the world. Religion that is not the truth can damage the character of a person. The extent of damage depends on the leadership and doctrines of the religion. It is the excess seen in various undesirable characteristics such as pride (in what they believe), greed (doing everything possible to elevate their cause), selfishness (putting their needs above all others), anger, and hate (a disregard for anyone who opposes their view). Indeed, the "world of religion" can present people with a great deal to overcome.*

*It is fair to say that we need to be **open-minded to the truth**, including dealing with things that oppose our worldly and religious philosophies. It might be fair to say such perspectives are **difficult** to overcome. They are who we are, **who we have become**. It turns out it is **not impossible**, but it can be terribly difficult. That is why it is frequently mentioned how badly do you want to achieve heaven? If you are to succeed, there is only*

one philosophical viewpoint, and it is included in the gospel message. It requires living for Christ and the gospel, and seldom will any worldly philosophies align with God's view of those acceptable to share His Divine Nature. Why is that? The things of the world and the "religions of the world" incorporate a disregard for God and rejection, or modification of the things God defines as sin. Additionally, the deceit taught regarding salvation means the people are not spiritual. Finally, with the casual, careless use of scriptures, people will miss out on the seriousness of developing the character God requires.

4.4 Happiness – God's point of view

There are hundreds of ideas regarding life's meaning, and everyone has their opinion. The most common instance is hearing people say they do not care about the meaning of life and are working hard to find happiness in their lifetime. Jesus defined happiness, and it is uniquely **the wisdom of God** and **exceedingly different than humankind's view of happiness**. The latter view is associated with the physical such as physical possessions, beneficial relationships, and gaining knowledge of our physical world. Some descriptions of this happiness might be adventurous, romantic, riches, excellent health, longevity, filled with excitement, mental stimulation, prestige, and perhaps gaining honor from the world. The happiness Jesus describes in Matthew 5:3-12 is targeted to things that **end in SPIRITUAL success**. That would be appropriate since everything (including true happiness) is about the soul. Yes, there is no true happiness in the earthly realm, and that should be obvious since your physical life is temporary and consists of highs and lows in relation to happiness. Here is Jesus's teaching on happiness, and it is the wisdom from God that describes how to live NOW to succeed (true eternal happiness) in the next life.

Note: Blessed is appropriately defined as happy.

Matthew 5:3-12

3 “Blessed are the poor in spirit,

For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

4 Blessed are those who mourn,

For they shall be comforted.

5 Blessed are the meek,

For they shall inherit the [earth.

6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,

For they shall be filled.

7 Blessed are the merciful,

For they shall obtain mercy.

8 Blessed are the pure in heart,

For they shall see God.

9 Blessed are the peacemakers,

For they shall be called sons of God.

10 Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake,

For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

11 Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake.

12 Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

If you were present when Jesus spoke these things or even as you read them today, you might not see happiness resulting in how Jesus describes how to live. Yet, in the view of our Creator, these things are what bring happiness. Of course, God points to happiness that will never be found in our physical existence. God’s purpose, the scriptures, have a singular focus, namely the souls of humankind. The closest thing to happiness on earth is living how God directs, knowing that there will be a magnificent end – true happiness. Some of these things point to happiness in the process of being

persecuted, and that is because doing the right thing never makes one deeply unhappy, whereas doing wrong sooner or later brings misery. Knowing you are pleasing God can be very heartening, even when difficult and painful. Most of the things that make one happy during their lifetime are virtuous things, unselfish things. In maturity, you learn things like being merciful, pure in heart, peacemakers, being meek, more mourning than celebrating, seeking the right things, and being poor in spirit provide much more than greedy self-gratification. Being poor in spirit is quite powerful when properly understood. It relates to a characteristic that one needs to find and live the truth, namely humility.

There is quite a contrast between how the world and how God sees true happiness. God's purpose concerning your success **is realized** in those who follow His direction. The satisfaction Jesus describes is how to be happy resulting in your success – in heaven. Is it any wonder that people have changed the message from God? How often have people said, “this cannot be God” in referring to the scriptures? God's word conflicts with what the world WANTS (to be happy), and throughout history, so-called religious leaders have made private interpretations of God's word having a worldly mindset. Religions adjust God's word to allow for what people want, namely physical goals that oppose the eternal happiness God defines.

How do you overcome living for this world, and how do we keep from changing God's meaning in the scriptures? There is just one answer for both, and it is to cultivate a **love for the truth**. God even states you need to have a love of the truth that you might be saved. This is equivalent to Jesus saying, “For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it.” Jesus, of course, knew everything was about the soul, and central to your “soul success” was His coming as a man and suffering the horrible death. Thus, Jesus says, “For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his soul?”

We mentioned most people want to believe in the **goodness of humankind**, and this is also how God **wants** to see humanity since it is central to God's purpose. God is

objective about a person's worth and not the subjective wishful hope of humankind. God evaluates a person's goodness in terms of His Son and for a very good reason, namely, only in that relationship can sin be forgiven. Ultimately, God's objective view matters and allows the appropriate eternal separation of each person. That objective measure is God-defined sin and a person's response to His solution in Christ.

4.5 The truth about life and salvation is simple to understand but commonly rejected

There are many things **in the scriptures** that drive people **away** from God. Some people are seriously offended by God's revelation that they should fear Him and by the punishment associated with "failing in life." I have no clear idea what it will be like to be lost, except it will be miserable. I do not know what God will allow you to retain of your memory – perhaps all, perhaps limited. The point about the memory you have "after your judgment" is not important except to consider the extent of God's power over you. Life is about the soul, and it is serious. Take it seriously! I would be guessing that a lost person may wish God were more severe in His Bible warnings. "God, why didn't you hit me over the head, shake me?" Yet He did just that in His warnings, and it just made you bitter and turned you away from Him. However, others took God seriously, sought to please God, saw love in the warnings, or perhaps saw His seriousness, His resolve. The point is, do not hastily dismiss God due to your perceptions of the scriptures. Perhaps your understanding is lacking. God indicates the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge. It is a knowledge of the truth that will bring you to understand God's purpose and understand Him as He has revealed Himself. Of course, it is the truth you need to succeed in life.

Jesus said it is difficult to stay on the path to eternal life. Difficult, yes very challenging to succeed considering all the deceit in the world and all the deceit in the "religions of the world." Even more challenging is realizing that God's way might interfere with my plans and desires. Then to those who genuinely desire to succeed

(heaven), it seems there are so many different paths. Someone might think, “If there is only one valid path, it appears I am lost before I begin.” “This book may take me down a false path, and I will be even more confused.” It is suggested that the truth presented in this book is not telling you what to do but emphasizing that you understand what you believe. There are no hidden agendas or associations, but you will see that God’s word fits perfectly together and, therefore, can be trusted. God’s word is simple to understand regarding what is required and how to live. The truth will never disappoint you. The difficulty is “versus” **what you want in life** that does not align with God’s way. This book is the truth if it is consistent with the scriptures. Humankind’s ideas about salvation are exceedingly distant from God’s simplicity regarding becoming a child of God. A valuable observation may be how the “religious organizations of the world” are highly physical and designed by their private interpretations of scripture to support **their beliefs**.

4.6 The magnitude of deceit

It is easily observable that religious organizations create a massive number of documents and associated media that advocate their beliefs. Each religion may produce hundreds of thousands of works (books, manuals, videos, pamphlets, use various digital and social media and develop speeches and hold seminars) promoting their beliefs. Since the error resides in the fundamental aspects of their beliefs, all their work serves only to confuse and is very far from the truth – deadly to souls. Nonetheless, many will accept the teachings of such religions for their considerable **quantity** of “scholarship.” It is a form of honoring men and women instead of God. It is easy to show the error of false teaching, and this will be done herein for some significant issues. It is easy because many teachings are ridiculous and built on weak, prejudicial foundations. Also, many people do not care about doctrine but love what they currently believe. However, God’s wisdom points to the seriousness of the scriptures as they indicate, “with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the **love of the truth**,

that they might be saved.” The easiest way to expose error is simply by providing the truth, thus eliminating everything else. The world is not helping you succeed in the only thing that matters in life. The shortness of life is often the only thing people correctly understand about their existence. Everything that has value is about the soul, and this will become clear as you read through this book.

YOU need to understand what you believe. If you are a person claiming Christ in your life, the material in this book should be knowledge that is at your fingertips, and yet few know these things. The ones you trust claim to be guiding you towards a successful end but cannot be considered an excuse if you fail. The appeal is, do not trust those who direct your beliefs and do not trust this author but once again expend the effort to understand what you believe. That effort is the thing God is looking for in a person. It is the beginning of your journey to success and can be referred to as seeking God, seeking truth.

Let me generalize about a person who goes to their “Christian” church for worship and sits every week to listen to some lesson, sermon, or just an informal discussion of some religious, social, or even political topic. It might be of interest, or it might be tedious. The subject might be very Bible-based, yet that does not make it is the truth. Few understand the seriousness of teaching from the scriptures regarding the eternal consequence for themselves. It should be as a teacher a **frightening thing** to speak about God and truth, knowing it can affect the souls of those receiving the message. Life is about the soul, and when a person teaches error concerning godly matters, souls are at risk. It is safe to say God hates lies (Proverbs 6.16-19), especially damaging is teaching different than God’s meaning. Such teaching is deceitful and the worst kind of lie. Jesus obeys the Father and suffers the terrible death and sends the Holy Spirit to guide the apostles into all truth. Now humankind can achieve salvation by following God’s instructions, but some teach a different gospel. This is disrespecting God’s word and destroying souls. If there is one thing that brings the wrath of God to the point of God saying, “vengeance is mine says the Lord” or that, “it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God,” it would be those who trample on the “expensive” truth that

saves souls. The single most “expensive” truth is the suffering and death of Jesus, and indeed God’s Son is trampled by those who teach another gospel.

Hebrews 10:29

29 Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace?

4.7 Here is the problem

You need to understand the basics about God and life, and this book provides the truth you can understand and have confidence it is the truth. One reason a person does not know the truth may be that their “teacher(s)” did not know the truth. The things you will learn from reading this book about your soul will be overwhelming, meaning they could generate a reaction of “No Way.” The “No Way” is because it is drastically different than what you have been told is the truth. Your “No Way” response would not bother you if you did not have a serious concern that it was the truth.

However, those who love the truth will not deny the teachings that fit perfectly together. The truth can be uncovered by removing the ideas of men or women, and what remains will be the truth. That requires understanding God and His purpose and having sufficient knowledge of the scriptures to assure you are considering all that God has revealed on any given subject. A human author such as the author of this book can be helpful, but only if the teaching is consistent with the unchanged word of God.

Chapter 5

Before we begin: A high-level overview

It is good to see what is coming before it arrives, and this chapter brings some organization indicating how pieces fit together. This book aims to help people achieve heaven in a world where religion has massacred the only message (the scriptures) that instructs a person on how to succeed. Lies are exposed simply by providing the truth, which, unlike the deceit, makes perfect sense. This can be done because God in His perfection fits His message together without a flaw from Genesis 1:1 to Revelation 22:21. The astonishment is how disrespectful humankind has been of God by changing the message to make it of no effect. This book points out the importance of understanding that life, really that everything is about the soul. Chapter six provides a truthful overview of life carrying the book's title, "Life is about the soul," and the following four chapters can be deemed reference or supporting material. Those chapters could be considered a short book on each specific subject. The subjects represent topics that have been egregiously and carelessly misrepresented by religion to the harm of many souls. These topics have been taught deceitfully in support of error concerning a person's salvation.

The truth about life can never, has never originated in the minds of men and women. The truth comes from God's revelations to humankind and no place else. The religions of humanity have a basis in fundamental errors (changing God's meaning) that seed the growth of never-ending new errors. The only way to describe the situation is, "what a mess." It is a mess grown with a root cause of pride, self-seeking, and gaining/maintaining power over others. This terrible disease called pride, which God abhors and continually warns of its consequences, is treasured by many people. It places humankind above God as they profess their view of life. Humankind's version of the "scripture meanings" can be exceedingly popular in all its variations. Not surprising since "those doctrines created by humankind" agree with how people believe God **should** interact with the world. The human interpretation of the scriptures is more acceptable, more comfortable, and represents worldly logic. Picking and choosing from

the scriptures are the means used create the “religions of humankind” and the illusion is the scriptures support these manufactured doctrines.

There must always be an emphasis on understanding God and His purpose that includes the seriousness of the scriptures. The respect for the scriptures leads to the truth. We can say everything is about the soul because, for each person, life is about the soul and not about anything else. If we cannot understand this, we ultimately will understand at our end. However, if we diligently study God’s word, we can know this now.

5.1 Overview the chapters

It is vital to characterize God’s purpose as being about the soul. Everything God has done in terms of the creation, sharing His image with humankind, creating a test, defining the rules (i.e., God defines sin), describing the consequences, defining a way to be successful all have to do with the soul. Indeed, life is ultimately only about the soul. The **sixth chapter** (Life is about the soul) establishes clarity regarding salvation.

The **seventh chapter** (The Church is the Kingdom) and **eighth chapter** (The Conversions of the New Testament) address some fundamental aspects regarding God’s design of the plan for salvation. Bible conversions are exceedingly straightforward as they read, and yet “religions” have completely changed the pattern God defined for salvation. On the other hand, the correct and obvious understanding is a powerful assurance that you are doing the right thing.

The **ninth chapter** (What it Means to BELIEVE) is also about salvation and puts the concept of “accepting Jesus as your personal savior” in the correct perspective. It is false while being attractive. This teaching has a massive following and is correspondingly massive in its destruction of souls.

The **tenth chapter** (The Fall of Catholicism and Protestantism in One Simple Lesson) demonstrates religious humankind at its worse. This chapter addresses a fundamental “Christian” belief in relation to sin. Catholicism and Protestantism support “at birth” sin doctrines albeit differently. They both massacre the plan of God in their

creation of original sin (Catholic) and inherited depravity (Protestant). The “so-called Christian religions” are so rigidly associated with these doctrines that their entire structures collapse once they are exposed as false.

The **eleventh chapter** is a summary of the book.

The **twelfth chapter** contains some final thoughts and finishes with some brief comments about the book’s cover and a practical means to visualize life is about the soul.

Reference, the topics covered in this book are:

Chapter 6: Life is About the Soul

Chapter 7: The Church is the Kingdom

Chapter 8: The Conversions of the New Testament

Chapter 9: What it Means to BELIEVE

Chapter 10: The Fall of Catholicism and Protestantism in One Simple Lesson

Chapter 11: Summary of the book

Chapter 12: Final thoughts for this book

These topics represent fundamental things every person should understand because they involve your success or failure in life. We live in a time when people do not care about spiritual matters, and unbeknownst to them, that is equivalent to failing in life.

Note: The path to success devised by God is clear, simple, and perfect, and yet why does it take so much space, so many pages, so many words to explain the truth? It is because God’s clarity has been exchanged for hundreds of different beliefs, thousands of various doctrines, all with selfish, prideful motives with the often-desired goal of gaining power over others. Thus, with all this “garbage,” it can be helpful, needful to address the errors, which means more words.

5.2 The right way to bring the truth

The best of all worlds would be simply to preach the gospel, and people hear, obey, and live faithfully. This has seldom been the case since people have to put their twist on the scriptures to receive a benefit or eliminate things that are problematic for them. This book would not be needed if not for all the meaningless, vain, human-made religious doctrines and practices that fill the world while destroying souls. One way to get your “feet on the ground” is to realize that everything is about the soul, namely your very personal battle with sin. In that case you realize all your daily thoughts and actions are either helping or hurting your battle with sin. An important awareness is that the church is the kingdom because misconceptions regarding this understanding has confused the subject of salvation. Since the pattern designed for being saved from past sins has been slaughtered, look to the unaltered word of God and examples of New Testament conversions. The most significant deception of Protestantism is addressed in a study of the word BELIEVE. Its misuse will be shown to be a clever and evil means to control people. Finally, we attack one of the primary religious inventions of humankind. Namely, the claim that God placed sin or sin nature on humankind and then mention some of the associated teachings (such as infant baptism) used to support the lies. Infant baptism becomes a necessary inference to these infused sin inventions. You will learn that much of the deceitful foundations of religions require additional strange doctrines to support their validity.

5.3 The “unsaid”

There is an “unsaid” in the room or in the book or in the reader's mind, and its significance occasionally bears mentioning. We define an “unsaid” as something in the room that is on everyone's mind but not mentioned even though it is believed to be the dominant issue or an overriding factor in making some decision. In our case, the “unsaid” on the mind of a sincere person is HOW can all these religions be so wrong. And so wrong, for so long to the point of devastating the souls of those they claim to be helping? This “unsaid” will be answered in various ways in this book. The short answer is that

humankind lives for now, and few are willing to exert the effort in their busy lives to discover the truth about life. Historically, people have been self-seeking, greedy and opportunistic and the truth has suffered.

5.4 There is error and usually associated treachery

There have been multiple billions of people calling themselves Christian since the first century that have no valid relationship with God. The world may not understand this because they do not understand what it means to be a Christian. Saying you are a Christian or having someone declare you are a Christian does not make you a Christian. How can this be? This book provides solid answers to that question. I will suggest the short answer is there is truth, and there is error, and only the truth saves. God is not responsible for people who choose to act and teach in opposition to His word. God cannot lie, and thus His means to save will not change regardless of the masses who create a different gospel. This book will bring a person gradually to the truth and as often mentioned, achieved by understanding God, God's purpose and how He "goes about" to attain it. In this process, you can discover God's determination and your need to take Him seriously.

One more thought on how "error gets a hold" and maintains that hold. The error in religion originates from self-seeking people trying to gain some advantage, usually a personal benefit. This is how Catholicism was built, and nothing was allowed to stand in its way. People were accepting the Catholic teachings and initially largely out of fear. This is not the fear of God associated with knowledge, but of fear for their lives. The teachings of Catholicism were human devised. There would be no questioning. Was there any truth, any validation? NO, there was not. Nonetheless, over time those doctrines were accepted and considered to be the truth. Men and or women create doctrines, and in the case of "so-called Christian" religions, find "some way" to validate the teachings within the Bible. This is the process of the "Christian" religions of the world. The point is a few people dictate doctrine, and many believe, and we have a

situation where people do not understand what they believe. Here is an analogy but very realistic. The world wars sometimes involve millions of people who fight and often die **and typically they do not** know why. They are told why, and it might be, “they attacked us or are about to.” If we think in terms of the instigator and ask why was the war started? It is often something personal, some grab for power or something to make the current leaders look better and almost always very immoral considering all the damage to the “combatants and innocents.” Good leadership of countries should never result in the instigation of war. That is true but look at the pathetic leaders throughout history. Of course, there will be many lies in selling the war to the citizens, often emotional. The parallel with the “religions of humankind” is very similar. Rulemaking and lies and more lies, and there are generally just a few people making “religious policy.” Once a religious organization is established, there may be committees and councils, but these men/women make the rules with great partiality. There is never-ending maintenance of these initial doctrines, and this goes on for hundreds or even over a thousand years in a way that no one (or no one for long) doubts their authenticity. Can you see this will never work? That this is not a pattern resulting in truth? Can you see God in His perfection would not place humankind in such a position? He even declares that He is not the author of confusion. What makes you think your religion got it right? The truth comes from the unchanged word of God, and not surprisingly, it looks nothing like the “religions of the world.”

Bottom line: There is no reason to believe what you have been taught is the truth. You are justified in denying the religions of humankind due to their inconsistency, i.e., does not fit with God’s purpose and is in opposition to the majority of Bible teachings on any given subject. The greatest deceit the world has ever known is related to the private interpretations from the “so-called Christian” religions. Has there ever been any greater deceit in the history of humankind? Is there any deceit more harmful? No, this is the worst, because so many people think they have a relationship with God when they do not. Exactly as Jesus told the Jews that by their hypocrisy, they made converts twice the child of hell as themselves. Likewise, these “so-called Christian religions” bring devastation to their “converts.” Although the “so-called Christian religions” are absent

the truth, in their indoctrination, they are fiercely dedicated to their belief systems and typically will “never” relent. God was very careful to indicate that His word must not be changed, and the reason is evident as people can have the Bible, but not the truth. Since God’s purpose is to have you succeed, He has done everything possible to help, and you should take His instruction seriously; that is, keep in your mind that you need a love of the truth.

5.5 More about this book

Note: A certain amount of this book has been previously published by this author on his websites. These sites contain hundreds of topics, and I used them to capture my understanding of these subjects. They are my filing cabinet of knowledge. I also used them to send friends and acquaintances to specific pages/posts to help them better understand certain issues. Now I am formally publishing them for a larger audience. The subjects were selected to complement the subject of this book, “Life is about the soul.” The title is designed to help people understand that life is about the soul and really about nothing else. Intimately associated with this book would be how to achieve “soul success.” Thus, the titles:

- *The Church is the Kingdom*
- *Conversions of the New Testament*
- *What it Means to BELIEVE*
- *The Fall of Catholicism and Protestantism in One Simple Lesson*

Each of the subjects covered in these chapters has been massacred by the world's "religions" and in very different ways. As usual, all you need is the truth, and it is straightforward. There are hundreds of interactions between these subjects, making the invented manufactured conclusions even more confusing. The fundamental TRUTHS of each subject bring you to the correct understanding of God and His purpose. The correct grasp of each of these subjects destroys the majority of the “so-called Christian

religions.” You will find the truth compelling and likely be amazed by how the teachings of men and women on these subjects have been so misleading and inconsistent.

Note: Frequently, it is mentioned that evidence of the truth of the scriptures is how everything (in God’s word) fits perfectly together. There is considerable discussion on salvation in the chapters of this book. Beginning with “Life is about the soul,” then the “Church is the kingdom,” then “Conversions of the New Testament,” then “What it means to Believe,” and finally “The fall of Catholicism and Protestantism in one simple lesson.”

You might discern how many references are from sources outside the Bible, and the correct count would be “essentially zero.” The doctrine, the truth, comes only from within the Bible. Support for the doctrines of the “so-called Christian religions” will be from references from hundreds of non-scriptural sources since that is where they originated.

Through all these subjects, there is a single message that everything is about the soul. Indeed, salvation is the answer to a successful life, to the soul's success. Regardless, if we are talking about the church, about sin, about the verses that mention salvation, about the kingdom of God, about the actual conversions, all these things fit together. There is no need for any outside (the Bible) directions. If influences came from humankind, then everything would not fit perfectly together. You end up with what we have in religion today – confusion and, worse, the loss of souls. Peter certifies the completeness of the word of God under the influence of the Holy Spirit when he says, “as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness.” So back in the first century, humankind had all they needed to be successful. How many things has humanity added, how many things have they subtracted?

Chapter 6

Life is About the Soul

This chapter is quite short in terms of correctly covering a subject of this importance. However, brief can provide clarity if concise, accurate, and well written. This is the goal of the author. There is some purposed repetition from section to section for emphasis and improved understanding by viewing subjects from different perspectives. Subsequent chapters can be considered as references or as supporting material. Nonetheless, each chapter stands alone in terms of addressing their respective topic. Each chapter has been created to address subjects used by “so-called Christian” groups that **effectively confuse the matter of salvation**. The false doctrines have been cunningly devised to deceive, and consequently, they destroy souls while portraying themselves as providing answers for your success. The good news is if you can get beyond the charisma of the teachers and the often-massive number of followers, the scriptures quickly reject the errors by providing consistent and understandable truth.

Note: If you can come to understand God, His purpose, and consequently your purpose from this chapter, then indeed, the other chapters are just helping to clarify the common errors associated with the various “so-called Christian” religions.

6.1 Life is about the soul – What does that mean?



Life is not about this life, but about the next life and the next life is about the soul. This beautiful, mysterious place with all its diversity of wonder, it fills our minds with possibilities. There is hope, excitement and then often the reality is very different even tragic. Life's ups and downs define our character and that can be loving or bitter. God wants you to succeed and with courage and a selfless, humble attitude you can. It is sad people mislead you from what you really need namely, the truth. That is about to end if you want heaven enough to seriously respect God.

This chapter provides a basic discernment of life concerning God's plan. This is so fundamental that everyone ought to understand, but very few know **what life is all about** and how to succeed. Certainly, the truth has been missed by the "religions of the world" because the most fundamental aspects of God's word have been corrupted. If you get the basics wrong, then everything that follows will be wrong and eventually grow to be ridiculously wrong. When the truth is so massively distorted, the error becomes strangely believable. It becomes difficult to distinguish the many layers of error from the truth. It is not inconsequential that the leadership of these religions have personal reasons to keep the status quo, namely their livelihoods.

The “religions of the world” want their membership to believe they are spiritual. That means their religion is considered to have a connection with God. These religions are very much the opposite of their claims, which will be easily demonstrated.

When you come to appreciate that life is about the soul and really about **nothing else**, then the word of God holds a seriousness that overwhelms **everything else**. One aspect of spiritual life is how spiritual thinking directs your decisions. Jesus's requirement to please God is that you must lose your life to save it, meaning live it for Jesus and the gospel and not for yourself. In humility, a person can live this way, whereas in pride, a person holds the world in high esteem, and consequently, “religious persons” over history were willing to temper the word of God. Religion looks physical with its rulemaking, its prominence of material things, including physical buildings, its worship (worship not in spirit and truth), and its physical organizations (with human-devised organizational structures and having other than spiritual goals). This might include, for one thing permitting things God would not allow. The specific means to accomplish the desired doctrine would be to interpret the scriptures privately. Such an emphasis might permit certain sins, which effectively could revise the process of salvation. For example, the repentance portion of salvation could be affected. The casual handling of God’s word is the source of error that destroys the gospel message. The result is the current state of religion that contains no truth.

Religion has a strong relationship with the world and continually grows similar in appearance. The relationship with the world is the thing Jesus warned would be devastating, indicating one could not love both God and the world. The correct view of life is that it is about the soul and nothing else, and religion needs to be spiritual and **not a mix of spiritual and physical**.

Practically, what does that mean, and is it important? Dealing with God happens on the spiritual level. You are dealing with perfection and not another person. Religion has no value if it is physical (worldly), and the only way for religion to be spiritual is by being aligned with God’s way. Religion needs a dedication to God’s word, which means never changing it but honoring it, and that, of course, means no rulemaking.

Unfortunately, the “religions of the world” live in making rules or a mixture of God’s way and humankind’s way, which in effect means humankind’s way. It cannot be said enough that humankind CAN NOT understand or even envision things outside their realm. God graciously provides the things we need to know to succeed, and any variation is not the truth. You might understand how “that will not work” for a proud person. So much of the world sees God’s word as not all that important, especially in its details and can be thought of as trivial and “surely this or that is not essential.” That is why we emphasize that humankind cannot correctly envision things outside our realm. Yet everything God does is in no way trivial. Many things seem inconceivable, such as the necessity of God’s Son to endure the terrible death or the associated pattern for salvation. We know of these things because God graciously revealed them. Yet, often in pride, people will not accept anything different than **their way**, certainly not anything that interferes with what they want out of life.

The subjects emphasized in this chapter will be salvation, reconciliation, church, kingdom, conversion, the forgiveness of sins, and all these properly understood will help you succeed in life. Also, as might be expected, they all fit together perfectly, as do all the scriptures. That means they all point you in the same direction to gain a better understanding of life and how to succeed. We begin building a firm foundation by correctly understanding God’s purpose and nature, as He has revealed.

A wise person can see that life is about the soul. Essentially everything that has meaning is about the soul. All the hundreds of things that a person may consider important in their lives are **not important**. Ultimately, at death (or Christ’s return), there is only one issue of importance, and it is do you have a relationship with God – are you in the body of Christ. That will be the determining criteria for success or failure. **Life is about the soul and absolutely about nothing else**, but there are some equivalent ways of stating this that can bring added clarity. Life is about the battle between good and evil and **very personally about the struggle between you and sin**. This correct understanding of life emphasizes life is about the spiritual.

In contrast, the world thinks, and the “religions of the world” believe it is about the physical or at least in some way significantly includes the physical. In religion, this can be seen in their buildings, their worship, their doctrines, their organizations, and their relationship to the world. A relationship with the world is spoken of negatively, and this is the terminology used by God. The world is not the physical planet but the things that pull a person into the sins that the world promotes. The world glorifies evil since it rejects the word of God. It is easy to envision if a person’s world is void of God since their focus is on the things of the world. Ethical and moral decisions are dictated by the world, and they are different than God’s rules. In fact, why should there be any rules, and this is a conclusion that the world will eventually reach or approach? Why shouldn’t everyone do what is best for themselves? Life to the worldly person is about everything except the soul. Then follows non-existence. It is natural to think, even believe wishfully, that the world is not evil. You may not understand this, but God knows “the world and the things of the world are evil” and reveals it to those “in Christ.” God declares humankind’s most fundamental choice is that you love Him or love the world.

1 John 2:15-17

15 Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

16 For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world.

17 And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.

God’s purpose for His creation is that they share in the Divine Nature, but those choosing to love the world will not be sharing in the Divine Nature.

6.2 God and His purpose

The reason for our existence can only be understood in the framework of God's purpose. A clear statement of God's purpose is, "God desires to share His Divine Nature with His creation." This leads to the obvious conclusion that God's creation must have an eternal aspect (continually exist beyond death). God is the perfect absence of evil. Read, "God is the perfect absence of evil" at link below:

<https://heavencoach.com/god-is-the-perfect-absence-of-evil/> or from this author's book, "God is the perfect absence of evil."

This correct perception of God provides many insights into God's character, into the test He devised and creates the conclusion God cannot share the Divine Nature with evil. Thus, said more directly, those who qualify to share in the Divine Nature must also be free from evil – free from sin. There must be a means to differentiate each person in terms of good versus evil. The method God has selected to make the correct determination for each person is a test. The rules of the test and the pass/fail criteria consist of defining sin and then observing how each person responds to God's laws. This may all seem very "unnecessary," but it is perfect for God to achieve **His purpose**. Perfect means there is no better way, although most people could suggest a better way. A person needs to understand that God's way is perfect to accomplish **HIS PURPOSE**, whereas those offering a better way would be aligned with whatever **they have for a purpose**. Perfect and God are synonymous. This can be a compelling concept that can help you succeed, i.e., God is right and thus act accordingly!

6.3 Understanding God means you understand the truth

The problems with the world, the confusion, and the cruelty of men and women towards other men and women are not of God but of humankind and, sadly, often of humankind's religions. God is the absence of evil, while humankind murders and even supports the murder of their own offspring. There is a very long list of corruption in

humankind's repertoire, and some things are considered less pathetic than others. However, God judges evil as evil regardless of the magnitude assigned by humanity. In other words, failing is failing. However, the scriptures point to degrees of being lost with more severity to those having done certain evils, having a cruel heart.

Lying and deceit are common forms of evil that can be the most devastating and usually associated with all sins. Evil is representative of godless behavior. On the other hand, association with God can be seen in the good and noble aspects of humankind, and this has to do with God being present in our existence. The world of our existence is a mixture of good and evil as determined by our choices. The point is that in a failed life, meaning eternal loss, God will **NOT BE THERE**, and that is what must be avoided. 2 Thessalonians 1.9 indicates that the punishment for failure in life is the permanent separation from God, "These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power." Someone might think in earthly terms, "that is not too bad," but God's description of the lost state in physical terms is sufficient to bring terror and fear. This physical description of punishment is good to know as it might bring a change for the better. Existence for eternity without God will in some way be pure evil – God is not there! Many people in their pride reject the God of the Bible for the punishment He describes and, in a somewhat relieved manner, proclaim, "this cannot be God." In pride, they boldly say, "no one tells me how to live," and indeed, this is the character of a person that God **does not want** to share eternity.

A person may be very distant from God, even denying His existence, or be completely oblivious to God as they busily go about life. Yet, God is there, and again the point is He will be absent from those who are lost. The horrendous magnitude of this eternal separation cannot be appropriately described. Fear and punishment play an essential role in helping certain persons to live godly lives and other people with undesirable characteristics from sharing in the Divine Nature. These latter persons see fear and punishment as threats from an evil God and become bitter and reject God's ways. However, it helps humankind to fear God in order to take God and His word seriously and achieve the knowledge needed to be successful. Those with a good heart,

or we might say with the esteemed characteristics God desires, will correctly see God's wisdom in revealing fear and punishment.

In a free-will existence, God will get those persons who exhibit acceptable characteristics just as those opposing God's requirements will choose to reject Him. We will see that these **desired characteristics** are representative of those who will look at God's ways and, in humility, follow them. God will precisely make the proper separation because His test is without flaw since He possesses a quality that humankind underestimates or does not understand, namely perfection. It is a perfection seen in the creation but **not appreciated in how He achieves His purpose**. Perfection is very alien to humankind, but your trust in His ways will be cherished the better you understand God. If you do not understand God and His purpose, you will be stuck in "not caring" or become bitter about His message and find things like human suffering, fear, and punishment to justify your hostile view of God.

Do not be dismayed because **you can succeed**, and it will be your choices concerning sin that God uses to make that determination. In this war for your soul, God wants you to succeed. You will better understand evil and its source and goodness and its source as you better understand God and His purpose. Remember your beliefs regarding things outside our realm will always be wrong, and only in humility will you know God and His ways.

We learn that all will sin, and thus it would seem all would fail in life. However, God is determined to have some succeed (desiring all to succeed – 2 Peter 3.9) and thus the concept of salvation. Salvation in the Bible is always about sin, specifically being saved from sin. It would be correct to use the common Bible phrase, the forgiveness of sins, as corresponding to salvation. Dying in sin is equivalent to being lost, failing in life.

6.4 Salvation

Our goal is to bring clarity to the subject of salvation. It should be easy since very little needs to be understood. However, there is a world of things taught about salvation

that represents various organizations' beliefs and are false. Fortunately, the truth about “salvation” is easily and in confidence understood since God fits everything perfectly together. The truth evades people because most do not have a deep love of the truth but are satisfied with something that is “comfortable.” Although it is not difficult to understand the truth, it can be challenging to accept and apply. God designed the road to heaven to fulfill **His purpose**, and in that process, He will get those who meet His requirements. As you grow in the knowledge of God, you will be amazed how the conversion process in its simplicity will **not be attractive** to the proud, the selfish, the greedy, the cowards, and so on. How can that be? Our character is intimately associated with our decision-making and thus related to the conversion decision. Perfection is something humankind cannot fully appreciate, and therefore they struggle to understand God’s ways. Humanity cannot correctly guess or predict anything outside its realm. Per God’s design, the truth comes only from Him. Proud persons like to make many assumptions regarding the next life (it must be **their** way), and that is one reason God will only get those He wants. A person who can humble themselves before God accepts His way – as the only way that saves. After all, how can anyone know the things of God unless He reveals them? They cannot.

This concept of salvation from sin implies the complete covering of sin forever and is a fundamental New Testament teaching. The forgiveness of sins or salvation is the complete covering of **past sins**. The fact that **only past sins are forgiven** is a critically important understanding to the success of those who obey the gospel. Romans 3:25 alludes to this.

Romans 3:25

25 whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed

This verse, in principle, indicates that only the sins committed can be forgiven, somewhat obvious. However, those who accept being saved by mental acceptance of Christ (Protestant doctrine) believe their sins are forgiven and must (once saved, always saved) include even future sins they commit. Of course, **no sins (past or future) are forgiven** in the Protestant “accepting Christ as personal Savior belief.” The Protestant beliefs on salvation are so flawed that they never appropriately considered that in “their once saved, always saved” salvation doctrine, they necessarily needed to have all sins forgiven (at the point of accepting Jesus) including any future sins a person might commit. It is always the case with scripture that once a fundamental doctrine is violated, errors quickly multiply. When we say God’s word perfectly fits everything together, we mean from Genesis to Revelation. The doctrines of humankind easily fall apart. In this present discussion, without much effort, we see the conflict with this Protestant teaching of mental acceptance for salvation. At the moment of mental acceptance and for the rest of a person’s life, that person is saved according to Luther’s salvation by faith only, and Protestants also accept some or all of Calvin’s TULIP doctrine. The history of these two and their beliefs is confusing. Today Protestant beliefs can be summarized from the theories of these two men, and NOTHING coming from either of these men is of the truth.

Chapter 9, “What it means to believe,” quickly debunks salvation by faith only. However, in this present chapter the emphasis is showing how these early Protestant thinkers were simply **not thinking**. This is said with no disrespect since Luther and Calvin were escaping the terror of Catholicism, and thus in terms of courage and risk they are to be admired. However, there is truth, and there is error, and with all their good intentions, they only produced error. Protestants “marry” the idea of salvation by faith only and what they see as **necessary inferences** under the assumption of God acting in a predestined manner (electing specific individuals) to establish the basic Protestant beliefs concerning salvation.

Thus, seldom has “accept Jesus as your personal savior” been taught before the next proclamation of once saved and forever is announced. Again, no one is saved by

accepting Jesus as their personal savior. Also, the **scriptures** describe the necessity for those saved (obeyed the gospel) to find forgiveness for future sins. There is a continuity of error and progressive error throughout the Protestant (and Catholic) doctrines. Protestant teaching of once and forever saved must ignore God describing a process for receiving forgiveness of future sins.

Note: For clarification, although a person is not saved by accepting Christ as their personal savior, they are saved by obedience to the gospel. Discussion of the truth regarding salvation follows throughout this chapter.

6.5 Sin is possible after salvation is received in obedience to the gospel

1 John 1:9, in **writing to Christians**, says, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” In Acts 8, Simon the sorcerer (a Christian) is told what to do after he sinned that he might be forgiven. 1 John 2:1 provides the remedy for sin for God’s children, namely, “My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.” Many verses point to those who obey God but sin again. God provides the remedy for these future sins to all those who committed to Christ and had their past sins forgiven. Of course, those “in Christ” can still sin; after all, they still have free will. You will not be headed to heaven; having violated your repentance and dying in sin will mean failure. God wants you to succeed and has provided you the means just mentioned above to again “clear your slate.” There is no lack of warnings to God’s children concerning failing to receive the crown of life, and God only guarantees success to those who are faithful unto death (Revelation 2.10). The warnings to those “in Christ” are the most serious in the scriptures. God expects a great deal from His children as they are the only link between the lost and the gospel

message. The seriousness of God in relation to those “in Christ” living faithfully is expressed in the passages from 2 Peter and 1 Peter below.

2 Peter 2:20-21

20 For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning.

21 For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them.

1 Peter 4:17-18

17 For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?

18 Now, “If the righteous one is scarcely saved, Where will the ungodly and the sinner appear?”

Those who have obeyed the gospel and were added to the body of Christ are indeed “in Christ” and admonished to grow in their faithfulness especially their capability in evangelism. That is, to avoid being barren and unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, they must grow. They are reminded in 2 Peter 1.9 that they should not forget they have been cleansed from their **old sins**.

2 Peter 1:5-9

5 But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge,

6 to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness,

7 to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love.

8 For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

9 For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins.

As always, the correct interpretation comes from understanding God, understanding His purpose, and considering all scripture on a given topic. All scripture supports that people can commit sins after obeying the gospel, and those sins were not forgiven as part of the initial obedience. As mentioned above, we have the example in Acts 8 where Simon the Sorcerer (his name and apparent occupation before conversion) was told what to do when he sinned after his conversion. Specifically, to “repent therefore of this your wickedness, and pray God if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you.” As mentioned above, **Christians** are told in 1 John 1:9, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” Salvation, as received in obedience to the gospel, is not the end of your faith and in no way guarantees a successful life, i.e., heaven. You are just beginning as a child of God – being “in Christ,” on the road to heaven, living your life for Christ and the gospel, and you will have many challenges ahead. Your test is not over but remains difficult now that you are “in Christ.” In the initial test, you sought God, and now you are serving God. It must be an acceptable service. The end of your faith occurs as indicated in 1 Peter 1.3-5, and 9 at the end of time and is reserved for you, guaranteed by your faithfulness.

1 Peter 1:3-5 & 9

3 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,

4 to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,

5 who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

9 receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of your souls.

6.6 A concise description of salvation from God

Peter, in writing to Christians* guided by the Holy Spirit, accurately reiterates God's pattern for salvation. They had already been added to the spiritual body of Christ in obedience to the gospel, and now he mentions the living hope they have and the need to remain faithful.

*Specifically, Peter's letters address the pilgrims of the dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia in 1 Peter and in 2 Peter addressing those who have obtained like precious faith with us by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ.

God is perfectly accurate in His description of salvation. In the verses from 1 Peter below (repeated from above for reference), there is beautiful clarity and so much is revealed especially when you consider the truth "rings out" with every word. In verse three, we see how God has provided a living hope for those begotten (born again in view of having past sins forgiven) and made possible due to the resurrection of Jesus. Then in verse four, there is an inheritance described in very assuring terms, and each saved person has a reservation. There is nothing anyone can do to take heaven from you, but in the fullness of scripture, **you can do something to lose your reservation** by unfaithfulness. Paul tells of Demas as one who fell from grace, "for Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world." This reminds me of how Jesus described the seed (word of God) that fell among thorns, "and the thorns sprang up with it and choked it." Jesus explained that these, "when they have heard, go out and are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity." Then in verse five, you are reminded that the safeguard of your salvation is your continuing faith, and your salvation will be revealed in the last time. Then in verse nine, you hark back that the end of your faith is the salvation of your soul. This is (one reason) why we say, "life is about the soul."

The effort of God on behalf of those obedient that is, those “in Christ” in support of their ongoing faithfulness, is quite amazing. The letters to the saints are full of advice and warnings and provide a way to understand God better. These things are powerful encouragement to live godly lives. The Christian focused on heaven grows in confidence and that is displayed in fortitude and persistence as faith becomes sight.

1 Peter 1:3-5

3 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,

4 to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,

5 who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

1 Peter 1:9

9 receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of your souls.

Then in 1 Peter 1:22-23, Peter indicates how they were saved from past sins by obeying the truth. The apostles were told by Jesus in John 3:5 how they must be born again by water and the spirit, or they cannot enter the kingdom of God. Like so many things in Jesus' ministry, they would not fully understand until the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. In Acts 2:38, they were under the influence of the Holy Spirit and were able to tell people what they must do. In those directions of Acts 2:38, they were born again by the word of God. That is, in obedience to the word of God preached that day and continued to be preached to this day.

1 Peter 1:22-23

*22 Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart,
23 having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever*

One might think that God's effort is much greater for those "in Christ" than those who are on the "outside." That is not true since God is not a respecter of persons. He wants those in the body of Christ to finally receive the end of their faith – the salvation of their souls. These are the ones who have honored His Son. The world often aggressively denies the Son of God, yet the gospel message is there for those who can see beyond their worldly desires and are not proud and selfish. The attention given to those in the body of Christ is to help them be faithful, and part of that faithfulness is carrying the message of salvation. There are **no other means** of bringing the message to a lost and dying world. The attention given by the Lord and the special advantages of God's children **benefits the lost**. Those unique benefits include the ability to reach the heavenly Father through prayer due to the advocacy of the Son. Those outside the body of Christ benefit from the developed and developing skills and persistence of those "in Christ" to effectively, even in duress, bring the gospel message. There is a beautiful example of Paul in this regard. Paul's determination for Christ can be seen in his effort his suffering, and in those early centuries, there would be many Christians in their faithfulness dying for the cause of Christ. Paul states some of the things he endured as expressed in Corinthians.

2 Corinthians 11:23-28:

*23 Are they ministers of Christ? —I speak as a fool—I am more: in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often.
24 From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one.
25 Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep;*

26 in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren;
27 in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness—
28 besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches.

Paul was bringing the gospel message to the lost, but he also had concerns for those local churches he had established – specifically for those saints in the local churches. Paul, of course, would have liked to avoid all the suffering, but it can be a consequence of preaching. One might be glad that today the consequences are not as severe, although that is not necessarily the case. The consequences today of preaching the truth might be just as severe as during Paul’s time. Yet, they might have different descriptions of severity (i.e., not shipwrecked three times) but be every bit as devastating. **God does not desire suffering** for His children, but there are many misguided people capable of evil in a free-will world. The consequences of preaching the truth that is typically in opposition to what people currently believe can produce severe outcomes. Certainly, the outcome for Jesus in bringing the truth was most severe. Jesus warned the apostles of the consequences of following Him in John 15, verses 18 and 20; “If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before *it hated* you” and “If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you.” These outcomes result from the world’s dislike of God’s ways. It might be the restrictive nature of God-defined sin, it might be the stated punishment of the wicked, it might be blaming God for various problems and transmitting that “hate” to those who acknowledge God, and the list could be very long. Yet over the centuries, people have brought the gospel message amid distress and without becoming bitter or puffed up in themselves but remaining quietly contented knowing they are fortunate to be in the service of God. They do realize that “the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us” and “our light

(comparatively speaking) affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.” Myopia (near or short-sightedness) rules those lost, whereas those “in Christ” learn to view their lives from an eternal point of view. Certainly, those “in Christ” realize life is about the soul, and if viewed correctly, everything of value is about the soul. Therefore, salvation needs to be at the center of life for each person because absolutely everything else is temporary. The big picture of life is eternal, spiritual, a place where righteousness dwells, a place of no more tears, no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying, and no more pain. Heaven is the place you want to be, and the Bible description is in physical terms since that is all we can comprehend. The world was created to be quite a wonderful place, and until sin arrived, it had the potential to be somewhat heaven-like. When God describes the next existence as a new heaven and new earth, He points to a place where righteousness dwells. Such a place is without evil and God’s test results in a few although God’s desire was for many, most, really all to succeed. Humankind is in the driver’s seat via their choices and poor choices abound. Those few will be righteous since they received forgiveness of past sins and remained faithful. Despite some who enjoy temporary happiness, the “world” is in misery, even knowing **it will not last**.

6.7 The horrible, despicable, pathetic “so-called Christian” religions of the world

We begin by commenting on the tragedy of “salvation teaching” that is **not** the truth. There is an enormous amount of error taught on salvation to the eternal detriment of countless souls. It begins with changing the gospel message, and thus none receive the truth they need. Following this are doctrines that teach people they are saved one time and forever and many other quite varied and false salvation-related teachings. The Catholic version of misleading their followers concerning salvation begins by offering a myriad of rules that, if followed, supposedly will end a person in heaven. Their adaptation of salvation includes infant baptism, confession of sins to a priest, the

definition of sin relative to its seriousness (i.e., venial or mortal), and a confusing mix of many other inventions that fail to forgive a single sin. Then they provide a safety blanket for Catholics. Maybe we could call it a “ray of sunshine” in creating purgatory. This allows dying in certain sins with recovery by suffering in purgatory until those residual sins can be “worked off,” allowing an eventual backdoor into heaven. The purgatory invention violates every Bible principle and God’s purpose for achieving His purpose.

In any case, when salvation is misrepresented, it numbs people into a false sense of security. All of this is rooted in disrespect for God and His word. It is the result of privately interpreting God’s word.

The most despicable aspect of misleading people concerning salvation is, of course, the loss of souls. Universally, an associated problem of error is the distance a person is placed from the truth. For instance, **they no longer seek the truth**; they already have it, or so they think. Such people believe they can have a spiritual existence while also living in the “world.”

The ease of becoming a “faith only” Christian is followed by an ease in living their life, whereas God requires a great deal from those who are indeed “in Christ.” Simply put, they need to live their life for Christ and the gospel. Salvation is well defined in the scriptures, specifically how to have past sins forgiven and the need to be faithful until death to receive the crown of life. The world's religions are typically involved in hundreds of things but fail to emphasize the only thing that matters – the salvation of a person’s soul.

6.8 The origin of God’s solution for sin

The origin of **sin’s solution** goes back to Genesis 3.15 and the statement made by God to Satan that would allow humankind to re-establish a relationship with Him following the first sin. We can begin further back than this with God’s purpose. Namely, to share His Divine Nature with His creation. This would require His creation to be eternal, i.e., in His image, that is, have a spiritual, eternal component – unlike other living

beings. It would also require them to be worthy without evil (no sin). God, as mentioned, is the perfect absence of evil and this understanding of God eliminates a lot of false conclusions and their consequences if God were in any way evil. Salvation is for individuals, and as a result, a test is required. God in this last age has defined sin, and like Adam and Eve, it is a transgression of God's law. God will observe how each person responds to His laws. He knows that each person will fail in relation to sin (Romans 3:23), and that is why He initiates a path to cover sins in Genesis 3:15.

Now, the question is, how will God go about the process of salvation? God has revealed the simplicity of salvation (saved from past sins) and its association with His Son. Jesus is at the center of God's plan for reconciliation, and to succeed, you need to have Jesus at the center of your life as the scriptures describe the saved as being "in Christ."

6.9 A little more preparation for the truth

You would need no preparation for the truth if the "world of religion" had not successfully been teaching their private interpretations of scripture for many hundreds of years. Thus, it is back to the basics to provide the truth.

It might help some people to look at the Bible as broken into the creation event, the sin of Adam and Eve, God's plan for reconciliation, the "long" period where the Israelites were gradually bringing the Messiah through their lineage, the coming of the Messiah preaching the kingdom and ending in His death, burial and resurrection, the Holy Spirit delivering and confirming God's final and complete message through the apostles which allowed the reconciliation of the obedient and allowed Jesus to begin building His church, the return of Jesus in the air including saints removed to ever be with the Lord followed by the end of all things and the final judgment.

Again, everything is about the soul. Each part of these subjective albeit reasonable, simplified major divisions of the Bible just mentioned is about the soul. Creation was to allow God to achieve His purpose of having souls share in the Divine

Nature. Jesus came to provide a path for the success of the soul knowing all will sin. The parables were parables of the kingdom* regarding the nature of the kingdom. Namely, how to get in and stay in the kingdom and how to serve God in the kingdom. Jesus' miracles were one aspect of the evidence of who He was and to validate His teachings. Eventually, the Father specifically revealed who Jesus was to Peter in answer to Jesus' question. That is, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Then Jesus says, "I will build my church." The reason for Jesus saying He would build His church was Peter's statement that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God. That declaration (received from the Father) would be the foundation, later called the cornerstone but now the rock on which Jesus would build His church.

**Parables of the kingdom - for example, the parable of the seed and the seed being the word of God. The truth about God, life, salvation all come from one source – the word of God. Indeed, it is the seed of the kingdom.*

Moving forward, Jesus completes His mission (death, burial, and resurrection) to allow the reconciliation and adds the obedient to His body, the church (spiritual). All that remains is the return of Jesus when He takes those in His spiritual body to "always be with the Lord." All other souls will face the final judgment. You cannot escape that everything in life is ultimately related to the soul. The intention of this book is to emphasize the soul as ultimately being the only thing that matters and **thus to live accordingly** that is, act in ways that align with God's commands.

The terminology of salvation and the meaning of each related word or concept and its interrelatedness make up the remainder of this chapter. Chapter 8 describes the conversions of the New Testament. A consistent pattern in each conversion validates what is taught in terms of receiving forgiveness of sins. You need to understand the terms and they include church, salvation, kingdom, conversion, reconciliation, and forgiveness of sins. It will also aid your understanding if you can differentiate the spiritual from the

physical, which might seem simple. Still, a great deal of the religious world considers various physical things to be spiritual and thus miss the true meaning.

*Note: There is an obvious clash of sensibilities yet largely unnoticed or ignored in religious practices. Before we face that perverse and unreasonable picture of religious teaching, let us look at the beauty of truth, or we might say God's way. In the New Testament conversions, which will be discussed in chapter 8, there is **consistency** in their description – this is very good. The gospel message and subsequent conversions result in persons having a new life. All that God planned since Genesis is now completed – there is reconciliation with God. In most cases, the events from hearing the message to sanctification are very brief because it is all **very understandable and straightforward**. Phillip preaches to the Ethiopian eunuch, and they come to water, and He is baptized having believed.*

*Isn't it evident that the history of "Christianity" to this day is quite **complicated** with their hierarchies and rules concerning conversion? The obvious but ignored is the **complexity of "so-called Christianity"** since its origin. The evolution from truth to error was almost immediate (during its implementation) as the gospel was perverted, as Paul pointed out in Galatians chapter one. There are hundreds of names/concepts such as priests, confession of sins, accepting Christ as personal savior, pastors, sacraments, Mariology, church buildings, endless ways of worshiping, popes, councils, purgatory, a literal 1000-year reign of Christ on earth and endless others that are all invented and not part of God's word. "Christianity" looks like a business because it is what the world has devised (changed and changing, added to, taken away) from the things God delivered. Consequently, there is no connectivity with God. Where did the simple solution to sin go? What is needed besides what was sufficient to place a person "In Christ" during the time of authority? That is, during the time (much of the first century) the Holy Spirit was working with the apostles guiding them into all truth. The examples of conversions of the New Testament are simple and free from all the concepts that confuse people about God's way, specifically in our case about salvation.*

6.10 Overview of the kingdom and the church

*Note: Chapter 7 is wholly devoted to the **kingdom and the church** and is complimentary to the discussion in this chapter. There is more detail in chapter 7 and some repetition, but this subject is confused as many carelessly rush to define these words and their relationship. Yet, there is a simple meaning.*

The kingdom Jesus spoke of is the church, and in Matthew 16:16-19, Jesus says He will build His church. Of course, Jesus is talking about souls and their salvation. There is **no other subject** (everything is about the soul), and for Jesus, this is His only mission. Jesus came to seek and save that which was lost (Luke 19:10). There is nothing physical in terms of a background physical intent (like a leadership with rule-making authority) “going on here.” Jesus was bringing a spiritual solution to the spiritual problem of sin. Jesus spoke of the kingdom coming and then, late in His ministry, introduced the church where (we will learn) He individually adds each obedient soul. Today people are in this kingdom Jesus spoke of as a result of being added to His spiritual body, the church. Regardless, if talking about the kingdom or the church, they are spiritual (there is no physical aspect such as a physical building), and in effect, the kingdom and the church are the same. Read Chapter 7, “The Church is the Kingdom,” for validation that the kingdom and the church Jesus spoke of are ultimately the same things.

6.11 More about the kingdom and the church for clarity

Jesus began preaching the kingdom from the first day of His public ministry, indicating it was near.

Matthew 4:17

17 From that time on Jesus began to preach, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.”

The important characteristic of the kingdom is that it is “not of this world.” In John 18:36, Jesus said, “My kingdom is not of this world.” It is spiritual, and of course, this would be in opposition to what the Jewish leaders wanted. They wanted a leader, even perhaps a warring conqueror, to restore glory to physical Israel, and at that time, it meant overcoming the tyranny of Rome. The kingdom Jesus spoke of is where a person wants to be. Jesus, before His death, announces He will build His church, and then we learn after His death, burial, and resurrection at the time of the first conversions that He would add those obedient to the gospel message to His spiritual body, the church – Acts 2:47. Again, the church Jesus speaks of is where you want to be. Those persons in His body can be referred to as “in Christ.” These are the ones (if they remain faithful) that Jesus will take with Him when He returns at the end of the world.

1 Thessalonians 4:16,17

*16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead **in Christ** will rise first.*

17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.

This life is all about the soul, your soul, and everything important is spiritual. There is a local physical church consists of those “in Christ” who act in spiritually defined ways together in worship and evangelism. The local church is **not** who Jesus will be taking with Him at the end of time but His body, the spiritual church.

The forgiveness of sins or salvation is the covering of past sins. At your obedience, past sins are forgiven – that is, the sins you have committed to that point in your life. You are then a child of God having an advocate with the Father in Jesus, and this allows **future sins** to potentially be forgiven. Those sins need to be genuinely repented, and as

expected, God, who knows your heart, only accepts those who truly repent. The appropriate pattern for a **child of God** to have their sins forgiven is to “repent therefore of this your wickedness and pray God if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you” (Acts 8:22).

No person can add you to the body of Christ or say by doing what they teach, you have been added. The Lord, in response to your obedience, including your sincere belief and repentance, is the only one who can bring you into a relationship with Him. When you qualify for baptism and complete that action, the Lord adds you (now sinless) to His spiritual body. Your addition to the body of Christ can be certain by doing what God requires, and that means a sincere dedication to your qualifying commitments in terms of belief and repentance. These are the unseen things, whereas the spoken confession of Jesus as the Son of God and your baptism are seen. In effect, having believed and repented, you know your sins were forgiven in baptism unless your belief and repentance were insincere. The Lord knows your heartfelt intentions and thus adds you to His body, the church. It is not complicated, but you need to take stock of your commitments and then be sure that you keep them, specifically living for Christ and the gospel and abandoning sin.

How can God get the right persons to be in the kingdom, in His body? It begins by preaching the gospel as God’s power to save.

1 Corinthians 1:18

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

Some will respond to the message of the cross and obey the gospel. This is where Jesus takes over and adds those obedient to the church – His spiritual body. This is exactly how Jesus is building His church as promised, “I will build My church.” It is one thing to be obedient in the manner of outward appearance, but a person might ‘fake’ (for instance) their repentance and have no real intention of leaving sin. Evil cannot share,

cannot have a relationship with God. To be sure, this will not happen since each person is added to the church personally by Jesus Himself. God knows the heart of every person. All the people in the “so-called Christian” churches believe they are in the body of Christ because someone told them so. You cannot expect the truth from the “religions of the world,” or do you want to be associated with them. Obviously, if they fail to help you in the only thing that matters you are in the wrong place.

You would be right to think succeeding in life is exceedingly more difficult than you have believed or has been portrayed. Jesus indicates few will find eternal life as there is a narrow road that is difficult. Anyone can succeed, and as you continue to seek God and truth, you will understand it will require courage and a love of the truth to get “into Christ” and stay there.

6.12 Introducing the kingdom and how and when it arrives

God has a focus on souls (His purpose), and Jesus is at the center of the effort to save souls. The message Jesus brings is related to the kingdom that is coming. Jesus is single-minded, and essentially everything He teaches is associated with the kingdom. Of course, its fulfillment will be very costly to Him. Yet, Jesus knew that obedience to the Father outweighs anything He must endure. At the beginning of His ministry, Jesus realized that the time of suffering was quickly approaching. Yet, for about three years, He focused on what was to come after His death. He represents a picture of serious persistence regarding the wisdom given to the apostles, His miracles, and His teachings. His focus must be on the things that will allow success for souls. As the time approaches, more is revealed to the apostles about **who He is**, and then Jesus tells them how the Holy Spirit, who He refers to as the comforter or helper, will guide them into all truth.

Concerning **WHEN** the kingdom would arrive, Jesus told a group that some of them would see the kingdom come with power. So, we know that in the **lifetime** of some to whom He spoke, the kingdom would be in place.

Mark 9:1

1 And He said to them, “Assuredly, I say to you that there are some standing here who will not taste death till they see the kingdom of God present with power.”

Following the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, the apostles learn that they will receive power from on high, but the power is not defined. However, the apostles might have believed the power was associated with the comforter (or helper) promised to them. If they had thought this, they would have been correct. Then in Luke 24, just before Jesus rose into heaven to sit at the right hand of God, He tells the apostles to wait in Jerusalem until they receive power from on high.

Luke 24:49

49 Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.”

Acts 1:8 records some additional information relative to the power they will receive as they learn the scope of their witnessing. This was consistent as Jesus explained their mission of bringing the gospel message to the world in Matthew 28:20 and Mark 16:15-16.

Acts 1:8

8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

The power the apostles were to receive was about the soul. The purpose of everything is related to the soul because that is God’s purpose. The power Jesus says is coming will allow the apostles to be witnesses of Jesus in their work of saving souls – from sin. The power they receive is primarily the message of truth, and in using that message, there will be (for a time) certain outward, supernatural in-character signs that

confirm it is the truth. The emphasis is on this **first day of the kingdom** and rightly so as the reconciliation with God will now (after about 4000 years) be available. However, the power received would continue since the Holy Spirit from this point forward will be working with the apostles until that which is perfect has come. The final and completed revelation to humankind would gradually be finished sometime before the end of the first century.

Note: The power received on that first day of the kingdom was one of two times where there was this immersion of the Holy Spirit (often referred to as the baptism of the Holy Spirit). The other time would be the conversion of Cornelius. In both cases there was a monumental reason for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. First was the opening of the kingdom on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2) and secondly was the opening of the kingdom to the Gentiles (Acts 10). Thus, the promises God made in Genesis 3:15 and in Genesis 12:2-3 were fulfilled respectively in Acts 2 and Acts 10. The Holy Spirit from this time in Acts 2 would continue working with the apostles until near the end of the first century. As mentioned, there were only these two instances that could be called the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The continuing work during this time involved the Holy Spirit working with the apostles, guiding them into all truth and bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Hebrews 2:3-4

3 how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him,

4 God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?

The work of the Holy Spirit with the apostles would end when “that which is perfect had come.” Seldom do people understand the meaning of 1 Corinthians 13:9-10,

but as one might expect, it has to do with the soul and, as always, with accomplishing God's purpose.

1 Corinthians 13:9-10

9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part.

*10 But when **that which is perfect** has come, then that which is in part will be done away.*

“That which is perfect” is the word of God, now completed. God's revelation has always been in part, but now it is complete or perfect, and at times God's revelation came with supernatural events as the case where the Holy Spirit was bearing witness to the word of God with “signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit.” Now the world would continue until the end and have the completed revelation from God, and there would be no more signs. God's miraculous interactions to demonstrate He was God and confirm His word have ceased. There will be no signs regarding Jesus' return at the end of the world. Jesus describes His return as a thief in the night. In that sense, there is a sign that there will be no sign.

Perhaps the most significant failure of the religious world is the failure to understand “that which is perfect” as God's completed word. The first thing that might come to mind regarding the coming of “that which is perfect” would be Jesus' return. Jesus has already come and perfectly completed His mission, and the next time will be the end of the world. “That which is perfect” is the completed word of God because it is perfect, and that means complete. The answer to salvation is in God's perfect word. It is the reason Jesus suffered the terrible death; otherwise, without the truth, what would people do for salvation? God's word had been in part throughout the Old Testament, and now in the first century, there was the gradual revealing of God's message until it was complete (perfect). It has been about 2000 years wherein humankind has this blessing of “that which is perfect.” Unfortunately, humanity continues to ignore the obvious and, as a result, disrespect God's word by carelessly handling it and often look for something

supernatural like a sign or a special communication from God. They continually violate God's direct command not to change His word and usually do this by using their private interpretations. The power brought by God on the day of Pentecost continued until God's perfect word was completed. The opportunity offered by God's perfection (perfect revelation from God) has been corrupted by its misuse. That opportunity is no less than the salvation of souls enabled by God's word. The truth is compelling in accomplishing God's purpose, whereas the changed word of God is deceitful in false assurances while seeming credible. Knowing God's word is perfect and available, how will you respect it? Will you doubt God's method for delivering the truth? Will you think it to be less than perfect inasmuch as it is unacceptable (to you) in some parts? Here is the wisdom. Take God's word seriously – all of it!

In summary, for this section, the kingdom arrives on the day of Pentecost following the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. The gospel message is delivered and obeyed, and the Lord adds persons to the kingdom, to the church. This is the **when and how** of the kingdom. Of course, the kingdom is not heaven but brings you into a relationship with God where you can serve God and qualify for eternal life by your continued obedience.

*Note: The Catholic Church's teachings oppose the entirety of God's revelations. Catholic doctrine is alien to the truth. The correct understanding of "when that which is perfect has come" is rightly understood to be the completed word of God. The Catholic Church crumbles as it opposes God's completed word by claiming the right to make the rules. In other words, although God's word is **PERFECT**, there was more required from humankind and specifically from the hierarchy of the Catholic Church. God never relinquished His authority to any of humanity. On the surface, that is ridiculous and, of course, inconsistent with all scripture. Nonetheless, Catholics claim Peter was chosen to be the earthly head of what Jesus said He would build – His church (spiritual). Catholics claim the right to make the rules based on Jesus saying they (the apostles) would receive the keys to the kingdom. At the time of Matthew 16:16-19, there is no*

*further explanation of how the apostles and the keys were to interact. Of course, they did receive keys, which occurred when the Holy Spirit fell upon them in Acts 2. Those keys were to open the kingdom. This would happen through their preaching, and in that preaching, they were binding and loosing on earth the things of heaven. Of course, they were not creating doctrine but were led by the Holy Spirit into all truth, as Jesus indicated in John 16:13. The Holy Spirit would continue to work with the apostles in completing the revelation from God to humankind. In this sense, the apostles **knew by inspiration the things of God** and were able to function opening the kingdom **by preaching the truth**. This is so incredibly simple, straightforward, and consistent with God's purpose and nature that getting this wrong is inconceivable.*

2 Peter 1:20,21

*20 knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation,
21 for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.*

Note: Prophecy is defined as a divinely inspired utterance or revelation.

*The things that come from God are true. God makes it clear throughout the scriptures but states very concisely that “**prophecy never came by the will of man.**” This means that humankind, including the apostles, never had the authority to make the rules. They were inspired as the Holy Spirit guided them into all truth. Now, we started by saying few understand the meaning of “when that which is perfect has come.” It is quite simple to realize this refers to God's word being completed. Of course, it has to do with the soul, and nothing was more important to God's purpose than getting **the valid saving message** into the hands of those seeking Him. These are the instructions from God. In Catholicism, ongoing rulemaking is done without authority and in opposition to God's word. As one might expect, humankind's intervention with the word of God amounts to changing, adding to, and, or taking away from the truth of the scriptures, and, in effect, reeks devastation on the souls of humankind.*

6.13 Finally, the reconciliation with God

On the day of Pentecost, following the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, the apostles would receive power as Jesus indicated. After about 4000 years, the day had come for the first souls to be reconciled to God. The apostles would **NOW be given instructions** concerning the kingdom Jesus had been preaching. The instructions, if obeyed, could change a person from the power of darkness to the kingdom of the Son.

Colossians 1:13-14

13 He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love,

14 in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.

Jesus had told the apostles in John 16:13 that the Holy Spirit would guide them into all truth. These are indeed the keys of the kingdom promised to the apostles. It is always about the soul, and the keys of the kingdom opened the door to the reconciliation by preaching what was revealed. This is the power received by the apostles, a power that transcends the earthly realm. On this day, the apostles would be able to instruct others and even do so in different languages (or dialects). Basically, on this day, the different languages would be the different dialects of Jews who had come to Jerusalem for Pentecost. We might say it was the changing of the guard, a special day when the New Covenant in Christ's blood would go into effect. People from this point forward would obey the gospel, and the Lord would add them to His church.

Acts 2:47

47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.

That is, added to His spiritual church, His body and became citizens of the “kingdom of the Son of His love.” Everything that God wanted humankind to know would gradually be revealed. The totality of God’s revelation would soon be complete. Specifically, the completion of God’s message to humankind would occur before the end of the first century. It can appropriately be called, “That which is perfect.” Understanding that God’s word is perfect brings a powerful seriousness to all scripture. Perfect implies flawless, and that includes being complete. The changing of God’s word in any way can be appreciated in its seriousness, namely being seriously devastating.

6.14 People in the kingdom

Obedient souls have been in the kingdom of the Son since the day of Pentecost following the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus and continue to be added in precisely the same manner to this day. Colossians 1:13-14 (quoted above) talks about those in the kingdom by their qualification of having their sins forgiven.

You would be wise to know that life is about the soul or the battle between good and evil or can be stated to be very personally a battle between YOU and SIN. It cannot be said enough that your life is a war between YOU and SIN. The world and the “world of religion” think life is about everything else. Can you imagine with all the things that fill your life that no thought is ever given to this war? This war will determine your eternal outcome and in pride and concern about getting all you want in life; a person may amplify sin in their life – in effect enhancing their enemy in this very personal war. You can proclaim that life is about many things, but it is only about the soul. The consequence of understanding God’s purpose allows certain insights but primarily that the important things are spiritual. This is drastically different than how in ignorance; humankind looks at the scriptures and create the physical. Physical churches with physical (man-made) “salvation” and physical rules and ceremonies are the characteristics of the churches that have evolved from the word of truth of the gospel being changed.

6.15 The process of conversion

God designed a process for a person to be successful in life. As might be expected, it is PERFECT in accomplishing God's purpose. God's word is perfect in truth, in conversion, in everything. **Any variation from the process will not achieve the intended result.** The process itself demonstrates God's perfection in how it accomplishes God's purpose in the components of conversion. **Faith** comes from the word of God and is at the center of the process. God indicates that without faith, it is impossible to please Him, and this is the starting point of the conversion process. We see that people can find God if they search for Him diligently, and thus one might understand that no one will accidentally stumble into heaven. God's requirement to **repent** is the place where a person of their own free will decides to live God's way and begins by giving up all sin – forever. The scriptures point to the need to outwardly acknowledge (**confess**) Jesus as Lord of their life. This may require some courage, but in any case, it is a typically verbal commitment that will continue to be made throughout a person's life. One verse that emphasizes this attitude is the clear statement of not being ashamed of the gospel of Christ, that is, not being ashamed of the Lord.

Romans 1:16

16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.

The final step in the conversion process is **Baptism**, where sins are forgiven. It might be said to be the critical event because upon completion a person is in a new life without sin. When the term obeying the gospel is used, its focus is on baptism, but the previous steps are required to be a candidate for baptism. The conversion process includes believing, confessing Jesus, repenting of sins, and is completed in baptism.

Romans 6:3-4

3 Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?

4 Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

You do not reach the last step of baptism **until the other steps are in place**. It would be ridiculous to be baptized unless you believed Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God. Likewise, there would be no reason for baptism if you did not truly repent. That is, thinking your sins could be forgiven while maintaining an attitude that is ready and willing to continue in sin. Consider Phillip and the Ethiopian eunuch after Phillip preached Jesus to him and then came upon a body of water; the eunuch asks Phillip what hinders me from being baptized. Phillip responds, “If you believe with all your heart, you may.”

Acts 8:35-38

35 Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him.

36 Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, “See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?”

37 Then Philip said, “If you believe with all your heart, you may.”

38 So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him.

We know that believing, repenting, and confessing Jesus precedes baptism and in this last step, one obeys the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. That is, a person **dies to sin** when **buried in the watery grave** and **rises into a new life** – past sins are gone. Baptism is the place where sins are forgiven, and this immersion process is a characterization of Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection. Indeed, you are buried with

Christ in baptism. You never reach this last step unless the previous steps of believe, repent, and confess are completed. The place where you contact the blood of Christ is the point where your sins are forgiven, **allowing the relationship with God**, and placing you “in Christ.” It could be said that you come in contact with the blood of Christ when the process is completed. Jesus told the apostles in the upper room just before they went to the Garden of Gethsemane that the cup containing the fruit of the vine represented, “my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.” It can be said that these steps of the process led to your relationship with God’s Son. That is the case but behind those actions was obedience. Obedience is the central issue in pleasing God, just as it was for Jesus in pleasing the Father, and then Jesus became the author of eternal salvation to all those who obey Him.

Hebrews 5:8,9

*8 though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered.
9 And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him*

Thus, the whole process can be referred to as obeying the gospel. In 2 Thessalonians, God points out the dire consequences of **NOT obeying the gospel**, and if you understand God, you know the certainty of His word. Indeed, God could not be more direct, concise, and concerned that you know these things, and you act accordingly with this awareness.

2 Thessalonians 1:7-9

*7 and to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels,
8 in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

9 These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power,

Note: The doctrines of humankind claimed to be representative of God's meaning are often just ridiculous. One of those is the real presence of Jesus in the elements of the Lord's supper. Namely, His actual body and blood are present in the elements. This doctrine has become a core principle in the Catholic Church, a centerpiece of their beliefs. It originates from what Jesus spoke as recorded in John 6.53-56.

John 6:53-56

53 Then Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you.

54 Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.

55 For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed.

56 He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him.

*When Jesus said these things, their meaning was not understood. In Acts 2, the gospel message was taught, and people could be reconciled, making good outcomes now possible by a person's obedience. All those added to the body of Christ, if they remained faithful, would have eternal life, and indeed Jesus will raise them at the last day. Thus, it is clear that eating His flesh and drinking His blood occurred in the gospel process. In the death, burial, and resurrection (obeying that form of doctrine), His blood is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. The result Jesus promised in John 6 occurred in obedience to the gospel. Those persons **did eat the body and drink the blood** of Jesus in the John 6 portrayal. Indeed, it was a powerful representation used by Jesus and like some of the parables and for instance the revelation to Peter regarding Jesus as God's Son and Jesus building His church and the work given to the apostles of binding and loosing these were things not understood at the time they were revealed. They would be*

understood after the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus and only as the Holy Spirit gradually revealed them.

If you are astute, you might realize something is missing, and it is the last thing that puts the stamp of approval on each conversion. Jesus said He would build His church. Indeed, that has not happened but occurs following each person's conversion. In this process, one is added to the body of Christ (His spiritual church) by the Lord Himself. They would not be eligible in the state of sin, but they can have this relationship with God and Christ once forgiven. It is appropriate since none will be holy if they do not complete the process, and only God, knowing each person's heart, knows their sincerity and commitment. Specifically, was their confession of Jesus meaningful, was their repentance valid? Thus, per Acts 2:47, they are in the church, the body of Christ added by the Lord.

6.16 The seriousness of baptism

The need to talk about the seriousness of baptism is an outcome of Martin Luther's salvation by faith only. "Faith only salvation" defines salvation as a mental acceptance of Christ. Then the associated doctrine of the Holy Spirit acting on the hearts of predetermined individuals is used to support that a person can do nothing regarding salvation. Protestants declare baptism is a choice you make and subsequent action you take; therefore, it cannot be needed for salvation. You are already saved (by your faith). Baptism therefore appears for various reasons in Protestant denominations but always post-salvation. When the basics are wrong, everything gets worse. Why is this believed? It is accepted because respected persons have taught it over the centuries, and defenses have been developed. The root cause is because people respect people more than God, more than God's word. Protestant churches may baptize, which could mean sprinkling or, in some cases, immersion, and it may be babies (only sprinkled) or adults. Since they do not baptize for the right reason, their baptism is not valid. Baptism of babies and

baptism by sprinkling are meaningless (chapter 10 describes the absurdity of those doctrines). Protestants describe being baptized as a demonstration of an outward action of inward grace – but the important thing is to protect their faith-only doctrine such that you are not **doing something** for their salvation. Protestants must NOT associate baptism with salvation. Yet, there is excellent biblical clarity regarding the association between salvation and baptism. Baptism is the right and final directive to complete obedience to receive forgiveness of sins. The Bible's reason for your baptism was to receive forgiveness of past sins.

Baptism throughout the scriptures is associated with the forgiveness of sins thus salvation (from sin). The following are just a few scriptures emphasizing baptism and its relation to various spiritual aspects, such as forgiveness of sins, salvation.

Acts 2:38 “Repent and be baptized for the forgiveness of sins.”

Acts 22:16 “Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins.”

Galatians 3:26 “as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.”

One might notice that it does NOT say, “as many of you that believed in Christ or as many as repented have put on Christ,” but it is in baptism (that is done due to your belief in Jesus) where sins are forgiven, and in effect you “put on Christ.”

There would be no reason for baptism if these other things (belief, confession, and repentance) were not “settled.”

1 Peter 3:20-21 “baptism now saves us.”

God gives a prominent place to baptism, and even Jesus was baptized, but in His case, to fulfill all righteousness as it was John’s baptism that was in effect, and Jesus did the right thing for a Jew. Ephesians describes the seven ones of God; one of those “ones” is baptism. Baptism is in good company with the other six “ones”: God the Father, God the Son, the Holy Spirit, Faith, Hope of heaven, and the body of Christ. Baptism is important as there is no other place where sins can be forgiven.

6.17 Important understandings in relation to conversion

Life is about the soul and soul success depends on sins being covered (forgiven) and living faithfully thereafter. Thus, the discussion of the soul emphasizes the conversion process. God's simple process for conversion has been so butchered by "religion" that God's purpose cannot be achieved.

Chapter 7 will clarify the church and kingdom and you will see how that confusion supports a different gospel.

Chapter 8, "Conversions of the New Testament," is a list of the conversions recorded in scripture and includes a great deal of information about conversion. These are the actions taken by certain people recorded in the scriptures as examples of conversion. The pattern is consistent with the doctrine presented to receive forgiveness of sins. There would be no deviation in this pattern for the remaining time of humankind. Instead of someone telling you that you are a Christian, you can be assured by God, by God's revelation, that in obedience to the gospel, you are indeed a Christian.

Chapter 9 is called "What it means to BELIEVE." The "so-called Christian" religions have brought considerable confusion in relation to the word "believe," and this chapter brings clarity. The point here is that believing as used in the scriptures regarding Jesus is not a mental acceptance but is a commitment to follow God's way. Specifically, to do the commands of God and do them for the reasons He indicates.

Finally, Chapter 10 exposes the inventions of sin types imputed at birth and how have they have been used to alter the conversion process.

6.18 Everything is about the soul, some life-changing thoughts (How awareness of "Life is about the soul" is helpful)

Creation of humankind begins, and in verse 27 of Genesis 1, "So God created man in His own image; in the image of God, He created him; male and female He created them." We have the first hint of God's purpose for creation as He creates humankind in

His image. This seems to be the key event in creation, and of course, this is what the scriptures point to in their entirety. Humankind has this godly character, and we learn it is an eternal character. The correct word to be used is the soul; it is the entity to be cherished to be saved.

1 Peter 1:3-5&9

3 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,

4 to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,

5 who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

9 receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of your souls.

So, humankind's existence begins with announcing their soul's existence (eternal being) and will end with an accounting for their soul. Near the beginning, in Genesis 3, sin entered the world, and God puts in place something to allow sin to be covered (Genesis 3:15). Christ will come about 4000 years later, and His purpose will be to save that which was lost and thus the emphasis on the soul. The kingdom that Jesus is bringing is about the soul with the seed of the kingdom being the word of God. Jesus will reveal the church He will build and begins doing that by personally adding those obedient to the gospel. Everything from the beginning to the end of the message from God is about the soul. Your life is about the soul, and Jesus contrasts your life to all the things people seek and makes the summation: "For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?"

God provides a beautiful synopsis of the soul without using the word soul in 2 Corinthians 4:16-18. Paul is writing to those in the body of Christ in Corinth. As always, the focus is on the soul, and in this case, He explains to those "in Christ" how life is about the soul. He says your outward man (body) is deteriorating day by day, but your

inward man (soul) is being renewed. The faithful person in the aging process is getting closer to a wonderful end, specifically a place where God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, sorrow, or crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed. Then He says, indeed you may be suffering now but what awaits in your “soul” salvation is an eternal weight of glory. Finally, there is a great reminder of what is important by contrasting the temporary (seen) with the eternal (unseen). Quite a dramatic three verses say life is about the soul and everything else pales in comparison.

6.19 Dealing with life when you know everything is about the soul

The world can be devastating on a daily basis by observation. It can be very disappointing for those who know the truth. It should be good to know the truth (and it is), but the downside is recognizing error and deceit at every turn. In religion, there is a constant stream of deceit, and obviously, meaningless discussions, meaningless rites, and everyone seem to be taking their nonsensical beliefs very seriously. When you read Chapter 10 dealing primarily with Catholic’s original sin and Protestant sin nature, even the most elementary understanding of scripture indicates that both doctrines are humanly devised and fabricated. Thus, infant baptism is nonsense, and then theologians argue about the process of baptizing babies. Due to these fabricated “sin” doctrines, there are other necessary inferences, and the deceit deepens. It is tough to seriously discuss the various technicalities of infant baptism when the reason for its existence is nonsense. The patterns for humankind’s religions are disheartening since people believe them.

It is excruciating to see people misled, which is continual without relief. Religion and the world combine to bring deceit in many forms. Young people are easily overwhelmed by the media, by their instructors, and there is little or no opposition to humanism. That is, the system of thought attaching prime importance to human rather than divine or supernatural matters. Of course, it is not just young persons, but they are

the most naïve. The “older” folks who have motives for accepting the lies receive less sympathy. As I observe these things, it is comforting to say, “Life is About the Soul.” Ultimately, God has everything in control as justice will be perfect. The sad things people do to each other in terms of deceit or even outward mental and physical cruelty are temporary because “Life is About the Soul.” There are about eight billion people alive on our planet, and about 100 billion people have existed. A large portion of the eight billion people might not understand that life is about the soul. However, about 92 billion people do understand it perfectly. The things that are devastating and disappointing to me pull people in the wrong direction, in a worldly direction. The “world” and “religions of the world” are the culprits, and the minds of humankind are affected in a way to damage their eternity. So, coming to grips with life being about the soul and essentially about nothing else is **a valuable awareness**. This short statement calms my sadness and motivates me to be even more aggressive in helping others to what is most important. In viewing the deterioration of societies, nations from a moral, ethical perspective, I realize that historically there have been few if any times when the masses have not been similarly overcome with evil. In every lifetime, there is this observation of moral deterioration. Today, information travels much faster, so lies reach many people very quickly, and there can be a speedy magnification of lies upon lies. There is a genuine lack of interest in getting to the bottom of any issue, to the truth.

Lies are easily accepted because they may support another existing “likable and appreciated” lie. Those in Christ have something solid, and it is the word of God, and they know life is about the soul, and no matter what is said, no matter what happens, there will be perfect justice. All the earthly tragedies and unfairness and pain can be overwhelming, but life is not about any of these things but about the eternal. Those “in Christ” have an awareness of evil but no responsibility to resolve it or even think about it but only to preach the word. God knows the hearts of evil people but those “in Christ” only see people, all people in need of forgiveness. In that sense we do not blame, we do not condemn but we bring the gospel message.

6.20 The God of Love and Justice are not in conflict

The greater our understanding, the more powerful our life can be in service to God and, consequently, building our assurance of a successful end. As you grow in the knowledge of God and life, many things can be properly understood. Indeed, you will find that many beliefs about God and life are ridiculous because the most fundamental understanding is missing. For instance, let us look at something that seems essential to understanding God and life but do it with the knowledge that life is about the soul and let us say we also know that God is the perfect absence of evil. Then we will address the issue of God being the God of love and still being the administer of eternal punishment.

We can phrase this issue in terms of God needing to be **PERFECT in love AND PERFECT in delivering justice**. It must appear at first glance that these two characteristics of God are in conflict. We will see they are complimentary, and there is no conflict.

People or religions “left to their own thinking” about something eternal will always be wrong. God is focused on getting certain persons to share His Divine Nature, and His test will be perfectly fair (no evil in God, no unfairness). Since God cannot lie, everything He says in His word is true, and thus the rules regarding how to succeed are known. The criteria for judgment are known.

John 12:48

48 He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him—the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day.

God’s love does not compete with His stated conditions for success. Those conditions for success are related to God-defined sin, and very specifically, a person must not die in sin. God knows all will sin, and thus none will share the Divine Nature. So, where does God’s love come into the picture? Humankind may think God intervenes at the end of a person’s life and will allow certain sins to be overlooked, and in some

way, a person achieves heaven. That is what people and or various religions may see how God's love will work. **That is terribly wrong** and can mislead a person into thinking there is hope when there is none. God's love has been "in play" since Genesis 3:15 (actually before) and particularly demonstrated in His Son's death, burial, and resurrection. God's love resides in Jesus on the cross and results from His obedience to the Father. Individuals take advantage of God's love in obedience to the gospel message. God's love continues in His advice given to those "in Christ" regarding how they are to live and the advantage of having an advocate with God the Father. To clarify, God's love is associated with sin being forgiven. Past sins are forgiven in obedience to the gospel, and later sins are potentially forgiven via access through the Advocate. Your awareness of life being about the soul means you understand God and His purpose, which is for you to succeed. Your awareness of God as the perfect absence of evil means there will be perfect justice (unfairness would be evil), and judgment will agree with God's stated criteria. The scriptures point to God's love being tied to what God has done in Christ for each person. The scriptures do not find God expressing His love of humankind in any other way, and God has promoted how one takes advantage of His love. Understanding God and His purpose allow us to appreciate God's love and justice, and indeed they are in no way in conflict. Both are quite separate and well defined. Humankind and the religions of humankind would like to see God forgiving everyone and all achieving heaven. They teach this by promoting God's love differently than the scriptures. However, only those who do not understand God and His purpose could reach such a conclusion. Each person who understands life is about the soul, and nothing else will **focus on spiritual things**, specifically having past sins forgiven and remaining faithful.

6.21 Life is about the soul, and that defines what is important in our life

So many things fill our lives because they are important to us, and we have little time for anything else. Our eternal success will depend on realizing that nothing is truly,

ultimately important unless those things support what is eternally important. We need to make decisions regarding temporary matters with the soul in mind. Things as ordinary as the friendships we develop, who we marry, where we work, how we treat others, the education we pursue, our efforts to help the needy, the effort in discerning truth from error, and in every temporary thing, there needs to be a consideration of how our soul will be impacted.

Chapter 7

The Church is the Kingdom

A great deal of CONFUSION exists because various religious groups do not understand this simple, straightforward, elementary constituent of God's plan. Salvation is in the church built by Christ. The saved are in the church and nowhere else. It is the church Jesus said He would build, and it is a **spiritual church**. It is the body of Christ. Jesus came speaking of the kingdom, and it was His focus throughout His ministry, and by adding the obedient to His church, they are in the kingdom.

The Church is the Kingdom, and without this knowledge, there are many serious false doctrines, and indeed they are costly to souls! In the theological world, doctrines such as the kingdom of God are twisted in various ways to fit the fundamental beliefs of a group. The beliefs at a high level either teach the kingdom is in existence currently, or it is yet to come, or it came but is only partially in existence as it lacks full disclosure. The Catholics like to use the statement the kingdom has “come and is coming” – an explanation to follow. A popular Protestant view was that the kingdom does not yet exist since it did not begin in the first century as God planned. Somehow God was wrong – that is quite a doctrine. God is never wrong, never has been wrong, and never will be wrong, as it is one of the characteristics of being perfect. Anyway, for some, when Christ comes to reign on earth for a thousand years (a fabrication), the kingdom will be established. The thing being discussed involves the timing for the coming of the kingdom. However, more essential is the nature of the kingdom. Is the kingdom Jesus came preaching heaven, eternal life? We will see it is not. These various misunderstanding of the kingdom lead to many errors, and one is the thousand-year reign of Christ on earth. Some Protestants believe it is at that time the kingdom will be established. The scriptures, however, indicate the kingdom is in existence today. Some persons have been in the kingdom since the gospel was first preached. Also, there will be no 1000-year reign of Christ on earth. Just like life is about the soul, the world of

privately interpreting the word of God and, in this case, the kingdom and the church result in teachings that damage the soul's success. What is so devastating about having an incorrect understanding of the kingdom or the church? You would be correct to say the soul is at stake since **everything is about the soul**. Error on this subject leads to a myriad of false teachings concerning salvation. One of the most serious would be seeing the kingdom, the church, as being in some way physical. In the various physical kingdom scenarios, the doctrines concerning salvation can easily be corrupted. Suddenly things like the church being a building and the acceptability of humankind creating doctrine are common outcomes of misunderstanding the church, the kingdom. This will be explained throughout the chapters of this book, but especially in this chapter.

7.1 The Catholic teaching of the kingdom/church

Catholics hold that the kingdom of God on earth is the Catholic Church, and the pope is the earthly head of this kingdom – you cannot get much more physical than that! Thus, it is easy to see the problems of such a kingdom/church misconception on the salvation of souls. Catholics must see the kingdom and the church as being different. They teach many different things about the kingdom and generally encompass a heavenly element, but the church of the scriptures, according to Catholicism, is uniquely the Catholic Church. Of course, the church built by Christ is the body of Christ and is SPIRITUAL. Thus, it would have a spiritual head, which is what the scriptures teach.

Ephesians 5:23

23 *Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body*

Catholic worship upon examination is very physical and a mix of Old Testament and New Testament aspects. The worst part of a “physical religion” is that there is rulemaking regarding the matters of God. Such rulemaking will always be wrong, deceitful, and damaging to souls. The spiritual church uses only that which is perfect – the completed word of God. Again, one thing about humankind's rule-makers is they are

always wrong because God's rules come from a different realm, from God. It is difficult to know what Catholics are teaching over history. Still, throughout much of their history until about the mid-20th century, they were teaching one must be part of the Catholic Church to achieve heaven. Catholics are **100% wrong on everything** related to the doctrine of Christ. That is incredible but not unexpected when you are a rule-making body, and the most fundamental aspects of the truth have been corrupted.

*Note: It is difficult to understand the teaching of the “world’s so-called Christian churches.” The church built by Christ is simple to grasp but involving men/women in the creation of doctrine results in error which builds more error, and it becomes devastatingly confusing. Humankind’s doctrines are open to changes/corrections, so in addition to being fundamentally wrong, they are ever-changing. Confusion has merit in maintaining membership since only the hierarchy understands, can explain the teachings, and often must administer the doctrine. Let me summarize the Catholic view of this subject of the kingdom and the church. I said I would explain the earlier Catholic statement that the kingdom has **come and is coming**. The following summarizes Catholic teaching on the kingdom and the church from two sources that contain various references to the Catholic catechism. I inspected many others and only managed to be more confused, but these two sources seemed somewhat consistent and “reasonable,” albeit terribly wrong.*

<http://www.beginningcatholic.com/kingdom-of-god>

<https://www.catholic.org/news/hf/faith/story.php?id=56373>

Catholicism might summarize the kingdom as follows:

*“So, this kingdom, this reign of God, has already **come**, it is **coming** and, when the King returns, it will be finally and fully revealed.”*

Catholics teach that a person **comes** into the kingdom that exists today when they are baptized (typically as a baby). It seems they get rid of original sin (no such thing) and become a Catholic at the same time. Catholics also have a rite called confirmation, by which Catholics receive a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Confirmation is necessary for the completion of baptismal grace. Through Confirmation, the Holy Spirit gives them the increased ability to practice their Catholic faith in every aspect of their lives and to witness Christ in every situation.

When Jesus returns, the kingdom will be fully revealed and thus, that is the **still coming** (*has already come, it is coming*) referred to above. Catholics go on to say:

“Their mission is to bring all men and women into the body of the Savior, the Church, which is the seed and sign of His Kingdom. Each Catholic needs to be living their **lives as seed and sign of that Kingdom**. Catholics do so most fruitfully when we live in the heart of the Catholic Church, which is a seed of the kingdom for the sake of the world and the spreading of the kingdom.”

So, the critical teaching here is that the Catholic church is the existing kingdom, the kingdom that has come. Catholics would say the kingdom remains in their midst in the Eucharist. As a summary, the following Catholic statement in this matter is:

“Christ gave to his Apostles the work of proclaiming the Kingdom, and through the Holy Spirit forms his people into a priestly kingdom, the Church, in which the Kingdom of God is mysteriously present, for she is the seed and beginning of the Kingdom on earth.”

I mentioned that defining the doctrines of manufactured religions is extremely difficult since the stand-alone doctrines are problematic and changeable, and then combining those doctrines into something that makes sense is impossible.

This attempt to define Catholic beliefs is just the best I can do because nothing Catholic makes any sense. However, by Catholicism claiming to make the rules, they can say anything, and some people will believe them, and the more complicated, the more the Catholic hierarchy is needed. In their explanation of the church and the kingdom, they get some small pieces correct, but they **never get the concepts of God**

correct. Indeed, the kingdom exists today and since Acts the second chapter. Perhaps we could say they are right that when Christ returns, the kingdom will have a different character as Jesus will take His spiritual body, the church, to forever be with Him. They are right to realize a transition will occur but do not understand the nature of that transition. Essentially, they are wrong about everything because the truth ends up helping people to a successful life, and error such as Catholicism results in eternal loss. Catholicism can always reject any criticism by saying they have the right to make the rules. However, that is easily seen as false when their rulemaking is in opposition to the scriptures, and they are always in opposition to the scriptures. This chapter provides the truth about the kingdom and the church and thus negates the Catholic teachings on this subject.

7.2 Everything about the kingdom Jesus preached and the church He built is easily understood and perfectly explained

As you will see, the kingdom is not difficult to understand, and God provides great clarity. Interestingly, few realize that false teaching regarding the kingdom is the backbone of a series of damagingly misleading doctrines concerning salvation.

*Clarifying: Men/Women commonly think of the church as an organization of people under one name meeting in a particular location and having central oversight, usually at some designated location or locations. There is a physical church in the New Testament, but it is an **independent** local church scripturally defined in terms of membership, organization, and purpose. There is no central authority over multiple churches - the word of God is the only rule. Those in the body of Christ (spiritual church) would participate with a local group of others who have also obeyed the gospel. This is the local “physical” church. Their mission is to evangelize, to carry on Christ’s purpose of seeking and saving the lost. The church, the kingdom referred to on this page, is as Jesus said, “NOT OF THIS WORLD,” whereas the local church is physical (of this*

*world) having members that are “in Christ’s spiritual body.” Together those in the body of Christ participate in **spiritually authorized** activities that require worship in spirit and truth – everything they do in serving God is “spiritual.” The Lord’s local church is in no way a rule-making organization as the rules come from the scriptures and are never changed.*

The church being the kingdom is not understood largely because of spiritual versus physical misconceptions about salvation. People today automatically hear church and think of some building, some earthy organization. The churches, even those who teach the truth, have members who may or may not be in the kingdom at any moment. So, when Jesus hands over the kingdom (His spiritual body) to the Father at the end of the world, He is NOT handing over some building, some local church but handing over those in His spiritual body – the kingdom/His church.

Understanding this should help you realize that not just any church that says it is Christian is indeed Christian. Salvation occurred due to breaking down the wall of sin between God and man, specifically in your case **between God and YOU** as we talk about YOUR salvation. Salvation occurs by having past sins forgiven according to God’s instructions. This is possible because of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. Salvation occurs when the Lord adds you to His body (the church that Jesus is building), making you a child of God, bringing the hope of heaven and the responsibilities associated with the blessing. Also, very importantly, we are in the last age. At some point and only the Father knows the time, the end will come.

[\(https://heavencoach.com/end-of-the-world/\)](https://heavencoach.com/end-of-the-world/).

There will be no rapture (as used by premillennialists), no tribulation, and no one-thousand-year reign of Christ on earth. Jesus will be handing over the kingdom to the Father or, as we are discussing here, Jesus’ handing over the church to God the Father. Those whom Jesus hands over will have attained eternal life (heaven).

1 Corinthians 15:24

24 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.

The kingdom has been in existence since Acts 2 and now at the end of time the church, the body of Christ, the kingdom is delivered to God. This is the outcome of God's purpose: receiving those who will share in the Divine Nature.

7.3 Here is why the Kingdom has come and why it is the church

The time for Jesus to begin His preaching came when He was about thirty years of age. Jesus initiated His public ministry in Galilee. We see Him immediately preaching as recorded in:

- *Matthew 4:17: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand,"*
- *Mark 1:15: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand."*
- *Later in Mark 9:1, Jesus said, "Assuredly, I say to you that there are some standing here who will not taste death till they see the kingdom of God present with power."*
- *After Christ's death and just before He ascended into heaven, He speaks of the kingdom and the apostles receiving power (Acts 1:3-8).*
- *The kingdom indeed comes with power in Acts 2. Later, Paul, writing to the Christians at Colosse, says, "He [God] has delivered us from the power of darkness and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His love."*

God was very careful in preparing for the coming of the kingdom, essentially from Genesis. What follows in the table below is a summary **of prophecy regarding the church as the kingdom and its fulfillment in the New Testament**. It provides the

prophesied time and place for the kingdom and thus the respective fulfillment during Roman rule and in the city of Jerusalem. There was to be a king, of course, Jesus Christ. Before ascending into heaven, He would tell His apostles, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.” We see the King receiving/building His kingdom/church and ruling over it at the right hand of God. There is a new covenant, and the promise of the Holy Spirit coming with power is central to the events of Acts 2. To understand the kingdom, we need to see it as God does in terms of its spiritual nature. The Jews could not see the kingdom in a spiritual sense since they were looking for a worldly kingdom. Today many, who would like to be Christians fail to see the church as the kingdom and, like the Jews, continue to wait for the kingdom instead of becoming a part of the kingdom by obeying the King. Throughout the time of the old covenant, there were prophecies/promises of the kingdom, and we can see how they were fulfilled in the first century and in terms of the church.

7.4 Old Testament prophecies/promises related to the kingdom and their fulfillment in the New Testament church

Old Testament Prophecies / Promises	New Testament Fulfillment
The Time: Daniel 2.44 "In the days of these kings" the fourth kingdom was that of Rome	The Messiah came during the Roman rule of Jerusalem
The Place: Isaiah 2.2,3 "The Lord's house shall be established and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem	Church / Kingdom began in Jerusalem, Acts 2
A King: Jeremiah 23.5,6 "A King shall reign and prosper. He will be called THE LORD OF OUR RIGHTEOUS"	Jesus Christ – the King <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Powerful: Matthew 28.18 • Right hand of God: Acts 2:29-33 • King of Kings: 1Timothy 6.15
The King receiving His Kingdom Daniel 7.13,14 Son of Man came with clouds to the Ancient of Days <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All nations shall serve Him • His dominion is everlasting 	Jesus ascends to heaven to receive the kingdom Jesus ascends with clouds to heaven to sit at the right hand of God: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acts 1.9-11 & Mark 16.19 Church is subject to Christ: • Ephesians 5.24 & 1Peter 3.22 Jesus dominion was then and future over the church: • 2 Peter 1.11, Luke 1.31-33, Ephesians 1.20-22
Jesus rules the Kingdom Matthew 28.18 All authority given to Jesus "Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool." Psalm 110.1	Jesus rules the kingdom now and until I make Your enemies Your footstool (Acts 2.34-36) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psalm 110.1 refers to Christ's ascension to begin rule over His spiritual kingdom: Mark 16.19, Acts 2.34-36, John 18.36 • Finally Jesus delivers the kingdom to God: 1Corinthians 15.24-26, Hebrews 10.12-13
A New Covenant Jeremiah 31.31-34 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Laws written on their hearts and iniquities forgiven • Shall be God's people 	Jesus is Mediator of the New Testament <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hebrews 9.15-17 • Hebrews 8.6-12 • Acts 2.36-38 • 1Corinthians 1.2 "Sanctified" or set apart for God in the church (Acts 2.47)
The promise of the Holy Spirit Joel 2.28-32 "And it shall come to pass afterward...."	Jesus promises the Holy Spirit (John 14.26 & John 16.13) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "This is what was spoken by the prophet Joel ...": Acts 2.16-21 • Word is truth: John 17.17 • The seed of the kingdom is the word of God: Luke 8:10 • Born again of kingdom seed: 1Peter 1.22-25 & John 3.5

There is a great deal to be learned about life, God's plan, and of course, God's nature as we study how the fulfillment of the kingdom is in the church. One can be impressed by the carefulness of God and the manner the fulfillment occurs in the church.

It should even impress those who oppose God's existence since each component of the prophecy fits everything perfectly together.

Therefore, do we have a kingdom today and ever since Acts 2? If we had a kingdom, it would have the following characteristics, and each is spiritual:

1. A KING: That king is Jesus, the Son of God per Luke 1:33. Jesus, at the end of the age, will deliver the kingdom to God the Father. Jesus must reign until He has put all enemies under His feet.

2. A TERRITORY: It is a spiritual territory, a spiritual kingdom. In John 18:36, Jesus says, "My kingdom is not of this world," and in Luke 17:31, Jesus says, "For indeed the kingdom of God is within you."

3. SUBJECTS: Everyone should be a subject. Jesus died for all (Acts 28:20); Philippians 2:9-11 says every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, and Romans 5:8 says God's love was shown while we were still sinners. Christ died for everyone! But only those who obey (Hebrews 5:8-9) the gospel are subjects in the kingdom. Indeed, those who obeyed from the heart (Romans 6:16-17) and were called by the Gospel (2 Thessalonians 2:14), were begotten (born) through the Gospel (1 Corinthians 4:15) are the ones added to the kingdom, to the spiritual church by the Lord Himself. These are the subjects of the kingdom.

4. A LAW: The New Testament: Hebrews 9:15-17 says the New Covenant is in effect since Jesus' death:

The Law of Christ: Galatians 6:2

Laws on their hearts: Hebrews 10:16: "I will put My laws into their hearts."

Gospel/scripture: Romans 16:25-26: "For obedience to the faith."

There most certainly is a law, and it might be referred to as the law of Christ or the **doctrine of Christ**. It is essential for success, and as the scriptures indicate, to have Jesus and the Father.

2 John 1:9

9 Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son.

The law in these last days (last age) is the New Covenant of Christ which is perfect in every way in fulfilling God's purpose.

Hebrews 1:1-2

*1 God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets,
2 has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds;*

Those who want to achieve heaven need to abide in the doctrine of Christ and being faithful to God's way; they will succeed. Those who will not be in subjection to anything, or anyone will in pride choose to reject the kingdom. In this way, God's purpose is also served since they possess characteristics not compatible with sharing in the Divine Nature.

Note: Can you see the difficulty in having any other law or doctrine than the one delivered by inspiration? God could see the problem, and thus no changing of His word is allowed. New teachings would undoubtedly be in conflict, especially as men gather to make the rules and make many hundreds of such rules. In Catholicism, we have an illegitimate organization, a physical organization making rules, and indeed those rules conflict, really are in opposition to the scriptures. The church built by Jesus and was

indeed spoken of as a holy kingdom. Jesus has the Holy Spirit guide the apostles into all truth, and the path to reconciliation is defined, and the obedient are born again of incorruptible seed. They are “in Christ,” have “put on Christ,” and are in the spiritual body of Christ, His church. Then along comes humankind with all their rules, and it is a travesty. The “churches of the world” look nothing like the one Jesus continues to build.

7.5 A brief timeline from the introduction of the kingdom to its fulfillment

Let us focus on the truth. Although we have previously discussed this in terms of the “big picture,” we will now provide more detail. Keep in mind that the things revealed are what God planned since Genesis 3:15. The kingdom was about to be opened with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. We will see people entering the kingdom and God’s care in revealing His plan in its simplicity. Consider a world of religion that changes what God so carefully planned and delivered for our understanding and weep for the souls of humankind.

Beginning with Jesus’ preaching the kingdom, the macro series of events below culminate in the establishment of the kingdom, the church:

- Jesus preaches the kingdom of God is at hand.
- Jesus is crucified.
- Jesus dies, is buried, and is resurrected.
- Jesus appears to the disciples after His death and, shortly after that, ascends before them into heaven. Jesus, on that occasion, provides the apostles instructions in preparation for the coming of the kingdom.
- The apostles waited for the Holy Spirit in Jerusalem. The fulfillment of Joel 2:28-32 occurs in Acts 2.
- The truth is preached and obeyed for the first time.
- Those obedient to the Gospel are added by the Lord to the church, the kingdom.

The following scriptures allow you to follow the events from the appearance of Jesus after His death to the kingdom's establishment. After Jesus' death, in Luke 24:44-49, Jesus appears to the disciples. All that God has planned in Christ was completed. What will men and women be asked to do? What will be their response?

7.6 Luke 24:44-49: Jesus opens their understanding

These verses are filled with information regarding Jesus, and God's purpose, and how it has all "played out" exactly as God planned. Now, with Jesus' part completed, namely, His death, burial, and resurrection, He explains what is coming next and provides the apostles instructions regarding their part. One can see that although the sacrifice of Jesus has been completed, it would be meaningless unless it could be fruitful (individuals' benefit) in achieving the reconciliation with the Father. Jesus explains, WHAT will happen next (*repentance and remission of sins should be preached*), but the HOW is in some way associated with the power Jesus indicates would be coming shortly to the apostles in Jerusalem. It is apparent that the HOW was unknown to the apostles – what must they do, what must they say. More details of the mystery that has existed since Genesis 3:15 would be revealed to the apostles on this occasion AND then shortly the fulfillment. The fulfillment is the pinnacle achievement as the reconciliation occurs. Life is about the soul, and in the reconciliation the soul can succeed. The words soul, kingdom, or church do not appear in these verses, but that is the subject. How do we know? We know because that is what is always being discussed and always in the background of God's focused purpose.

Luke 24:44-49

44 Then He said to them, "These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me."

*45 And **He opened their understanding**, that they might comprehend the scriptures.*

46 *Then He said to them, “Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day,*

47 *“and that **repentance and remission of sins** should be preached in His Name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem*

48 *“And you are witnesses of these things*

49 *“Behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until **you are endued with power from on high**”*

7.7 Then in Acts 1:3: About the kingdom of God

(Acts 1:3 is a continuance of Luke 24:44-49, and almost certainly by the same human author – Luke)

After Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection, He is seen for forty days and talks about things of the kingdom.

Acts 1:3

3 *To whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.*

7.8 Now in Acts 1:8: Jesus tells the apostles of the Power they will receive when the Holy Spirit comes upon them

Jesus continues to emphasize the power they will receive by again pointing to their mission as being His witnesses.

Acts 1:8

8 But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.

A little thought allows a person to see how the scriptures are always connected with souls and “witnessing the saving message” to the world.

7.9 Acts 2:1-13: Power from on High

Acts 2 begins with the apostles together on Pentecost, and the Holy Spirit comes as promised with power. The power included the ability to speak in various languages or tongues. The apostles spoke the languages (dialects) of the various Jews gathered in Jerusalem for Pentecost. They were speaking the truth. This was the long-awaited message from God, and on this first day of the kingdom, it was to be delivered with power. The apostles before this time did not know what to say or what God was going to require.

Note: Anyone seeking truth can see how God is going about to deliver His message now that His Son has finished His mission on earth. It is by the Holy Spirit as promised to the apostles, and now we understand how the apostles would be capable of binding and loosing. That is, God was directing them, and they were delivering the message. The things being taught were the truth. The Holy Spirit would continue with the apostles until that which is perfect had come.

7.10 Acts 2:36 is the conclusion of verses Acts 2:14-35

Peter, over these verses, describes the part **this day** plays in God’s plan. He explains that what is happening right then fulfills Joel 2:28-32. Peter tells in detail how Jesus was the Messiah, ending by saying:

Acts 2:36

36 Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.

7.11 Acts 2:37-38: What shall we do?

Those hearing this were “cut to the heart.” Peter and the apostles are asked, what shall we do? The kingdom was just moments away from being fulfilled, and Peter responded to their plea of what shall we do.

Acts 2:37-38

37 Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?”

38 Then Peter said to them, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

7.12 Acts 2:40-47: People obey; God adds them to the church

Acts 2:41, 47

41 Then those who gladly received his word were baptized.

47 And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.

These are the basics. Every person ought to understand how God unfolded His plan for humankind. This is what Christ died for, for you! He suffered terribly and died so you could have the opportunity to be obedient to the Gospel. The power God promised came miraculously, providing the apostles with the ability to speak in different languages (really dialects) known to the listeners and accurately deliver the truth. Now for the first

time, people knew exactly what to do. Men did not invent the process, but it was what God planned from the beginning for your salvation. If you do not become part of the kingdom, the church belonging to Christ while you are alive in the body, you will not be part of the kingdom that Jesus will deliver in the end to His Father.

7.13 General clarity regarding the kingdom/church

If the church is the kingdom, why do we have two different names for the same thing? Ultimately, the church and the kingdom are the same thing in terms of the residence for a person who has obeyed the gospel. There needed to be a differentiation between the kingdom and the church. Jesus began preaching the kingdom that was coming and especially its characteristics. Late in His ministry, He introduces the church He will build. Those added to the church by the Lord are then in the kingdom. That is the church, which is the spiritual body of Christ, the spiritual kingdom. Jesus would be the king over a kingdom (spiritual), and He would be the head of the church (spiritual).

The kingdom was a word understood by those listening to Jesus' preaching. The church or the “called out” would involve **HOW people were to be added** to the kingdom – to the church. The “calling out” has to do with the gospel message and would be something only possible after the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. Thus, to this writer, the use of two different words with the same ultimate meaning is logical considering the timing for their use by Jesus. The first use of the word “church” is found in Matthew 16.18 and refers to Jesus building His church which would begin in Acts 2 after His death. These words (kingdom and church) and their meaning will have served their purpose when Jesus adds those obedient to His body, His spiritual church. Then at His return, He hands over the kingdom to God the Father (1 Corinthians 15.24). We even see in this verse that God puts an end to all rule and all authority and power. At that point, those “in Christ” will have succeeded and will ever be with the Lord. Indeed, they will have received the end of their faith - the salvation of their souls.

7.14 The truth regarding binding and loosing – a little more detail than when this was mentioned above

The apostles were given the ability to bind and loose in Matthew 16:19, but of course, they did not know what that meant. We see Jesus telling the apostles in John 16:13 that Holy Spirit would guide them into all truth. Before the Holy Spirit begins guiding them, Jesus, during the forty days after His resurrection, does provide some insight when He tells the apostles they will be His witnesses. This is the key to the work of the apostles in binding and loosing.

Keys to the kingdom and Binding and Loosening

Matthew 16.16-19

¹⁶ Simon Peter answered and said, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

¹⁷ Jesus answered and said to him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. ¹⁸ And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. ¹⁹ And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”

Simplicity from God
versus the prejudiced
imagination of humankind



Acts 1:8

8 But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.

The apostles receive power in Jerusalem on the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Jesus. The gospel is preached the first time, and the apostles are binding and loosing God's will. It is the most significant event in human history since the reconciliation occurs. The outcome of Genesis 3:15 is being fulfilled as a result of the apostles delivering the message. **The apostles are not creating the message.** The Holy Spirit would continue to work with the apostles throughout much of the first century until the word of God is complete, also referred to as when that which is perfect has come. Indeed, the church built by Jesus was built on Jesus being the Son of God and His perfect sacrifice. The idea of any man being able to make the rules for God is inconsistent with a reasonable understanding of God. The "binding and loosing" was a great honor and made the apostles the intermediary between God and the people. Just before Jesus went up into the air to sit at the right hand of God, He gave the apostles a commission to preach the gospel (Matthew 28:19-20 and Mark 16:15-16). The gospel was to be preached and not whatever the apostle's thought should be preached. **There has never been any more serious violation of matters belonging to God than men saying they speak for God when they do not.** The apostles were able via the Holy Spirit to deliver the truth, and that same word they taught is the same gospel message taught by those obedient persons, those "in Christ" throughout history.

Chapter 8

The Conversions of the New Testament

THERE IS MUCH CONFUSION brought by man regarding what God requires for conversion. It is the purpose of this document to explain this most critical process. Before detailing the process and showing the instances of conversions in the New Testament, we need to clarify the Bible use of the word conversion or being converted.

8.1 The meaning of conversion

It might be better if, instead of conversions (of the New Testament), I used salvation's (of the New Testament) or being-born-again events (of the New Testament) or translations from the power of darkness to the kingdom of God (of the New Testament) or forgiveness of past sins (of the New Testament). These phrases are valid depictions describing what God had in mind to achieve His purpose concerning the success of souls. The idea of conversion implies **turning or being changed**. Conversion is ESSENTIAL, as Matthew 18:3 and Acts 3:19 indicate.

Matthew 18:3

Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.

And

Acts 3:19

Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord.

The Bible definition of converted is “to turn” and thus portrays an **active requirement** for the person involved. Specifically, in the verses above, it is a “voluntary act in response to the presentation of truth” [Vines Expository Dictionary of New Testament words]. Figuratively as used in Matthew 18:3, conversion is turning one thing into another. Specifically, turning a person living amidst sin into one that rejects sin. The suggestion in Matthew 18:3 is that little children are more open to something different, even more humble (receptive) to what is taught. They have not yet incorporated pride into their lives.

God’s plan of reconciliation requires you to do something, and since there is sin, you cannot be reconciled. You are going to have to change and turn away from sin. When you do all that God requires to forgive sins, God will then transform you, translate you from the power of darkness to the kingdom of His Son. Jesus, Himself, will add you to His spiritual body, the church. God is very dramatic in comparing where people “are” by saying they are in the power of darkness. Ultimately without the conversion, their ending would be in this most undesirable place.

8.2 The road to heaven in its commands is a change process

In addition to the conversion process being a turning, the command to repent is specifically turning away from sin in your life. In the process of conversion, you have turned and thus been converted, been saved, been born again, been translated into the kingdom of God, had your past sins forgiven. God validates your actions and thus your conversion. Therefore, in the mind of God, you are a son of God. In this sense, a valid conversion occurs in the mind of God. Only God knows your heart, which is why you may wrongly think you are converted. You cannot fool God. Perhaps you have no real intention of giving up certain sins, or maybe you have real doubts that Jesus is God’s Son. Yes, we can even fool ourselves, so we truly need to be **dedicated to our commitment** to ensure we are in the desired state. That is, we have received forgiveness of past sins. The Lord adds you to His spiritual body, the church, upon your obedience,

and that only happens because He knows your intention, especially regarding repentance. In John 3:5-8, Jesus describes the requirement for entering the kingdom of God as being born again and compares it to the wind blowing in that you cannot see where it comes from or where it goes.

John 3:5-8

5 Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.

6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

7 Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'

8 The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit."

This is an aspect of being born of the Spirit. You cannot see the result of your turning, but by faith, you know it happened in the mind of God if indeed you have not fooled yourself. You have turned or changed in the following ways, and at each step, God validates your actions, and you become a son of God. The commands in the conversion process are as follows:

- Believe: You turn from not believing Jesus to be the Son of God to being convinced He is God's Son.
- Confess: Your verbal confession of Jesus as God's Son outwardly demonstrates your commitment.
- Repent: What is repentance? Repentance is not being sorry, although godly sorrow leads to repentance. Repentance occurs when you change your mind about sin's seriousness and demonstrate that by TURNING from sin previously in your life. Repentance must occur to avoid failing in life. If there is no valid repentance, a person will not be added to the body of Christ.

Luke 13:3

I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish.

Since believing and repentance are not seen, nonetheless, they are seen in their sincerity or lack thereof by God. The Lord will only add those with good hearts to His body. Why? Because He cannot have a relationship with evil as He is the perfect absence of evil.

- Baptism: You take the action God prescribes in baptism and have your sins forgiven. Namely, buried with Him in baptism (buried in a watery grave), dying to your sins, and rising to a new life having your past sins forgiven. The gospel can be thought of as the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus per 1 Corinthians 15:1-4. Appropriately, when the scriptures require you to obey the gospel, that can be thought of as obeying the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. In this last step of conversion, your sins are forgiven, and you arise a new person without sin.

Romans 6:3,4

3 Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?

4 Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

There is no other place in the scriptures where your sins are forgiven. None of the other steps (believe, confessing Jesus, or repenting) are associated with your sins being forgiven. Thus, having completed these three things, you are a candidate for baptism. Consequently, the scriptures rightly indicate in 1 Peter 3:21 that Baptism now saves us.

1 Peter 3.21

21 There is also an antitype which now saves us—baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ

You have voluntarily turned in obedience, and in this last step, God translates you from the power of darkness to the kingdom of His Son. You become a child of God, and in this process, Jesus is fulfilling His declaration from Matthew 16:18 that He would build His church, His Spiritual Church – the body of Christ, and He is building it one obedient soul at a time.

The terminology used to describe one who has been added to the body of Christ can be called being “in Christ.” Those saints in Galatia are told “Christ lives in them” (Galatians 2:20), and in Galatians 3:26-27, they are “sons of God” and have “put on Christ.”

Galatians 3:26-27

26 For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.

27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

8.3 Summary

Conversion is the process of turning or changing, and the result of a successful turning is to become a child of God. In the process, there are different ways of describing the result provided by God, and they include “being saved, being translated into the kingdom of God, having your past sins forgiven, being born again, having put on Christ, being in the body of Christ.” You are a child of God and headed for heaven if you persevere. To become a child of God; believe, confess, repent, and be baptized. This list can be misleading if the thought of as a casual step-by-step process. You need to understand each step, and it is not difficult, but the required **commitment needs to be understood**. Specifically, consider the more detailed scripturally defined meaning of the words and associated commitment. Believing entails (living for Christ and the gospel)

and repenting (not allowing sin to again enter your life). The word convert helps our understanding in that it **emphasizes action** on your part, **a turning from something to something else**.

Note: God's means of conversion is simple, yet neither Catholics nor Protestants follow God's pattern, and thus, neither are Christians. Neither obtains forgiveness of sins. As you read this or preferably read the scriptures without alterations, it will become overwhelmingly apparent (if it has not already) that the sins of Catholics and Protestants have not been forgiven. This is a truth that is overwhelmingly sad, pathetic, and tragic.

8.4 God's requirements for conversion and actual examples of conversions

The fundamental dilemma with conversion is that over history people have taken what they want from scripture and called it conversion. The process of salvation, or receiving forgiveness of past sins, continues to be discussed to help your understanding. Very simply, we need to do all that God requires for conversion. In the various conversions of the New Testament, we will see portions of what God requires mentioned and portions not mentioned in specific cases. By faith (or even by reasoning or necessary inference), we understand everything that God requires was included when a person became a child of God. So many people want to take John 3:16 as the whole Gospel. John 3:16 is a part of the Gospel but does not contain all you must do although all you must do is contained in the idea of believing (i.e., a person who truly believes in Jesus will do all the Savior says and for the reason He says).

The table, "Conversions of The New Testament," that follows consists of a list of steps required to become a child of God. It details the description as recorded by the inspired writer of each specific conversion. As God has revealed, the process of conversion is a series of steps needed to establish a relationship with His Son. Each step has an individual significance, and in totality, you become a child of God. As previously

mentioned, taking these steps casually without understanding can be misleading. Thus, each step will receive a little more explanation. Of course, there needs to be an introduction to the truth, which comes from hearing or reading the truth, or we might say the gospel message. The process begins with faith and specifically believing in Jesus, what He did, and why, which is the central theme for conversion. Confessing Christ before man as God's Son (the Savior) is required to have Jesus acknowledge you before the Father.

Matthew 10:32

32 "Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven.

Repentance signifies your willingness and your agreement to change your life from one where sin was a part of your life to a life where you no longer transgress the law of God. Finally, in baptism, there is a dying to sin (burial in water) and a rising (out of the water) to a new life being born again spiritually. You understand by faith that you did a great deal more than get wet in baptism. You took advantage of what Christ did in His death, burial, and resurrection for you. He is truly the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him (Hebrews 5:9). Now you have obeyed Him, and as the Bible states in 1 Peter 3:21, "There is also an antitype* which now saves us, namely, baptism [not the removal of the filth of the flesh but the answer of a good conscience toward God], through the resurrection of Jesus Christ."

* The earlier type of Noah and his family who were saved by water foreshadowed the antitype, [baptism].

In the conversion process, God has provided something so beautiful in its simplicity, thoroughness, and meaning. It perfectly encompasses faith (belief and action), love (response to what God has done for humanity), and hope (a new life, a

relationship with God now and potentially on into eternity) as one correctly responds to the will of God.

8.5 Conversions of the New Testament

The following chart presents what was recorded concerning these twelve conversions of the New Testament.

Conversion	Hear	Believe	Confess	Repent	Baptized
Pentecost Acts 2	Yes	Implied by cut to the heart	Not stated	Yes	Yes
The 5000 Acts 4	Yes	Yes	Not stated	Not stated	Not stated
Simon Acts 8. 4-13	Yes	Yes	Not stated	Not stated	Yes
Ethiopian Acts 8.26-40	Yes	Yes	Not stated	Not stated	Yes
Saul Acts 9	Yes; heard Jesus, then Ananias	Not stated	Not stated	Not stated	Yes
Cornelius Acts 10	Yes	Yes	Not stated	Not stated	Yes
Lydia Acts 16.14-15	Yes	Not stated	Not stated	Not stated	Yes
Jailer Acts 16.29-34	Yes	Yes	Not stated	Not stated	Yes
Corinthians Acts 18.1-8	Yes	Yes	Not stated	Not stated	Yes
Of John's baptism Acts 19.1-5	Yes	Yes	Not stated	Not stated	Yes
Saul Acts 22.12-16	Yes	Not stated	Yes**	Not stated	Yes
Galatians Gal 3.26-29	Inferred	Yes, by faith	Not stated	Not stated	Yes

8.6 Calling on the name of The Lord

The term “calling on the name of the Lord” (Acts 22.16) does not necessarily mean that this is an example of one confessing Jesus before men. I grant it might include this, but this phraseology carries more significance. Colossians 3.17 says, “And [whatever] you do in word or deed, [do] all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him. Doing all things in the name of Jesus does not mean continuously speaking the name of Jesus, but that we should **do all things religiously by the authority of Christ. So, when we read Acts 2.21, “And it shall come to pass that

whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved” (or the same verse in Romans 10.13), we understand Jesus as Lord and accept the validity of His commandments (and do them) in relation to salvation. Both Acts 2.21 and Romans 10.13 have their origin (that is, the same phraseology) in Joel 2.32. The passage in Joel points forward in history to what happened in Acts 2 and the beginning of the church (kingdom). Thus, “calling on the name of the Lord” contains the commands of God delivered that day for salvation. Furthermore, it would be no surprise to have Ananias in Acts 22.16 telling Saul (Paul) to “arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.” For it is truly by Christ’s obedient death on the cross that men can have their sins forgiven (in baptism) as they participate with Christ in that form of doctrine (the death, burial, and resurrection). Therefore, in summary, calling on the name of the Lord is not a “yelling out” of His Name but recognition of Jesus and His authority relative to salvation. You, in effect, “call on the Name of the Lord” when you obey the gospel.

8.7 About Confessing Jesus

Another distinction needs to be made regarding the table above relative to the confess column. Confess refers to confessing Jesus before men, and Jesus first mentions this in Matthew 10:32, “Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven.” Except for the clarifications just made for “calling on the name of the Lord,” no conversions relative to “confess” are specifically mentioned as part of a conversion.

However, in Acts 8, the Ethiopian acknowledges Jesus as the Christ in verse 37. There are also indications of this “confessing of Jesus” in three other conversions. It is possible that “magnifying God” of Acts 10.46 and “having believed in God” of Acts 16.34 and “believed on the Lord” of Acts 18.8 included the confessing of Jesus before men. This requirement that God has placed as part of salvation is the part that allows Jesus to confess someone before the Father (Matthew 10:32). It is a requirement that is so closely tied to believing that it may be hard to distinguish. For example, if one is

asked, “do you believe Jesus is Christ the Son of God” and they respond yes, that would fulfill the requirement of confessing Jesus before men. A Christian should never be ashamed of Christ but is always ready to confess Jesus as Lord. God, of course, knows the heart of each person; but it seems that in this matter, God wants them to “say it.” This is not a matter to be timid about, even if that is your normal character. Many notable Bible characters were naturally apprehensive and reserved, such as Moses, Peter, and even Paul, but they could not remain that way in God's plan. Certainly, the process of becoming all you can be in service to the Lord is one of growth, and the starting point is your conversion. It is the beginning of you standing on your own two feet in service to God. Courage is present in becoming a Christian and then living the life of a Christian, and in the simplest of terms, it has to do with not being ashamed of Christ. So, confessing Christ for this first time at your conversion is just the beginning of a life that will acknowledge Jesus. The conversion process necessitates humility, courage, and commitment, even in its simplicity.

Chapter 9

What it means to BELIEVE

9.1 What “Believe” means or how God defines believe

There is a great deal of confusion about the word BELIEVE as used in the Bible. As usual, there is no actual confusion as the scriptures are clear and **define themselves**. Believing is most fundamentally a mental exercise. Do you believe it will rain today? You consider the question, and for whatever reason, you say yes. You may be right or wrong, but this is what you believe. Do you believe in the Constitution of the United States? In saying yes, you accept the document as something you “BELIEVE IN.” Do you believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God? You decide to answer, yes. Will you follow the will of Christ and do all He requires? You choose to respond, yes. Living for Christ and the gospel would confirm you believe in the way you claimed. Certainly, one who believes in Jesus will do what He says, and for the reason He says. Thus, if Jesus, who you claim to “believe in,” associates something with receiving salvation, then, of course, you would respond to the Savior in obedience. In so doing, that person receives the blessing of obedience, namely salvation.

The verses below from 1 Peter provide an excellent summary of how God’s purpose was achieved, of how the reconciliation had taken place by the blood of Christ. Sin was covered, Jesus Himself being the propitiation. God’s plan from Genesis 3:15 was to be fulfilled in those obedient to His Son. These verses tell us of the hope we have leading to heaven. There will be trials, difficulties, and your belief will be tested, and God will know of the GENUINENESS of your faith.

1 Peter 1:1-9

1 To the pilgrims of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia,

2 elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the

Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ:

Grace to you and peace be multiplied.

3 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,

4 to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,

5 who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

6 In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials,

7 that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ,

8 whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory,

9 receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of your souls.

The blood of Christ is figuratively sprinkled on our hearts to cleanse us from an evil conscience when we believe, confess, repent, and are baptized (summarized in the word “obedience” in 1 Peter 1:2). Only then is one elect, sanctified, consecrated, and cleansed to serve the living God! As a Child of God, “In Christ,” you live a faithful life, and by your faith (obedience), you will receive the salvation of your soul. Certainly, your faith will be tested, and the GENUINENESS of your faith will be known to God. Let me replace “your faith” with “your consistent dedication to God’s word” to emphasize the nature of faith you continually strive to achieve.

The GENUINENESS of your faith can be seen in what Jesus said in Matthew 7:21 and many other places, and it is simply in your continued obedience. Indeed, the world is filled with people who mentally accepted Christ and did no more and thus never had

their sins forgiven. Even though many people have a particular devotion to God's Son, they are not "in Christ." They have no concern about their eternal destination since they were saved once and for all time when they believed. This is incredibly sad since the last verse above emphasizes receiving the end of your faith – the salvation of your soul. Of course, the end of a "faith only" person is the same as the beginning that occurred the instant, they mentally accepted Christ, namely **NOT** the salvation of their soul. God's concern and Paul's concern about faithfulness are not needed since each person accepting Christ as their personal savior has a guarantee. That guarantee is just as good as the word of Martin Luther, John Calvin, and many others down to the person who taught **them** this soul-destroying doctrine.

This doctrine has found acceptance in many who want heaven, but like the young rich ruler of Matthew 19, found the things Jesus required were too much. It should be obvious that there is much more to following Jesus than believing He exists, that He is the Son of God. How can a person having the message from God before them fail to see the requirements to be in the body of Christ and then the necessity of a lifetime of service? Believing, meaning "mental acceptance only," is shallow and essentially meaningless. God is serious about souls and your belief; your faith must be much more than mental. The belief God expects goes way beyond mental acceptance, way beyond a verbal commitment, and even way beyond your well-meaning. The true believer will say, what must I do, how must I live?

The young rich ruler asked Jesus how he could inherit eternal life. He had kept the commandments, but Jesus said He lacked one thing. Jesus told him, "Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." The young rich ruler could not give up those things. The problem was Jesus required of him more than he could give up, as it says he had many things. If Jesus had asked him to become a follower without any other restrictions, it would seem he would have quickly agreed. Those who mentally accept Jesus as God's Son for salvation have been deceived. They are happy with how easily God has made salvation, just as the young rich ruler would have been happy. A terrible thing is done when error is taught,

souls are ruined, sins are not forgiven, and the difficult (Matthew 7:13-14) life ahead has not been revealed. That is, a life not lived for self. It will be a challenging life living for Christ and the gospel.

Matthew 7:13-14

13 “Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it.

14 Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.

Abraham believed in God but had to obey Him when it came to Isaac. Jesus became the author of eternal salvation to all those who obey Him, Hebrews 5:9. So obedience is evidence of one's belief, one's commitment, and we might say the quality of one's belief. Continued obedience is required to remain faithful. It is not anything you are doing separate from what God requires (like something a person could boast about). It is very difficult to comprehend how following God's directions could be boasting. Jesus wanted to make this clear and did so in Matthew 7:21.

Matthew 7:21

21 Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.

Throughout the scriptures, there is clarification in terms of those acceptable to God, and acceptability requires action, specifically obedience.

Romans 2:13

13 for not the hearers of the law are just in the sight of God, but the doers of the law will be justified;

9.2 How badly do you want heaven?

This is what we are talking about -

believing God or believing men/women

The strange thing about the mental acceptance of Jesus as God's Son is that many people will NOT do what Jesus requires for salvation, allowing them to eventually achieve heaven. Specifically, repent, be baptized, and live faithfully. Apparently, their belief was very shallow, or someone told them believing mentally was all they needed. They may even believe that doing more in some way would be wrong – what a cruel teaching! Such a doctrine is pathetic, alien to the scriptures, deceitful, and costly to souls. Yet, this is the pattern of the vast majority of the so-called “Christians.” They are “so-called Christians” because the Lord does not add them to His body, the church if they only mentally accept Him. A person must have their past sins forgiven, and that does not take place in mentally accepting Jesus.

Believing is the starting point of being “in Christ.” Jesus revealed the relationship between belief and salvation before His death in verses like John 3:16. However, He did not reveal what must be done to receive the blessing. **He could not, since He had not yet accomplished what the Father sent Him to do.** Jesus told the apostles He would send the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, to guide them into all truth. Indeed, this occurred just before Peter in Acts 2 described Jesus as Lord and Savior, as the one they crucified. Consequently, they were cut to the heart in believing Peter's declaration of Acts 2:36, “Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.” Being cut to the heart, they ask, “what must we do?” Peter did not say believe in Jesus, and you will be saved. Peter did not mention “believe” since they already believed based on Peter's revelation of Jesus in verse 36. They now sought what they needed to do. They thought they needed to do something. They could not even ask about being saved since they very well may not have understood what they needed to be “saved from.” They were right; there was something to be done. Peter did not say, you do not need to do anything, but instead gave them instructions.

For the first time, in a very concise way, Peter tells them what they must do and what they are being “saved from.” They will receive the permanent forgiveness of past sins. They must repent and be baptized. Later in Acts 8, the Eunuch would ask Phillip if he could be baptized (after Phillip had explained the gospel to him), and Phillip answers if you believe with all your heart, you may. If you assemble all the conversions of the New Testament, you will see this same pattern. Believing is the starting point, but not where forgiveness of sins is received. It is not what gets you “into Christ,” where one becomes a son of God. Believing, when scripturally understood includes a **dedication to God’s Son**, includes doing what is required to become a Son of God (Galatians 3:26-27).

Paul, who was persecuting Christians, was traveling to Damascus. A great light shone upon him, and he fell to the ground. Jesus announces to Paul that it is Him whom Paul is persecuting. Paul realizes Jesus is indeed who His followers claimed. Jesus sends Paul to Damascus to learn what he must do. Ananias came to Saul in Damascus and told him what to do and why.

Acts 22:16

16 And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.

Those who believe will in obedience to God have their sins forgiven by following God’s directions finishing with baptism. Obeying God for the reason He says is not a work that one can boast. How can one possibly boast in doing what God commands? Do you believe that Paul would have his sins forgiven had he not been baptized?

Note: It is hard to categorize the beliefs of Luther and Calvin as they varied from time to time, and there were differences about salvation. They were both instrumental in the Protestant reformation and largely responsible for the fundamental doctrines of Protestant religions. The keystone of their beliefs about salvation could be called faith

only and sanctification held by Luther and Calvin, respectively. These are quite fundamentally different and yet Protestantism can be observed as doctrinally containing both. Of course, with all the Protestant denominations, it is confusing. At least from my perspective, Protestantism generally accepts Luther's faith only. Still, Calvin's five points (TULIP) are standard fare such as once saved always saved and the special operation of God regarding His elect are fundamentals of the Protestant belief. The nature of these doctrines and the casual manner of making such interpretations have led to many non-scriptural teachings.

Calvin and Luther (unintentionally) worked very hard in opposition to God's plan. Essentially, they demonstrated they did not understand God's purpose and how He was going to achieve it. God's purpose is to have worthy persons share His Divine Nature. God creates an existence where each person can be tested, which is evident in creating rules. Specifically, defining sin in a free will environment allows His creation to make choices. Calvin misses this big picture by indicating God personally selects certain individuals, and in that process, Calvin makes God a respecter of persons, which God declares He is not (Acts 10.34,35, Romans 2.11, and James 3.16,17). Luther is careless in handling scripture about faith and invents an attractive idea while ignoring a plethora of the scriptural problems with "faith only."

God's test is designed to allow a person to align with His way or with their own way. The idea of preaching as God's power to save demonstrates a selection process to be used by humankind and not God designating certain "elect" for salvation. The doctrine of the elect as used by Protestants is nonsense, or we might say totally in opposition to God's purpose. Abraham believed in God and, even in difficult circumstances, chose to obey God. Otherwise, his belief (or we might say his faith in God) would have been unacceptable. Faith has always been associated with free will choices and is only meaningful with obedience.

If you believe this mental acceptance of Christ is all you need (for salvation), then very likely you also accept Calvin's other teachings – his five points (or TULIP) or some

of them. You acknowledge that your salvation is guaranteed or, as often said, “you are once saved, always saved.” You cannot be lost no matter what you do. It is some special security for the believer – very attractive. You are “so deserving,” well, not really as God (you are taught) picked you, and you had little to do with it. Some would say God knew you were good and would be acceptable. This elect concept has no reasonable logic, only direct opposition to the gospel message. You are taught the Holy Spirit, in some way, acted directly on you to bring you salvation. The truth is the Holy Spirit’s role is defined by Jesus as the One who will lead the apostles into all truth. That is exactly what the Holy Spirit did! Your acceptance of the concept of the Holy Spirit acting directly on YOUR heart to save you requires you to:

First: Ignore the true and only authorized mission of the Holy Spirit or expand on it

Second: Reject the fundamental concept of God’s purpose that God wants only those **who choose Him** of their free will.

Third: Reject the gospel as God’s power to save (Romans 1.16) and the preaching of the gospel as God’s way of presenting the message of salvation (1 Corinthians 1.18, 1 Corinthians 15.1-4).

Fourth: You need to believe that some verse(s) in the bible teaches that the Holy Spirit operates on an individual’s heart to save them. There are no such verses, although some are **suggested**. One verse Protestants like to use is in Acts 16, where God opened the heart of Lydia.

Acts 16:13-15

13 And on the Sabbath day we went out of the city to the riverside, where prayer was customarily made; and we sat down and spoke to the women who met there.

*14 Now a certain woman named Lydia heard us. She was a seller of purple from the city of Thyatira, who worshiped God. The Lord opened her heart **to heed the things** spoken by Paul.*

15 And when she and her household were baptized, she begged us, saying, “If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay.” So she persuaded us.

The heart referred to is the mind, and therefore the Lord opened Lydia’s heart (mind) to what Paul was teaching. God’s power to save is the gospel (Romans 1.16) and Paul presented the gospel message to Lydia and her household. **“To heed the things” implies that Lydia was to act upon what was said by Paul.** God works through His word, which the Holy Spirit delivered. **The gospel message opens the minds of every person who loves the truth.** That message urges people to respond to it in obedience. God was not acting in opposition to His purpose forcing Lydia to act, but opening her mind to something different, that is, to the truth. That is what the scriptures always do, but all do not heed the message – Lydia did! God always depends on the preaching of the cross to move one’s heart. Similarly, Peter in the first preaching of the gospel resulted in opening hearts (“they were cut to the heart”) of those who heard and chose to obey.

Acts 2:37

37 Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?”

The kindness and love of God can move people. Indeed, the truth of what God has done in Christ is compelling because one sees the kindness and love of God, and hearts can be opened such as Lydia to heed the things spoken.

Titus 3:4,5

*4 But when the **kindness and the love of God** our Savior toward man appeared,
5 not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit,*

The idea of regeneration references birth or re-birth and carries the same idea as John 3:5 of being born again of water and the Spirit. The renewal of the Holy Spirit signifies the change or transformation that takes place. That is, you are saved or, as Romans 6:3-4 says, walking in newness of life having died to your sins. People always encounter God's mercy via the word of God. That is, faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God. They hear how the washing of regeneration can forgive their sins, and then in obedience, the transformation takes place, and they walk in the newness of life.

9.3 Catholic and Protestant conversion processes

The pattern for conversion by Catholics and Protestants is so bizarre and so silly that it deserves no respect, but condemnation is justified. There is an obviousness in those religions of disregarding the truth such that the following example is used despite my better judgment. My better judgment says to preach the word, but maybe this might help. Let us assume a person goes to a Catholic priest and says they want to be saved or become a Catholic. The priest asks if he has been baptized, and he says no. First, he suggests the person enter a Catholic catechism class. Upon completion, he could be baptized, meaning they would sprinkle some water on his head, which would eliminate original sin. He would then have to confess his sins to a priest, and there may be other things in relation to what he must believe, perhaps relative to the "Apostles Creed." Does this look different than the process found in the scriptures? What is the source of these things? Obviously, they are not from God.

Now we have a person going to a Protestant minister or pastor and asking about being saved and perhaps about joining their church. In quite a speedier form, the pastor asks if the person believes in Jesus as the Son of God. The person, in this case, says he does believe. The pastor declares him a Christian and, in this case, might offer baptism to associate with their group, an outward sign to others, or perhaps a commitment.

Now, of course, these answers given by these religious leaders of Catholicism and Protestantism might vary somewhat. Still, the point is that neither represents the gospel message, and thus neither will result in the forgiveness of sins.

Indeed, Catholicism and Protestantism have come a long way, away from the scriptures in defining the conversion process. If the person seeking salvation knew the things of the scriptures concerning conversion, they might wonder about the credibility of the Catholic and Protestant responses. I used the words bizarre and silly to describe the conversion process used by Catholicism and Protestantism, which is too kind.

9.4 Born again of incorruptible seed

The Bible, in its perfection, allows for a consistency that provides confidence or, as we say, everything fits perfectly together. Error is easily discerned and must be because even “small” errors bring confusion. The verse below perfectly describes salvation (without using the word salvation) but refers to purifying their souls. This is accomplished by obeying the truth supplied by the Spirit. Souls are purified by incorruptible seed and the soul is returned to its sinless birth state. Obeying the truth is **obeying the gospel**, and such a person is born again through the word of God.

1 Peter 1:22-23

*22 Since you have purified your souls in **obeying the truth through the Spirit** in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart,*

23 having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever

Whenever there is a reference to God or the Holy Spirit providing salvation, it is always concerning the gospel message delivered by the Holy Spirit (“obeying the truth through the Spirit”). Jesus made salvation possible by His death, burial, and resurrection,

and this is the gospel message, and no one is saved without it, and no one is forced to obey the message.

God selected Saul to bring the gospel message to the Gentiles. Saul, a leader in the prosecution against Christians, was traveling to Damascus when light from God shone around him, knocked Him down, and blinded him. Saul (soon also to be called Paul) asks, ‘Who are You, Lord?’ And He said to me, ‘I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting.’ Paul asks what he must do, and Jesus tells him ‘Arise and go into Damascus, and there you will be told all things which are appointed for you to do.’

In Damascus, Saul would do what was required and learned what God appointed for him to do. Ananias came to Saul and told him what to do to be saved. Paul did that, which is now available to all due to the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. Paul would refer to receiving forgiveness of sins in Romans 6.17 as obeying that form of doctrine – that is obeying the gospel. Saul would also learn what Jesus referred to as “all things which are appointed for you to do.”

The teachers of the Protestant Reformation abandoned the scriptures by defining salvation to only include mental acceptance (or Calvin professed sanctification doctrine). Protestantism has a great deal of circular logic via potential inferences leading to new doctrines. It is taught that since the Holy Spirit selected you, there can be no mistake, and therefore you are once saved in your predestined, “no choice” acceptance of Christ and forever saved. One might wonder how Luther’s “faith only” or accepting Calvin’s sanctification led to a multitude of other non-scriptural doctrines and I do not know, but the reason is suggested in the next paragraph. Actually (for me), it is hard to reconcile Calvin and Luther’s differences into Protestantism. However, in both cases, there is tremendous disregard for the word of God.

There is such careless use of the scriptures to arrive at Luther’s “faith only” concept that others also began to interpret loosely (we might also say privately interpret) God’s word. To this day, the carelessness continues. God’s word fits His message together perfectly and is always consistent with His purpose, and the doctrines of Luther, Calvin, and others cannot withstand even the simplest of inquiries. Nonetheless, to their

dying breath, proponents rarely relent even in the face of overwhelming evidence. The reasons are always the same: pride, the likely outcome of not looking good or thinking those who have departed (often loved ones or ones they taught) would be betrayed.

9.5 Predestined – The meaning defined by God

People either understand God, or they do not. Those who respect God's word **do not** take pieces of scripture from "here and there" to create doctrines but honor God's word. In the early days of their doctrinal development Martin Luther, John Calvin, and others must **have made a certain assumption about the use of the word predestination. Their assumption may seem reasonable at first glance.** However, since they did not understand God or His purpose and how He was going to achieve it, they assumed predestination referred to INDIVIDUALS. Then choosing a few verses where the Holy Spirit is mentioned in relation to conversion, they determined the Holy Spirit worked on the hearts of individuals to save them. The whole of the scriptures teaches something entirely different. **It turns out individuals are not predestined, but GOD's PLAN TO SAVE WAS PREDESTINED.** The closest we can get to someone being pre-destined would be in the sense that **people who choose** to obey the gospel are predestined by their obedience. There would never be a specific individual randomly selected by God for salvation. Even more, before the foundation of the world, God put in place a means for people to succeed when they follow His predestined pattern. The character of those who succeed in life will be those **who stand holy and without blame** before God. So indeed, God reveals those who will be saved and here are their names – **"those who stand holy and without blame."**

Ephesians 1:3-5

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,

*4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be **holy and without blame before Him** in love,*

5 having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will

They achieve this status of **holy and without blame before Him** by being obedient, that is, obeying the gospel and having their past sins forgiven, and then continue in faithfulness. Indeed, these stand holy and without blame. The scriptures indicate, “He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love.” **This is the character of the person God predestined, and they become holy and without blame of their own free will by their choices.**

God announces that there is no partiality in Him and the means He defined for salvation involves the gospel message as His power to save and, consequently, Calvin's ideas crumble. Protestantism becomes a place of significant error resulting in the loss of souls.

*Note: **This book puts a strong emphasis on understanding God. Then, you are less likely to misunderstand His meaning.** Likewise, it is critical to understand His purpose. His purpose is simply stated for His creation to share in His Divine Nature. His test is designed to allow Him to select the appropriate persons. **His nature is one of fairness and love, of perfection in everything, and He is the perfect absence of evil.** He wants to find people who are without evil and tells us there are none (all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God).*

*Nonetheless, God the Father provides in Christ a way for reconciliation. In their God-given free will, each person can choose obedience to receive forgiveness of sins. Indeed, God wants a certain kind of person, namely humble, unselfish, kind-hearted, truth-loving, and **these will respond to the gospel message.** No one is created with such attributes, but these things can evolve and become influential in their lives. How*

ridiculous to understand God as one who is unfair in accomplishing His purpose. Every person in God's fairness can be successful and share in the Divine Nature.

9.6 Continuing the discussion of predestination

(After all the trouble caused by Luther, Calvin, and others, let us get this right)

The most fundamental thing about creation is that individuals of their free will choose God. Again, the word predestination does not mean **individuals** are predestined. The truth is inordinately straightforward and not confusing. In brief, let us look at two verses that are used to suggest that God (via the action of the Holy Spirit on their heart) chooses you **instead of the other way around**. The scriptures teach you must seek God with your whole heart “And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.”

The first verses Calvinists might use would be Romans 8:29-30, as it **seems** to imply people are selected by God.

Romans 8:29-30

*29 For **whom He foreknew**, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.*

*30 Moreover **whom He predestined**, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.*

God wants to fulfill His purpose, and logically that purpose cannot be fulfilled by force or unwarranted selection. If God were electing certain individuals for heaven, there would be no need to create rules or the test to determine those acceptable. “**Whom He foreknew, whom He predestined**” are the ones called, and indeed they are **called out by the gospel**. Jesus was building His church (the called out) which would consist of those predestined for adoption utilizing the plan God designated. That means could be called obedience to the gospel and that “calling out” is exactly what happens and what

Jesus required of His apostles. That is, they were to go into the world and preach the gospel. In Hebrews, Jesus is pointed out to be the author of eternal salvation to those who obey Him. Obedience (your decision) would seem to be the key to salvation and not something that just HAPPENS independent of your choosing. As you work through the scriptures with a love of the truth, Luther and Calvin can only be seen as private interpreters of the scriptures – most condemned for their disrespect of God.

Note: Luther and Calvin needed to realize God means what He says, and being perfect, everything in His word fits together perfectly. Luther looked at James (he could have looked many places) and wanted to eliminate the book of James as it directly opposed his faith only teaching.

Indeed, Jesus is the author of eternal salvation to all those who obey Him. There is something ridiculous about the conclusion of Calvin, and it occurs because he fails to consider the big picture in a reasonable manner. God creates a physical existence to be the habitat for humankind. Then He creates humanity in His image and all to share in His Divine Nature. Of course, God cannot exist with evil, and thus there will be a test, and like Adam and Eve's test, it is quite simple. There are rules; specifically, sins are defined, and there is a solution for the sins people commit. The idea of Calvin having God selecting individuals for sanctification is absurd. God lays the groundwork so each person can make choices. Consequently, God can make an accurate separation due to each person's free will choices. Calvin's sanctification has God selecting each person without any test. Calvin should have considered **why God was going to all this trouble** when He chose those He wanted? Maybe the "light would have gone on," if he studied all God revealed about salvation. Calvin would have seen the apparent inconsistency of his sanctification doctrine. There is God's way, Calvin's way, and the Protestant world lives in Calvinism.

9.7 Proceeding to a better understanding of the errors of Luther and Calvin

Luther's and Calvin's teachings are wrong and clearly can be seen as wrong by anyone who loves the truth. These errors have been so costly to souls they deserve more explanation. The Protestant indoctrination, or we might say the conditioning, has been effective, and thus, overcoming it requires a person to be open to "something different" than they currently believe. This study is very worthwhile if that "something different" is the truth. Pardon the repetition as we talk about some of the same things but from slightly different perspectives yet arrive at the same conclusions.

The following emphasizes the teachings of Calvin, whereas further into this chapter, more is directed to Luther's "faith only" doctrine. We know God cannot be partial to one person more than another. He is not a respecter of persons.

Acts 10:34-35

34 Then Peter opened his mouth and said: "In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality.

35 But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him.

Romans 2:11

11 For there is no partiality with God.

James 3:16-17

16 For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there.

17 But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.

It should not be surprising that God, who is perfect in judgment, thus in fairness and the perfect absence of evil could not in His nature be partial to one person over

another. It would be an evil thing to be unfair in choosing one person over another and thus entirely inconsistent with the Divine Nature and, of course, with God's purpose. This non-partiality is perfectly consistent with requiring people of their own free will to choose Him. So, God's plea is to diligently seek Him with all your heart.

Acts 17:26-27

26 And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings,

27 so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us;

The emphasis is to search for God with your HEART, i.e., dedicated effort.

Jeremiah 29:13

13 And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.

It should be no surprise that those who diligently seek Him are the ones who are rewarded.

Hebrews 11:6

6 But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

People choose God of their own free will; God does not choose them. Yet, some verses SEEM to indicate God is choosing people. There is a straightforward way to reconcile all God says on this subject, and it identifies who He predestined, whom He foreknew, whom He called, and there will be no disagreement or conflict with any scripture or God's purpose. God is not talking about individuals but a group. Indeed,

God predestined a plan not individuals, but that plan would define the nature of successful individuals. In that sense there is a group defined by their choices. That group is the spiritual church, the sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus. God's predestined plan is for a certain group, and thus they are the predestined object of His plan. He predestined, He foreknew, He called by the gospel those who obey His Son. So, God could say **THEY**, this predestined group, are all sons of God as it says below by faith in Christ Jesus, for as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ ("In Christ").

Galatians 3:26-29

26 For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.

27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

29 And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

These are indeed conformed to the image of God even to the point of obeying that form of doctrine (Romans 6:17), representing the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. This predestined group is indeed the body of Christ. They are sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus and previously referred to in section 9.5 as ***holy and without blame before Him***.

Ephesians 1:3-14

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,

*4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be **holy and without blame before Him** in love,*

*5 having predestined **us** to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,*

note: “us” above is collective, a GROUP that God planned to be reconciled by their choice to obey the gospel

6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.

7 In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace

8 which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence,

9 having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself,

10 that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him.

11 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,

*12 that **we who first trusted in Christ** should be to the praise of His glory.*

*13 In Him you also 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,*

14 who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.

Those who are saved are “IN CHRIST.” So, the predestination that Paul is talking about only occurs to those in the collective group of “in Him” instead of the group who are “not in Him.” Before the foundation of the world, God predestined the plan, and that would seem to favor the type of character that would submit themselves to God’s will. However, ultimately the separation God will make is determined by choices a person makes about having their sins forgiven. For instance, a proud person might be averse to

submitting to God, yet the scriptures could convince a proud person of the foolishness of pride.

People like to use these “predestined verses” to say individuals before their conversion (which to them might mean before naming Christ) were predestined, when in fact, the group predestined are those who are “in Christ” **due to their choice to obey the gospel**. Indeed, they have exhibited the character and qualities destined for those who succeed. These qualities were not given to them, but during their lives, were developed and now are important in their decision-making. Those qualities could be “rapidly realized” in hearing the gospel message as those on the day of Pentecost learned of God’s love in Christ’s sacrifice, and “when they heard *this*, they were cut to the heart.” Attitudes can be changed by understanding God in the realization of the truth. In all the prideful people, all the selfish persons, there still may be a spark of humility, and it can be ignited as Jesus pointed out, “And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself.”

As would be expected, all scripture is from God and fits perfectly together, always aligned with God’s purpose. Those who do NOT diligently seek God frequently accept and embrace the easiest path presented to them. For many, this has evolved to be “accepting Christ as their personal savior” and then waiting to receive the crown of life. Unfortunately, all they will receive will be incredible disappointment, regret, and the loss of their souls.

9.8 I will take God at His word (i.e., John 3:16)

(Fine, but you must understand what God means)

John 3:16 is probably the single most popular verse used by Protestants as evidence of their “faith only” answer to salvation. It is equivalent to taking the whole of the Bible out of context. It is also the easiest of teachings to invalidate. There is a great lesson here relative to the tenacity of many people to defend the undefendable. This doctrine is so

ingrained, personal, and valued that few will accept the truth even in the face of solid scriptural evidence that destroys “faith only” salvation.

John 3:16

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

God is serious about His word and carefully, perfectly delivers it so you can understand it. He defined the meaning of words and has revealed what it means to believe in detail. The scriptures define the meaning of baptism as an immersion – not sprinkling. The language (Greek) meaning is clear, and baptism means to dip, plunge, immerse. Then in examples – they were baptizing near Aenon because there was much water there, and the Ethiopian eunuch told Phillip, here is water what hinders me from being baptized, and Phillip responds, if you believe with all your heart, you may. They get out of the chariot, and both go into the water, and Phillip baptizes him.

Also, baptism is described as burial as one goes down into the watery grave (dying to sin) and arises as a new creature in Christ. When Jesus was baptized (to fulfill all righteousness), “He came up immediately from the water.” How could anyone believe baptism was sprinkling? Some say the details of the scriptures are unimportant and thus sprinkling or immersion – what does it matter? They do not understand God because **the details of God’s ways are exactly what matters**, whether it is not eating of the fruit in the midst of the garden or Naaman dipping seven times (not some other number) in the Jordan river (not some other river), Cain was to bring something but brought a substitution offering, Ananias and Sapphira were not accurate and thus not truthful in describing their offering but suggested some twist that made them look good, Nadab and Abihu sons of Aaron and priests decided to change the process of worship by using a different fire – referred to as a strange fire and were struck dead by God, King Saul had specific instructions from God through Samuel regarding the conquest of Ai and won the battle but fabricated some variations in God’s instructions and God removed him

from being king. **There are no such things as ACCEPTABLE “small” variations to God’s directions.** God is consistent throughout the scriptures in terms of meaning what He says. You will either take God seriously or you will not. A person who believes that they have entered a relationship with Christ by mentally accepting Jesus as God’s Son has been misled. They did not follow the scriptures to reach such a conclusion but followed some people (or many people). There is a great disrespect for God in avoiding or changing what He delivered so carefully as the truth. These things are not slight variations, but disobedience usually points to a deeper problem of pride, or we might say doing things THEIR way.

The first covenant (often referred to as the Law of Moses) is filled with examples of God requiring various things to be done **exactly as God directed**. Even in the earliest times, Cain did things his way. Nadab and Abihu did differently than God directed. Naaman wanted to respond differently than God specified but finally reasoned his pride was not as crucial as being relieved of leprosy. We repeatedly learn that God is serious about what He says. How many people accept sprinkling for baptism, how many people mentally accept Christ and expect salvation? If you substitute your meaning for God’s directions, then you can expect to be rejected as was Cain and Nadab and Abihu. God says what He means and means what He says. In the end, we go against the scriptures because of pride. Prejudice keeps us searching until we find a way to justify our beliefs. Naaman is quite impressive because he weighs the outcome of going against God versus his pride and overcomes pride. This seems like something few can do. The cost of holding to “faith only” is staggering, and a person’s pride supports its ferocity. “Faith only” is indefensible.

There is diligence required before accepting verses such as John 3:16 and Acts 16:30-31 as the solution for salvation. Again, nothing is complicated here. The complication comes because some people have worked so hard to destroy God’s clear meaning by defining the entirety of the gospel message to be John 3:16 and Acts 16:30-31. The verses are true, but the meaning of “believe” is naively thought to be mental acceptance as the whole requirement for salvation. The scriptures reject such an idea.

Sadly, those deeply invested in this doctrine will not “retract” their position, and the cost of that choice will be many lost souls.

Much of the New Testament is related to telling Christians how to live to remain faithful. It is amazing how anyone can be confident in a single thought that saves them once for all time. In fact, in their “believe doctrine,” God acted directly on their heart, resulting in their belief. They did not even believe on their own. Nonetheless, they are saved for once and forever regardless of how they live. It is ridiculous and totally in opposition to the scriptures. Paul knew nothing was easy for those in the churches (those who obeyed the gospel) and was concerned about their faithfulness. Thus, he continually warned them to remain faithful, telling them to work out their own salvation in fear and trembling. Paul himself was concerned he might stumble and lose out on eternal life.

1 Corinthians 9.27

27 But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.

People accept “faith only” regardless of the scriptures, and there are two interesting reasons:

- 1) The teaching is powerfully, charismatically presented and can be made to seem so right.
- 2) Population of those “faith only” believers is “influentially huge.” That is, millions, really billions of people believe in Luther’s “faith only” doctrine. “We must be right” – look at how many believe this teaching. Likewise, there are Catholics and Muslims with equivalent masses of people, and they all think to some extent their “numbers” provide certain confidence in their belief systems.

Here again, is where the distinction of truth and error is essential. Pride should not be a factor in your decision-making and is also an attitude God rejects. The membership size of a religious group is a feeble reason to believe something. Even within their ranks, these very large numerical religions vary in many of their fundamental beliefs. Thus, the

obvious distinction is truth versus error. God's criteria, namely, having a love of the truth that they might be saved (2 Thessalonians 2.10), represents a tenacity that will bring certainty to your belief. In terms of the "believing" of the Protestants, they need to distinguish between believing Martin Luther or believing the scriptures, and if they think they are the same, they will never distinguish truth from error.

*Note: God, in His wisdom, knows that those looking for different meanings, different doctrines may view their version of what is important by its magnitude (is the **issue** a critical belief or seemingly unimportant). It might be the magnitude of the offense (sin); it might be rejecting God's commands because they consider the commands to have a trivial character. Such as baptizing requires immersion or believing requires a dedication indicating much more than a mental acceptance. The solution: Do the commands of God as designated.*

9.9 Martin Luther's private interpretation

One can almost understand how Martin Luther came to think that believe was only a mental acceptance and resulted in salvation. Of course, his mistake would be carelessly dividing God's word and specifically not understanding the Bible definition of the word faith. Bible faith always includes action, and that action is related to obedience. The use of the terminology "accept Jesus as your personal savior" was not from Luther but a much more modern version of Luther's salvation by "faith only." The earliest use of this terminology is from about the 1800s but only sparsely used, with its everyday use coming in the mid-20th century. "Accept Jesus as your personal savior" is NOT a Bible expression or a Bible concept about salvation.

Catholicism is full of man-made and ever-changing rules and associated with violence for those who resisted. Some priests before Luther, like Jon Hus were burned at the stake for opposing Catholic teaching.

Note on Jon Hus: Jon Hus was burned at the stake on July 6, 1415. He opposed the Catholic Church on their doctrine of indulgences as a means to raise money, promising help for those in (non-existent) purgatory. He stood firmly against the violence of Catholicism, saying the scriptures were clear, “asserting that no pope or bishop had the right to take up the sword in the name of the Church; that a Christian should pray for his enemies and bless those who curse him.”

Five hundred eighty-four years after Hus' cruel death at the hands of the Council of Constance, Pope John Paul II apologized to the Czech people.

Paying tribute to the moral character of Hus, the pope said, "On the eve of the great Jubilee, I feel the need to express a profound regret for the cruel death inflicted on Jan Hus and the consequent wound, the source of conflicts and divisions, which were opened in the spirits and the hearts of the Bohemian people."

Martin Luther narrowly escaped the fate of John Hus. Luther did not find the Bible to support the voluminous nonsensical, selfish, and meaningless doctrines of Catholicism. Essentially, there is **nothing** in Catholicism with biblical support. Luther saw the scriptures as simple concerning salvation – the opposite of Catholicism. Unfortunately, he still maintained some of the ideas of Catholicism (or variations of them) regarding their practices.

Regarding forgiveness of sins, he kept the idea of infant baptism (to handle the Catholic invented original sin or the soon-to-be Protestant inherited depravity) and baptism by sprinkling. Instead of looking to all the verses concerning salvation, he became satisfied with one word, faith, but “mental belief only” faith. This mental acceptance is uniquely a Luther idea and a seemingly necessary inference of a “faith only” belief. Once Luther reached this conclusion, he ignored many verses throughout the Bible and even rejected James's entire book. Inspecting God’s purpose and having a correct understanding of God as He revealed Himself, Luther’s “faith only” belief is opposed to the entirety of scripture. Faith for Luther was equivalent to believing. Luther’s “faith only” is a way of saying nothing other than faith is required for salvation.

However, the forgiveness of sins is certainly essential to salvation, and those two ideas are practically equivalent. The Bible always associates forgiveness of sins with believers' baptism. Repentance is also necessary, as is a life lived in accordance with God's commands. In his apparent excitement to get rid of the rules, regulations, and the cruelty of Catholicism, he rejected the clear gospel message for just a part of that message – believing.

Believing can stand alone for salvation if it is understood in the correct biblical sense. That is if the believer will do (and does) all that God says as a result of their belief to receive salvation. The first thing to do is get into a relationship with Jesus by obedience resulting in the forgiveness of past sins. Those who believe in Jesus as the Christ obey His gospel, that is, repent of their past sins – intending never to sin again. In obedience, they are baptized to have their past sins forgiven in the perfect analogy to the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. They obey the gospel. That is, they obey the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus in baptism, as Romans 6:3-4 indicates.

Romans 6:3-4

3 Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?

4 Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

Romans 6.17 then refers to baptism as that **form of doctrine**.

Romans 6:17

17 But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered.

Jesus is the author of eternal salvation to those who obey Him (Hebrews 5:9).

Hebrews 5:9

9 And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him

Indeed, we find forgiveness of sins consistently associated with baptism, and there is NO OTHER WAY to have your sins forgiven.

1 Peter 3:21 directly ties baptism to salvation.

1Peter 3:21

21 There is also an antitype which now saves us—baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,

Galatians 3:26-29 associates being a Son of God with Faith, which requires baptism to “put on Christ.”

Galatians 3:26-29

26 For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.

27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

29 And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

9.10 Verses are taken out of context, that is, out of context of all scripture

We have a world of “so-called Christians” who look at verses like John 3:16 and Acts 16:30-31 and say they will take God at His word and “believe only” for salvation.

John 3:16

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

Protestants find support for salvation by faith only in the conversion of the Philippian jailer.

Acts 16:30-31

30 “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”

31 So they said, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household.”

Of course, the apostles knew sins were not forgiven by mentally believing Jesus was the Son of God. This was the first step, and no need to proceed if a person did not get past this recognition. After pointing out the need to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ to the Philippian jailer, they continued to explain what was required.

Acts 16:32-34

32 Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house.

33 And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes. And immediately he and all his family were baptized.

34 Now when he had brought them into his house, he set food before them; and he rejoiced, having believed in God with all his household.

He rejoiced having believed, but we see that believing included doing what God required. God defines salvation in the framework of believing and carefully defines what

it means to believe. How interested are people in salvation? How can a person say they follow Christ and then will not do everything He says? The very first thing to do is to get your past sins forgiven and get into a relationship with Jesus, that is, to be, “In Christ.”

Luther so disliked the book of James that he thought it should be removed from the bible. Of course, James directly refutes the idea of faith only, which is consistent with all scripture. Luther would need to remove the entirety of the New Testament and just keep a couple of select verses. God is not pleased by less than a life of obedience. Can a person love God without obedience, apparently not as God makes this clear that if you love God, you will keep His commandments?

James 2:14-24

14 What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him?

15 If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food,

16 and one of you says to them, “Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,” but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit?

17 Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

18 But someone will say, “You have faith, and I have works.” Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.

19 You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble!

20 But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?

21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar?

22 Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect?

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.

24 You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.

There is clarity regarding what it means to believe. You need to distinguish between following Luther, Calvin or the many who follow in their steps such as Billy Graham and your local “pastor” OR follow God as defined in the scriptures. The Holy Spirit accurately delivered the scriptures, and you either speak as the oracles of God or of private interpretation. If, as a Protestant, you can make this distinction, it is because you love the truth, and you will find over 95% plus of what you have been taught is in grave error.

9.11 Once more, does John 3:16 mean I believe, and I receive salvation?

All that has been discussed above should tell any person who loves the truth that the answer is very clearly, NO! One should seek to understand God as He has revealed Himself. As you better understand God, it becomes clear that God is looking for certain persons. You might say high-quality individuals in humility, selflessness, courage, and dedication to His Son. A mere mental acceptance would never suffice. God asks a lot, and the world in accepting an instant mental acceptance of Jesus is inconsistent with God’s purpose. Some people look at this mental acceptance as the hidden secret they have discovered. How wonderful that God only requires saying you believe in His Son, and you will undoubtedly receive heaven? If the scriptures taught that, it would be fine, but in no way is such an idea taught. When you initially proclaim your belief in Jesus as Lord of your life, you receive nothing. Yet very important, you are on the right path. As mentioned, the forgiveness of past sins is what you should be seeking. The whole of God’s plan to achieve reconciliation, as described in Genesis 3:15, was to remove the sin so humanity could have this relationship with God. Now, God explains what is required for sins to be forgiven, and the “Christian so-called” world will not obey because they have a better way.

The defenders of “faith only” have invented many defenses, but all go against the gospel pattern. One of those ill-conceived inventions is the idea that a person can do nothing to save themselves. They call this doing works, but in many cases where works are referenced in the scriptures, it refers to the works of the law. Also, they use a verse like Ephesians 2:8-9 to convince people they can do nothing to address their salvation. Such is the desperation of supporting the doctrines of Luther and Calvin.

Ephesians 2:8-9

8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,

9 not of works, lest anyone should boast.

The works here could reference the works of the law but let us say it was just “works in general.” Certainly, we are saved by Faith, and that can never be separated from obedience. Apparently, Protestants would like to define obedience to God as a work. By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac. All the examples of faith in Hebrews chapter 11 (a chapter recognized for God’s emphasis on faith) are associated with **actions taken to validate their faith**. Ephesians 2:8-9 teaches a person can never do anything to save themselves, but what does that mean. The correct view would be that independent of what God has done, your ideas, concepts, logic, or actions cannot save you. Indeed, if they could, then you could boast.

The truth is, God via His Son has done what was necessary to achieve reconciliation, and now God has designated what each person must do to receive the blessing. Yet, look at what people claim from Ephesians 2:8-9. Namely that one’s salvation could be boasted if they had done something. Again, nothing I can invent will save me – very true. However, **how can one boast of doing God’s commands?** When you do God’s commands in relation to salvation, in relation to how you live there is no boasting that is possible. How incredible to think that doing the will of God is something that brings honor to me, and therein I can boast?

*Note: Mentally accepting Christ is **doing something** necessary for your salvation and thus would seem to qualify as a “Protestant work” in which you can boast. Repenting is also something you do and, therefore, a work wherein you can boast. A characteristic of error is usually its gross inconsistency with all scripture and in many cases in opposition to God’s purpose and God’s character as He has revealed Himself. Defining baptism as a work is a pathetic attempt to support “faith only.” “So-called Christians” exist due to this sort of nonsense and, in the process, honor Luther and not God.*

**9.12 Faith is from God’s word for Abraham and for you
(Faith involves *obedience* in response to God’s
commands, and your *obedience* validates your faith.)**

The faith of Abraham was demonstrated in His obedience, and today under the New Covenant, we see faith requires the same obedience. In a very straightforward set of verses, we see in Galatians the action of faith is demonstrated in baptism.

Galatians 3.26-29

26 For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.

27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

29 And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.

What God required of Abraham was very clearly defined, and Abraham easily knew what God required; however, the decision to follow God’s instructions can be difficult. It was hard for Abraham, but He did God’s will. Jesus knew what awaited Him on that last night with the apostles, and yet He, like Abraham, obeyed. Abraham pointed

out to God that Isaac was the son of promise (which, of course, God knew), but then Abraham proceeded to obey. Even Jesus on that “fatal” night inquired of the Father if there was any other way. Then Jesus proceeded to obey.

In today’s world, people do not even know God’s instructions due to the deceitful ways of humankind and especially the “religions of the world.” That is why the scriptures emphasize **seeking God with all your heart** and having a **love of the truth**. The things you need to do are very clear, but there are stumbling blocks often associated with religion. Typical of such nonsense is the pathetic interpretation of Ephesians 2:8-9 or John 3:16, which can be twisted to hide God’s meaning. The whole of God’s revelation fits perfectly together and reveals the nonsense of these sad Protestant teachings. The whole of God’s revelation is consistent with Matthew 7:21.

Matthew 7:21

21 Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.

God intends that you do His will, and when people go “verse-hunting” to prove THEIR point, they will find verses to use. They have a different motive than having a love of the truth but instead have a motive of proving THEIR point, proving they are right. It is a symptom of pride dominating a person’s life.

When you understand God, you see Him saying if the righteous barely are saved, or Paul indicating how careful he must be, or he will lose out on salvation. In general, the right attitude is doing everything you possibly can for the cause of Christ and then realizing you could be doing more. Then we have those who recognize salvation was easily found, acted on (mentally), and then guaranteed – it truly amounts to a serious, careless error leading to a failed life.

Even in the most conventional way, if you ask a person if they believe in you and they say yes does that imply loyalty and they will follow your directions? I think if that person did not follow your lead, your instructions, it would be fair to conclude they did

NOT believe in you. God knows the heart of each person, so He knows their intentions. God also expects the “believer” to move beyond intentions to obedience and, in fact, ties the promise of salvation to obedience. Jesus is the author of eternal salvation to all those who obey Him. God cannot lie and has associated each person’s success with living for Christ and the gospel. At the “end of the day,” at the end of your life, you will succeed or fail because of your dedication to Jesus as Lord. Your attitude will be one of doing all that He said, and for the reasons He said. Here is what Jesus said about saving your life, and it is a summary of the **dedication** you need in the most straightforward and most challenging manner.

Mark 8:35-36

35 For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel’s will save it.

36 For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?

How do you lose your life? Stop living it for yourself, for your desires, for all the things you want, and live for Christ and the gospel. This is quite a dramatic change and begins with obeying the gospel and then continuing as Revelation says, “Be faithful unto death.” This is a very long way from saying you believe in Christ and are saved once and forever.

9.13 The Effort to Avoid Obedience

The scriptures are clear in the commands for becoming a child of God, having your sins forgiven. Sins are forgiven in the conversion process, which is completed in baptism. The defense that is mounted to preserve the doctrine of “mental acceptance only” for salvation is desperate. Their leaders use the thief on the cross who Jesus said that this day he would be with Him in paradise to claim baptism is not required. If you consider the kind of arguments used to promote false doctrine, they are frequently sidestepping

the issue and the **direct commands from God**. We have the plan of God, and the best opposing arguments are only distractions. Catholics may try to defend infant baptism by saying that Lydia and her household were baptized and may have had a baby. The fact that a “suggestion of a possibility” is made as evidence shows the desperation to find **anything** to justify their practice of infant baptism. They present this possibility of infant baptism given a baby does not meet any of the requirements for baptism, violating the very purpose of God, and the baby not having any sin.

Protestants use the thief on the cross to make a person think that baptism is not required. Of course, Jesus could and did forgive sins while He was on earth. Additionally, the doctrine of Christ was not in effect until the death of the testator.

Hebrews 9:16-17

16 For where there is a testament, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator.

17 For a testament is in force after men are dead, since it has no power at all while the testator lives.

The thief on the cross is just another distraction from God’s commands concerning salvation. Look to the commands of God, to the examples, and understand God and His purpose, and you will not be influenced by desperate people promoting their doctrines.

God points to obedience as central to salvation, whether it be Hebrews 5:9, or Romans 16:25-26, or 1 Peter 1:22-23, or 1 Peter 4:17-18, or Matthew 7:21 and many other places in addition to the conversions of the New Testament (see table further down this page). God brings clarity on this point, as seen in Hebrews 3:18.

Hebrews 3:18

18 And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey?

How sad, how pathetic is the teaching of believing mentally (only) for salvation. It is devastating to the souls of people seeking to do the right thing. They “run into” the deceit of this doctrine, the propaganda, and the indoctrination of Protestantism. They also look at 1 Corinthians and claim Paul taught baptism was unimportant because of the following verses.

1 Corinthians 1:12-17

12 Now I say this, that each of you says, “I am of Paul,” or “I am of Apollos,” or “I am of Cephas,” or “I am of Christ.”

13 Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?

14 I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius,

15 lest anyone should say that I had baptized in my own name.

16 Yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas. Besides, I do not know whether I baptized any other.

17 For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect.

So, to reject the clear commands of God about baptism, these deceivers say look, “Paul was not sent to baptize.” The reference here does not deny the essential nature of baptism but that the one performing the baptism did not matter. After all, Paul said a person was not baptized in the name of the one doing, performing the baptism, but in the name of Christ. The very fact that they were having this conversation was **that they were baptizing people as part of the conversion process**. Paul said his mission was to preach the gospel, which requires baptism for the remission of past sins. Jesus made baptism essential, and we can say made obedience essential.

9.14 Can You Imagine Anyone Denying the Necessity of Baptism?

Jesus was raised from the dead and appeared various times, especially to His apostles. In His later appearances as recorded in Matthew and Mark, He provides an overview of the apostle's mission, and in both cases, baptism is essential. Before Jesus completed His mission, the revelation was limited, but now in the first century, the final revelation from God is being gradually completed and simultaneously confirmed. These last direct revelations of Jesus reveal His authority and the mission of His apostles and the saints (those converted).

Matthew 28:18-20

18 And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.

19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.

Mark 16:15-16

15 And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.

16 He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.

Jesus is emphasizing:

- His authority
- Making disciples
- Observing all things as commanded

- Believing
- Baptism

Although He does not explicitly mention believing in Matthew 28.18-20, it is implied and taught throughout the scriptures, and the apostles know the requirement of accepting Jesus as the Son of God. Jesus also ties together believing and baptism as essential for salvation. Jesus tells the apostles to wait in Jerusalem for what He had earlier promised them: the Holy Spirit to guide them into all truth (John 16:13). That revelation begins in Acts 2 on the Day of Pentecost when the apostles were all with one accord in one place. Later that day the gospel message was preached the first time. As might be expected, people are told what they must do and what follows in the book of Acts and throughout the letters to the churches is a consistent pattern concerning salvation. You can see that pattern below in the Conversions of the New Testament, which is repeated from chapter 8 for convenience.

9.15 Conversions of the New Testament

Conversion	Hear	Believe	Confess	Repent	Baptized
Pentecost Acts 2	Yes	Implied by cut to the heart	Not stated	Yes	Yes
The 5000 Acts 4	Yes	Yes	Not stated	Not stated	Not stated
Simon Acts 8. 4-13	Yes	Yes	Not stated	Not stated	Yes
Ethiopian Acts 8.26-40	Yes	Yes	Not stated	Not stated	Yes
Saul Acts 9	Yes; heard Jesus, then Ananias	Not stated	Not stated	Not stated	Yes
Cornelius Acts 10	Yes	Yes	Not stated	Not stated	Yes
Lydia Acts 16.14-15	Yes	Not stated	Not stated	Not stated	Yes
Jailer Acts 16.29-34	Yes	Yes	Not stated	Not stated	Yes
Corinthians Acts 18.1-8	Yes	Yes	Not stated	Not stated	Yes
Of John's baptism Acts 19.1-5	Yes	Yes	Not stated	Not stated	Yes
Saul Acts 22.12-16	Yes	Not stated	Yes**	Not stated	Yes
Galatians Gal 3.26-29	Inferred	Yes, by faith	Not stated	Not stated	Yes

9.16 A final comment about conversions

One might think of the Protestant denominations as basically good and fundamentally consisting of those who follow the scriptures. Some Protestants are evangelical in their efforts, others just being “social or ceremonial.” The evangelical may be worse than those who just attend for appearance because they teach error, converting others to a false doctrine. Ironically, you do not see much Protestant fervor against Catholics, Muslims, Mormons, Buddhists, and others, but more of acceptance or co-

existence, although not agreement. However, against God's people, those "in Christ" they denounce with references calling them a sect, evil persons, legalistic with disdain, and the animosity is always present. Yet, these persons they frequently denigrate are those who follow the scriptures precisely and obey the God of the Bible in every way. Protestants might say those who reject Luther, Calvin, and the others go too far, take too seriously the word of God, and are inflexible. However, some of the Protestant rhetoric is downright evil. The reason seems clear: they do not like the insinuation that Protestants are not Christians. Add to this, they are ineffective in defending their teachings, and they are frustrated with the truth. When people have high confidence in their beliefs, it can be devastating to realize they may be wrong, undeniably wrong.

Instead of having a love of the truth, they, in pride, fight to uphold the inventions of Luther, Calvin, and so on. As in all religions, the people, the members, have been misled for many centuries. The Lord's people have no interest in participating in hatred, in animosity against those who believe differently. Those who are God's children realize that hatred and animosity are NEVER acceptable to God. God's people preach the word and discuss differences with anyone, anytime without animosity. The goal of God's people and their designated mission is to seek and save that which was lost, a mission identical to that of God's Son. God's children are relentless in the mission of fulfilling this task **but not overbearing**. They seek opportunities to teach, but they move on if there is no interest. The fields are white with people needing the truth, and if there is interest, the effort will be given. As quickly as a request is made to move on, they will move on, albeit with sad hearts.

Matthew 10:14

14 And whoever will not receive you nor hear your words, when you depart from that house or city, shake off the dust from your feet.

Of course, there were times when those hearing were not cordial in rejecting the message. Paul was frequently attacked and frequently beaten and on one occasion stoned. Paul would say about himself:

2 Corinthians 11:23-27

23 ... in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often.

24 From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one.

25 Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep;

26 in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren;

27 in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness—

Why did Paul receive such treatment? Of course, it was because of preaching and specifically preaching Jesus. It was a message not liked by the Jews and not appreciated by the world who often had created their own gods. Like today, people do not like the message because it contains a certain way to live and frequently opposes how a person wants to live. It includes a dire ending for those who oppose God, and “I (in pride) will not be threatened.” You are dealing with God when exposed to His word and not some person – realize this! Is He threatening, or is He warning? Is it the truth, or is it error? Does God want you to succeed or to fail?

In this current topic of “what BELIEVE means,” the scriptures are opposed to what many millions have been taught. It is “deadly to the soul” when a person is so deeply committed to a belief that is, in fact, directly opposed to the truth. In effect, they close their minds to anything different. Often, the very foundation of a person’s life is associated with what it means to believe in Jesus. It is easy to see why there is such

resentment and frequent bitterness when the “faith only” doctrine is so easily refuted. However, those who love the truth more than what they currently believe will embrace God’s way. The truth is irresistible in its perfection to those who love it.

Chapter 10

The fall of Catholicism and Protestantism in one simple lesson

I have taught this subject with good response and amazement to show how badly the early “inventors” of Catholicism and Protestantism failed in creating their doctrines. Simply said, where did these people get such strange non-scriptural ideas? These basic teachings have become landmarks for their respective religions throughout the centuries, and thus, they can “**never**” be abandoned. The world accepts these teachings on sin, and many, maybe most, have participated in the associated “ceremonies.” These teachings can best be described in terms of the consequences of being a terror to humankind. The good news is individuals can confidently walk away from those groups that promote these doctrines if they love the truth. In this chapter, you will come to understand the nature of these errors. We are talking about the Catholic doctrine of original sin (or inherited sin) and the Protestant doctrine of inherited depravity (or total inherited depravity or inherited sin nature).

One may also realize how many other “cherished beliefs” are in error if these doctrines are fabricated. Other doctrines of these religions have a basis in the validity of original sin or inherited depravity. None of the teachings of either of these groups are valid, and this could be expected as they have so carelessly handled God’s word. The nature of these core doctrines and their apparent necessary inferences are sufficient reasons to invalidate both religions.

10.1 Giving truth a chance

There is truth, and there is error and what we are going to discuss is highly damaging error because it involves your eternity. For many people, it is necessary to get past what they have been taught before they can accept the truth, and of course, the truth is this book’s primary motivation. Here is the strange part considering all that is at stake

– people frequently do not care but want to continue in their present belief and are not open to anything different. This is often because they become convinced that no one really knows the truth and their belief is as good, maybe better than anyone else. God has decided to divide people along the lines of loving the truth. That usually means loving the truth more than the things loved in fulfilling various desires and also considering things that may conflict with current beliefs. This desire for truth, this willingness to search for truth, makes a huge difference in coming to an understanding of God and what He requires of you. One thing for sure is by leaving your eternal fate in the hands of some theologian or cleric places you in the position of trusting man and not God. Sin enters the world and Catholicism and Protestantism both miss the mark in understanding God’s meaning – they do not understand God as He has revealed Himself. Doctrinal errors pile up with a bad foundation, and in the case of sin, there is incredible confusion leading to many new doctrines. Accepting error leads people further from the truth they so desperately need. So indeed, the fall of Catholicism and Protestantism in One Simple Lesson is feasible!

10.2 “What does the Bible teach about Inherited sin / Inherited depravity?”

Note: This material has been used in the author’s oral teaching on this subject and found in his books and websites. The subject fits well with the objective of this book to help people overcome religious deceit that is in the world with an end goal of “soul success.” This subject does not represent great theological effort but is the apparent outcome of taking God’s word seriously. God did not design the scriptures to be the place for deep analysis by theologians, but straightforward information related to salvation – for everyone. The scriptures fit God’s purpose perfectly. They can be interrogated in a way such that any issue can be understood by simply realizing God’s message is perfect because everything in God’s word fits together. Genesis 1.1 through Revelation 22.21 is a continuum with a single purpose. It is not complicated, and God means what He says.

Those who venture into God's word seeking God and truth after "looking around" in diligent study will begin to appreciate God and His word. God points to the prudent who in "ultra-diligence" go beyond taking God for what He says. They are exceedingly prudent, and God refers to them as those whose knowledge will be brought to nothing. In effect, they frequently filter God's word using various personal filters. They are personal inasmuch as they have motives or certain prejudices injected into their study. Instead of seeking God's meaning, they are trying to bring evidence to their view.

A hypothetical example might be the Catholic scholar that needs to find evidence for infant baptism and finds some were using the practice in the earlier centuries. He includes this along with other nebulous information like the possibility that Lydia's household might have included a baby who was baptized and presents this as evidence. Understanding God and His purpose grounds you in what is important and the seriousness of God's word. The professional apologists of all religions are experts in creating evidence where there is none, and those without a love of the truth are easy victims of their skills.

One could suggest that in teaching the truth about inherited sin or sin nature in this chapter, there is a prudent effort. However, we take God's word seriously and do not filter it with any prejudice. The reason for the deep dive "prudent appearance" is the need to talk about the things **NOT** in God's word (inherited sin and inherited sin nature) and their man-made justifications.

10.3 One Overwhelming Aspect of the Truth is Dread and Anxiety

(A little background before we study the scriptures concerning original sin and inherited depravity)

Your courage is appreciated in reading something that you might know will oppose what you currently believe. Learning long-held, cherished beliefs are highly questionable and then that they are unmistakably wrong can be overwhelming. In the end, it does not help you or others to know the truth unless there is a willingness to act on it. So even

before we begin the study of these subjects, can you commit to doing the right thing? You see, there may be dread and anxiety when the truth is discovered. The dread involves those who taught you and those loved ones who died following after these serious errors. Also, there may be a serious concern about how many other doctrines are wrong. The anxiety may be realizing your life needs to change. Additionally, you might wonder how these ridiculous doctrines were created – how could people get it so wrong?

The deceitful doctrines of Catholicism and Protestantism in this matter have occurred as a result of something God built into His plan to achieve His purpose. Yet in no way is the deceit initiated by God. **There are certain people whose characters God does not want to share eternity.** Such characteristics as pride, greed, selfishness, envy, and so on are in the background of sinful ways. There are various commands from God that some will find unacceptable. Many do not like them and will not follow them. Some people realize the power (over others) of twisting God's word to their own benefit. If done well (deceptive), the scriptures can be twisted to gain control over people by creating a need usually associated with eternal success. This is the case for the doctrines we are discussing. Additionally, building on the "twisted" scriptures leads to various new doctrines. Not surprisingly, this means more control if appropriately designed. It is not a conspiracy but typically just people seeking some advantage and then doing whatever is necessary to maintain that benefit.

One might wonder how God can allow this. There are many consequences of free will, and some people will twist the scriptures to achieve their goals. Yet God has no meaningful purpose if humankind cannot make free-will choices. Obviously, if free will is restricted, then it is not free will. Indeed, it is up to each person to make good choices, to have a love of the truth and accept nothing less. Realize evil persons will do whatever is necessary to gain advantage, and this includes manipulating the scriptures to gain an advantage. Of course, the subject of this chapter represents some of the most flagrant abuses of the scriptures resulting in the loss of billions of souls. It will be easy to see the error in the sin doctrines created since they powerfully oppose God's meaning. We can also say oppose God's purpose. All the books by this author emphasize understanding

God and His purpose as essential to understanding the scriptures. There is only valued meaning for God's purpose if the understanding leads to doing God's will. God does not force a person to act one way or another, and this can easily be understood regarding worshipping God. There would be no meaningful worship if people were forced to worship. It must be a person's choice, and a great deal of what God has done in His plan has to do with encouraging a person to make the free will choice to worship. God has done this perfectly by graciously revealing His purpose and a great deal about Himself. People exhibiting certain characteristics in their life such as pride will choose to reject God. Indeed, God has built various things into His plan such that persons demonstrating certain characteristics will choose of their own free will to reject Him. The HOW God did this is not known but it is seen in the simple case of a proud person unwilling to open their mind to something different.

It might be said by way of helping your understanding that the equivalent of perfection of God creating everything from nothing would be His perfection as He goes about separating good from evil. God is perfect in getting the right persons for heaven, and at a high level, they will be humble, selfless persons who love the truth. They are the ones that will follow the Savior in obedience. Although the truth is before all people, only those with "good hearts" will see beyond their desires and live for Christ and the gospel. Indeed, God speaks things into existence, controlling, for instance, the spin of all the heavenly bodies. His purpose is not the stage for the test but the cast's success (their souls). You can be confident that God is perfect (perfect in judgment - perfect love, perfect justice) in assuring only the right people succeed. Yet each person controls their outcome by their choices in life, never forced. Humankind is not used to dealing with perfection, and God has been generous in telling us a great deal about Himself and His purpose. Jesus explained something to the apostles regarding His teaching in parables. Expressly, Jesus indicated when preaching the parables of the kingdom that some will hear but not understand.

Luke 8:10

10 And He said, "To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest it is given in parables, that 'Seeing they may not see, And hearing they may not understand.'

The same principle is at work today since people hear but do not understand, and it is for the same type of reasons, such as hearts hardened by pride. God will NOT be spending eternity with those who exhibit certain unacceptable characteristics. It is not a person's character that results in a failed life, but ultimately that they die in sin. Certainly, their character contributed to their sin condition. Life's test (your personal battle with sin) will sort out those worthy of sharing in the Divine Nature. Let me give a simple example. God is clear that the proud will not be successful. Yet the message of salvation is open to all, and all have a free will to make their choices. One choice is relative to sin, but can a proud or selfish or other such person decide to follow God and abandon sin? Pride is seen in people who do things their way and will not submit to God, so despite heaven being within their grasp, they will choose to get all they can in this present existence. Nonetheless, in fairness, **a proud person can change** despite digging themselves a deep hole (closed minded) and that is because the gospel message is powerful.

God has a meaning for all scripture and has provided humankind with the truth and a consistent warning regarding changing it. The admonition is not to add to it or take away from it. The scriptures are central to a person's salvation, and this chapter deals with doctrines that make substantial changes to God's word and, in effect, thwart God's purpose. In our case, these changes are large additions, although often that may mean there was also simultaneously a subtraction. God hates all lies but changing the word of the truth of the gospel is in direct opposition to God's purpose. In view of the terrible suffering and death His Son endured providing the opportunity to share in the Divine Nature, there are also consequences for those rejecting God's benevolence.

The world's religions have taught something much different about God and His message. This book points out the truth on this subject of sin and will be shocking due

to the nature and magnitude of the lies. There will be an overwhelming dread and anxiety when someone discovers the truth. However, there is also an overwhelming aspect of hope and purpose as the truth is logical and understandable. There is something extraordinary since there is a certainty, and heaven is truly within your grasp. You now know that there was no hope of heaven when the truth was not present in your life. The inventions of sin nature and original sin are not just lies, but their development resulted in other doctrines that are not true and bring additional complication and unnecessary confusion to the subject of salvation. Indeed, sin nature and original sin in their existence are destructive to the soul because their association is with those who do not offer the truth about **sins committed**. In other words, these sin inventions assigned to each person at birth interfere with the pattern of managing sins that are indeed committed sins.

10.4 The terror of original sin and inherited depravity doctrines

I categorize this lesson as a teaching lesson. Both doctrines in the title above are false. So much of what people believe religiously has deceit at the core. This lesson deals with these issues of “inherited sin” called by some original sin or what other groups call total inherited depravity or inherited sin nature. In both cases, one or the other of these different “sin doctrines” are imputed to each person. At birth, you are either born in sin or born with a sin nature according to respectively Catholicism or Protestantism. Both are false and easily dissected to expose their deceit. Sadly, as mentioned, these doctrines are the **basis** of what many people believe religiously. The good news is that as we easily show these to be false, the associated doctrines built on these will also fall. One doctrine that is closely associated with these false teachings is infant baptism. Infant baptism is one of those doctrines that endears people to a religious organization due to its claims. People believe they are doing something wonderful for their infant. Seldom, if ever, do people question their religious leaders regarding the long history of their fundamental beliefs. The doctrines and processes become the religion and can become beloved. We

need to understand the origin of our beliefs! Religion should only be valued if it is the truth. In contrast, the world values religion by its comfortable and emotional rote. That means honoring the men and women creators of doctrine – not God.

Of course, the reason that these doctrines exist at all is a disgusting disrespect for the word of God. Bible subjects are simple. The confusion only comes when people mix their ideas with Bible passages to create false teaching. The religions based on these doctrines call themselves Christians. They are not Christians and frequently because of this error and its consequences on what God defined for salvation. The consequences evolve into other doctrines invented in support of the fundamental error. As a result, Catholics and Protestants have **not done** what God requires to become Christians.

The table below presents the primary name of the teaching, the meaning, and generally credited origin. Ironically, these infant baptisms are being performed to eliminate non-existent original sin or in some way, offset or lessen inherited sin nature. However, in many cases, they may keep a person from receiving baptism for the forgiveness of sins that is, for the sins they committed. That is because they were baptized as infants. In lack of knowledge they say, I have already been baptized!

10.5 Differences in Catholic/Protestant teaching of Original Sin and Total Inherited Depravity

<u>Doctrine</u>	<u>Meaning</u>	<u>Source</u>
Original sin or inherited sin	Humankind is born with sin; God imputes Adams sin to each person	Catholic
Total inherited depravity or Inherited sin nature	Humankind is born with a sinful nature	Protestant

The doctrine “meaning” varies somewhat with different Protestant groups, but most accept the meaning given in the table above. Even though the Catholic and Protestant teachings are quite different, the things that tie them together are the **same verses used as proof texts**. One verse from the Old Testament and one from the New Testament. Both groups are interestingly misinterpreting these verses differently. There are “other verses” used by Catholics and Protestants to support these respective doctrines. However, none of those verses support either of these doctrines. We will study the verses considered the most powerful used to support the Catholic and Protestant teachings and indicate the correct meaning. It is difficult to imagine how anyone could conclude the doctrines of original sin or inherited depravity from scripture. It all starts with Catholicism’s creation of original sin. This is a most complicated derivation of doctrines and the kind of thing that happens when men disrespect the word of God. You can find claims of support from Judaism references, from the apostle Paul’s letters, from the church councils and from the renowned Saint Augustine, among others. Indeed, they are CLAIMS of support and as usual particularly in the case of Paul the use of private interpretations. As we will see the correct meaning from Paul’s inspired writings in no way supports the idea of original sin but as with all scripture opposes such an idea. Augustine of Hippo (354 to 430 AD) was a powerful voice, an amazing intellectual and seen by many as a source of authority. Consequently, Augustine is given credit and honored in Catholicism for a massive amount of scholarship about original sin and infant baptism.

Comment: Admittedly, there was an immense amount debate on these subjects from many voices in the early centuries and it continues into the sixteenth century and to this day. Again, this is what happens when men get involved in doctrine. We will cover these “sin” subjects and arrive at the correct and obvious answer that is logical, understandable, fits with all that God planned and is quite simple. It is insane to think that God is associated with all the nonsense over hundreds of years related to

“religious” matters. Can you imagine all this consternation over the many dilemmas of original sin when in fact original sin does not exist?

We now return to the Catholic Church development of original sin. One of many issues of great concern over the centuries was how original sin was transferred. After years of turmoil with numerous issues the Council of Trent (1545-63) officially declared that original sin was transferred from generation to generation by propagation - which means during the physical act that resulted in conception. This formalized the notion of Original Sin is part of Roman Catholic doctrine. Amazingly, at the council of Trent, a group of “Catholic” leaders officially determined all people are born in sin.

If you are not amazed by the nonsense of Catholicism, then you must be numb. Consider all the work done on this subject of original sin from its conception sometime after the first century until modern times and it is exhausting. Of course, it is a waste but worse the doctrines resulting from this nonsense strongly influenced the Catholic pattern for salvation.

Augustine’s inherited guilt eternally damned infants and was avoided by multiple councils. The objection of damning infants who died before being baptized was resolved first by creating limbo, which was not heaven or hell but an final existence without suffering. Catholics never accepted this idea of Limbo since their children could never achieve heaven. Eventually, Catholics resolved the matter by indicating it was logical since God wants all to be saved that there must be some way for these unbaptized infants to achieve heaven. Thus, the Catholic hope is that these unbaptized infants will be allowed into heaven in some way (only known to God). After all this time of the prudent debate on this original sin matter, Catholics again create a different doctrine, and it is, “a HOPE all turns out well for unbaptized infants.” The Catholic Church's official catechism, issued in **1992** after decades of work, dropped the mention of limbo.

Note: The author does his best to discuss the religious inventions of humankind. It is easy to provide the truth from the scriptures as it is perfect – everything fits! The

thoughts of humanity concerning God have no basis in truth but do have nebulous origins that change frequently, and there are usually many versions. There may be thousands of human documents associated with each doctrine and developed or being developed over many centuries. Additionally, the writings of the so-called early fathers of the church are massive and seem unreadable due to their massive numbers and frequent changes in direction. Nonetheless, these writings are highly respected and even authoritative under the auspices of apostolic succession whenever they can be used in supporting a group's beliefs. God, as He indicates, is not the author of confusion, but any other source of religious doctrine than the scriptures will bring chaos along with deceit.

This is not a very difficult study and demonstrates how **beginning with the DESIRED** teaching, you can manipulate verses to support that doctrine. That is, you can twist verses to fool people into believing you have scriptural support. Peter spoke of this in 2 Peter 3:16 “which untaught and unstable *people* twist to their own destruction, as *they do* also the rest of the Scriptures.”

A simple study of these invented sins will produce no evidence of their scriptural existence and, very importantly show they are inconsistent and in opposition to all scripture. The root cause problem here is much deeper than a few verses being twisted but how God's purpose and nature as He reveals it is so badly represented. These so-called people of religion are void of the true knowledge of God. It is a travesty that so few have been diligent and respectful of the word of God. The teachings of the religions of humankind are heavily influenced by the selfish and power-seeking motives of evil persons and typically devised many hundreds of years ago. In effect, the doctrines of these religions make God out to be evil and not perfect and not all-powerful. They do this in subtle ways, and they may not fully understand the damage they do, nonetheless, they are without excuse. The “so-called Christian” religions understand how various doctrines benefit them, usually related to maintaining power over their supporters. They underestimate the seriousness of God's word. These teachings on original sin and inherited depravity oppose God's plan. One of the sad aspects of these false teachings is

how they distract a person from the truth. Why look for the truth when you believe you already possess it.

Martin Luther and John Calvin departed from Catholicism. Still, Protestantism's root cause error was the failure of those opposing Catholicism to realize **Catholicism NEVER had any connection with God**. Catholic doctrine could be considered the **opposite** of the truth. Nonetheless, they continued various of the Catholic doctrines or modified them. At least early on, they continued to agree on infant baptism and original sin. Eventually, Protestantism would eliminate original sin but apparently thought there was some merit and determined humankind was born with a sinful nature. Nonetheless, we will look at the claims of those who support these doctrines and how they use certain verses to justify the teachings.

10.6 A pause to address a possible concern

There is an unsaid indoctrination **behind** religious indoctrination. It creates the illusion that the common person (non-theologian) cannot understand the scriptures. Look at all the confusion and disagreement between those who are trained religiously. It is natural that people in their observations of religion, doubt their own ability to “get it right” without help. As you read this book and others by this author, you will see there is nothing complicated from God. Humankind, driven by their prejudices and a desire to benefit, have devised the required interpretations. God is not the problem; religion is the problem. God has a purpose, and we see that in His creation and in His plan to achieve that purpose, He is very straightforward in revealing His purpose. During the first century, there is nothing complicated in the message, and people are easily added to the church Jesus is building. However, the simplicity of the first century gospel is massacred when humankind becomes involved in rulemaking. God would be working against His purpose if he made understanding what to do and how to live complicated. God's plan requires no educational category of persons to bring the message. Instead, God's way is for people with a **good heart** and **great attitudes** to bring the message to like-minded

people who also love the truth. One might conclude that those analysts of the scriptures, those theologians, those who filter God's word are truly troublemakers – not helping. If you were to lose your soul due to this hierarchy of religious people, you might say these people were evil. You can know that today for indeed such people are evil in their doctrine, their pomp, their arrogance, and the mandatory respect they require.

The subject of this chapter is a good case in point as you will find nothing difficult about the simple truth but all kinds of problems with the invention of these sin doctrines. There is no scriptural evidence, **no purpose for these things**, no examples of these things, and just very humanlike thinking in their creation. Yes, you can correctly understand God, and you need to because religion does not help! We will begin by looking at the most important proof verses used to validate these doctrines. Not only do they provide zero proof, but the verses correctly understood, teach important truths.

10.7 The two most significant proof verses are:

Psalms 51:5 and Romans 5:12

Psalms 51:5

Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me.

And

Romans 5:12

Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned.

First, I hope people would be suspicious of such names as original sin or inherited depravity because they are not Bible names or in any way Bible concepts. The rules for our study are straightforward.

10.8 Rules of study

The knowledge from God provided to humankind needs to be highly respected and certainly not carelessly handled. The seriousness of God's word can easily be underestimated, and the motive for changing His word is usually personal problems with God's doctrine – frequently God's definition of sin and associated punishment. The other common reason is sinister and involves creating a doctrine that requires an ongoing dependency. Religious organizations survive on these dependencies. It is a means to exert power over people who depend on this "group" for spiritual success. Catholicism is the perfect example as Catholics depend on their priests for baptizing a baby, mass/eucharist, confession, and spiritual guidance in general.

God's word in its perfection fits everything together; thus, those loving the truth will reach the correct meaning. Carefully consider the verses below, which are represented in principle by many more verses. You need to see the seriousness of God regarding His word. You must get to **God's meaning**, which requires study and diligence. Our rules for the study come from God's advice for handling His word.

2 Tim 3:15-17

15 And that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

16 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,

17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

And

2 Tim 2:15

15 Be diligent to present yourself approved of God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

And

Ephesians 5:15-17

15 See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise,

16 redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

17 Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

Practical advice for getting to the correct meaning is as follows:

1. Study all the Bible verses on the subject in question
2. Even in advance of this, you will need to understand God's purpose and understand God (i.e., God's character) **as He has revealed Himself**. Realize some interpretations of Bible verses obviously oppose God's purpose and oppose God's nature.
3. Be aware of the consequences of private interpretations, of changing or adding to or taking away from the word of God.

The verses used to support Protestant and Catholic teaching for inherited depravity and original sin will now be discussed. One of the key verses used to support these doctrines is in the Old Testament and one in the New Testament. The Old Testament verse used to respectively support Protestant and Catholic inherited sin nature and original sin is from Psalms.

10.9 Focus on Psalm 51:5 as claimed evidence for original sin and inherited depravity

We begin with Psalm 51. It will be helpful to read Psalm 51:1-5 to understand the context (David speaking):

Psalm 51:1-5

1 Have mercy upon me O God,
According to Your lovingkindness;
According to the multitude of Your tender mercies,
Blot out my transgressions.
2 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,
And cleanse me from my sin.
3 For I acknowledge my transgressions,
And my sin is ever before me.
4 Against You, You only, have I sinned,
And done this evil in Your sight
That you may be found just when You speak,
And blameless when You judge.
5 Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity,
And in sin my mother conceived me.

We want to analyze these verses without prejudice, without being careless, and with confidence in God's Word. The Bible definition of sin will be helpful in this study. God defines sin in terms of violating His laws.

1 John 3:4

4 Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness.

This is a fundamental understanding and nothing in the scriptures indicates sin is produced in any other manner. Sin is always pertaining to what God defines as sin. It is typical of those creating doctrine to **make God out to be careless**. God would be very careless if He did not reveal such critical doctrines as original sin and inherited sin nature – yet they are never mentioned in word or concept. God really missed the mark. **Or**

perhaps inherited sin and original sin do not exist. Throughout your life, you will be making decisions regarding who to believe, either God or man. It is because of God's perfection, as seen in His word, that you can easily dismantle humankind's religious inventions. Of course, that brings us back to having a love of the truth and the central question of how badly you want to achieve heaven. Practically speaking, we are talking about your intensity in seeking God and truth. The Protestant use of Psalm 51:5 concludes that each person is born with inherited depravity or sinful nature.

The following is typical of Protestant doctrine. This statement coming from London Confession—Baptist, chapter VI, part 2, 4:

“Our first parents by this Sin, fell from their original righteousness and communion with God, and we in them, whereby death came upon all; all becoming dead in Sin, and wholly defiled, in all faculties, and parts of soul, and body . . . from this original corruption, whereby we are utterly indisposed, disabled and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil, do proceed all actual transgressions.”

Another example comes from Albert Garner, Missionary Baptist, in the Royal Birth a Life of Liberty, pp. 8-9.

“I, by natural birth, then am too wicked to live, too sinful to die, and too vile to meet God . . . Total Hereditary Depravity means that man in his entire self is bad. He inherited this nature from Adam through the human race, Romans 5:12. Consequently, he is entirely inherently conceived in badness. I mean by total that man is bad, mind, body, and spirit. Yes a sinner by nature . . . Before God, I by nature am depraved and unclean. Our best is but odious and obnoxious to the nostril of Him until the life is changed by a new nature that is imparted. So total depravity says you were born with the image of the devil and that you have the same moral nature as the devil.”

On the other hand, Catholics use these scriptures to teach inherited sin or, as they call it, original sin. A reading from The Teaching of Christ (a Catholic catechism for adults, 1976), page 84:

“Basing its teaching firmly on Scripture (esp. Romans 5:12-19), the Church teaches that from Adam original sin has been transmitted to all men. Not only do men tend to imitate the sinfulness that surrounds them, but each individual is born in a condition of sin, and can be freed from that condition only by the merits of Jesus Christ. The original sin each person inherits is not an actual sin he personally commits.”

“Rather, it is human nature so fallen, stripped of the grace that clothed it, injured in its own natural powers and subjected to the dominion of death, that is transmitted to all men, and it is in this sense that every man is born in sin.”

Note: This last quotation is from Pope Paul VI, Professio Fidei (“The Credo of the People of God,” June 30, 1968). “The transmission of original sin means that each descendant of Adam is created without sanctifying grace and without the special gifts that had accompanied that grace. Thus, the entire human race, all of mankind, has been wounded by original sin. Universal human experience confirms the teaching that we are born in a sinful state.”

So original or inherited sin differs from inherited depravity in that:

- Inherited depravity says, born with sinful nature
- Original sin says, born with sin

Let us continue our focus on the Old Testament verse from Psalms.

Psalm 51:5

*5 Behold, I was brought forth [shapen or born] in iniquity [lawlessness or wickedness],
And in sin my mother conceived me.*

Does Psalm 51:5 (or the context) indicate that David was born with a sinful nature?

Or

Does it indicate David was born in sin or with a sin nature? These verses do not specify either of these, and scripture does not support such interpretations.

First, determine who the sin is attributed to in Psalm 51.5. The word sin and “in sin did my mother conceive me” is not referring to David, but in sin did **my mother**. The sin is that of David’s mother! The following is an explanation of Psalm 51.5 that is consistent with the context of Psalm 51 and with all Bible teaching about sin. It may not be the only explanation, but it makes good sense without violating scripture.

David “was brought forth” in a situation of iniquity. All men “are brought forth” into a world filled with those who break God’s law (Genesis 6:5-6). All men except Adam—he “was brought forth” into a world where there was previously no sin. David was born into a world where sin was commonplace; even that sin was in his mother when he was conceived. Why is David saying all this? Is he trying to teach the doctrine of inherited sin or inherited sin nature? That would be ridiculous and make God out to be one who is trying to teach doctrine out of context. **REALIZE** David is prayerfully talking to God. Saying, have mercy on me, I have sinned, me, I did it! David is no stranger to sin; it has been around him since he was born. He does not blame God or his mother or even the lawless world around him. Nevertheless, I have sinned. Forgive me and cleanse me.

Moreover, in verse 9 of Psalm 51, David pleads with God.

Psalms 51.9

*9 Hide Your face from my sins,
And blot out all my iniquities.*

God did not place on any person a sin for which they were not responsible. Neither did God give us a sinful nature (a devil nature, an immoral nature). Somehow, someway, man would like to place some or the entire burden for our problems on God. This may be why these teachings without any scriptural basis have become so popular or were

invented in the first place. However, by understanding the Catholic mode of operation original sin brings a certain amount of control over the people. I doubt any conspiracy in this matter, but in the background Catholic laws and rules promote their follower's need for a hierarchy. Protestantism would receive a similar benefit (power over people) just by following the pattern of Catholicism. I do not know the motives, just speculating. **I know there is no original sin or inherited depravity in the scriptures.** As we read through this chapter, we will see God indicating we are His offspring, and we were created upright. The valued lesson from David's prayer is that he admitted he sinned and looked for no excuses, looked to blame no one except himself. David, of course, did not ask to remove the sin that God placed against him or remove his sin nature – since these things did not exist. David said, **I did it**, and despite all of David's weaknesses, God would say of David that **he was a man after His own heart.**

Thus, men beginning with what they want to believe gain support using some scriptures that “at a careless glance” might be teaching what they are promoting. Likely, these rule-making men did not intend to blame God in their doctrines, but it is a potential consequence of having God impute sin (or sin nature) to each person. Therefore, we have the fundamental doctrines of Roman Catholic and Protestant religions, placing some or all the responsibility for sin on God. You cannot have these sins placed on humankind at birth unless God so designates them, and as suggested, this could be considered as indicating God is evil. When in fact, God is the perfect absence of evil and thus cannot impute something so alien to Him. However, humankind is born upright and is the offspring of God and sin comes into their lives by their choices, which God consistently emphasizes.

Men can say, “I was born with a nature like the devil.”

Or

“I was born, God having placed a sin against me.”

“I had nothing to do with these things; certainly, I am not responsible. I had a bad start!” But **God says in:**

Ezekiel 18:4

4 *“The soul that **sinneth** it shall die*,”*

*Death (spiritually speaking is separation from God) is the result for the one that sins.

Ezekiel continues:

Ezekiel 18:5 and 9,

5 *“But if a man is just*

And does what is lawful and right;

9 *If he has walked in My statutes*

And kept My judgments faithfully—

He is just;

*He shall surely live!” ***

Says the Lord God.

We can continue in Ezekiel to see how this whole idea of inheriting sin, or a sin nature is entirely alien to Bible teaching.

Ezekiel 18:19-20

19 *“Yet you say, ‘Why should the son not bear the guilt of the father?’ Because the son has done what is lawful and right, and has kept all My statutes and done them, he shall surely live**”*

20 *The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not bear the guilt of the father, nor the father bear the guilt of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself.”*

**** surely live:** Life (eternal life) is attributed to following God's commands.

Once again, we see God attributing **complete responsibility for lawlessness to the individual**. God is not responsible! Ultimately, your earthly father or mother is not responsible for what you do. Neither are you responsible for what they did. Adam's children were not responsible for what he had done. They did not inherit his sin or a sin nature from Adam. God is the perfect absence of evil and does not impute iniquity on humankind. God wants humanity to succeed, allows them to make free will choices, and does nothing to hamper their success. He knows the difficult decisions every person will have to make concerning God-defined sin.

Note: Humanity has developed all sorts of ideas about God, and often they conclude God is evil in various ways. A document called "God is the perfect absence of evil" was designed to help understand how God is the perfect absence of evil.

<https://heavencoach.com/god-is-the-perfect-absence-of-evil/> or read the book by this author, "God is the perfect absence of evil."

*Note: Humankind should avoid using their logic to understand God, to understand God's actions, to understand why or how God did various things, and particularly thinking their reasoning will allow them to understand God's nature. **We know the things of God only if He reveals them.** Here is an example of how people try to explain God and suffering.*

*Since suffering is in the world and believing that ultimately everything that exists comes from God, therefore in some way, evil must have an association with God. This is NOT the case, and this document (God is the perfect absence of evil) shows **from what God has revealed about Himself** that He is in no way evil and thus could not place sin on an individual.*

Let us pause to see the emphasis God places on His perfection, His fairness, and that sin is always related to people's choices.

1 Peter 1:17 says,

17 The Father, who without partiality judges according to each work.

This verse indicates God is perfectly fair, and thus assigning a sin to each person or a sin nature would be unfair, and God points to His judgment being according to **what a person does**. At every turn, **these imputed sins are ridiculous**. Is there ever any mention in the scriptures of a person being lost due to their original sin or that they sinned due to their sin nature instead of the Bible description of the origination of sin (James 1:13-15)?

Another version (KJV, 1 Peter 1:17) reads:

The Father without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work.

Do you realize that when one teaches inherited sin, God becomes a “respector” of persons by placing a bad mark or bad nature against an individual at birth? If that child were to die as an infant or as a small child having never done anything contrary to God’s will, they would be guilty of this mark or would have possessed this “devil” nature. So, in complete ignorance of God’s word the “so-call Christian” religions rush off to sprinkle water on a baby. There were no baptisms of babies in the New Testament, no baptismal fountains because there is no sin and babies could not meet the qualifications for baptism as defined in the scriptures (like believing, confessing Christ and repenting). God would have shown less fairness (respect) for one than another. Shame on anyone who would make God a “respector” of persons, He is not, and He says He is not a “respector” of persons, but He judges **according to every man’s work**. The Bible is full of passages that teach where responsibility lies:

Matthew 16:27

27 For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works.

Romans 2:5-6

*5 But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God,
6 who “will render to each one according to his deeds.*

Rev 20:12-13

*12 And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and the books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books.
13 The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works.*

1 Corinthians 5:10

10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

Repeatedly, the Bible teaches that you and I will be held accountable for **what we do**, for the things done in the body, whether they are good or bad, lawful and right, or lawless and wicked. Jesus is asked a question in Matthew 18:1 and answers that question, revealing a characteristic of those who will be obedient. Whereas God does not assign a bad start to each person in the form of a sin or a sin nature, He observes the sort of character each person develops and its association with the sins they commit. God’s emphasis is on helping people succeed, and He would not universally hamper the efforts

of humankind to succeed, essentially hampering His purpose. He does provide how to establish a relationship with Him through His Son and valuable advice on remaining faithful.

Matthew 18:1-4

1 At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, “Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?”

2 Then Jesus called a little child to Him, set him in the midst of them,

3 and said, “Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.

4 Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

Jesus points to the innocence and humility of little children. At times, little children may seem more like little masses of mischief and trouble, but Jesus recognized that as little children, they had not reached the maturity to be capable of making judgments of right and wrong. So, these little children are innocent, sinless, without a sin nature. Their lack of sin/sin nature makes them **such as the kingdom of heaven!** Jesus makes a special point of a child’s humility. A child exhibits this characteristic of humility in many ways. Young children typically respond well to parental direction when consistently provided. They have not yet learned the “skill” of being bitter and resentful. But as children get older, it becomes a little more of a serious matter. Their pride is beginning to show. Finally, as adults, people hear a bad word said about them or even a hint that perhaps someone said something negative about them, and suddenly people are not talking to one another, and grudges are held. Sometimes, something they have believed for years is challenged, and it is very personal; I have been personally attacked! Jesus recognized how a little child could accept the teaching and how difficult it is so many times for an adult to humble themselves to God’s message. Therefore, in this lesson of the small child, Jesus pointed out to His disciples and us through His Word the innocence of little

children and how we need to turn and become as little children if we are going to be part of the kingdom of heaven. Could Jesus say what He says here in Matthew 18:1-4, to use an example of little children if they had been marked by sin (separated from God) or if they had a sinful nature from birth, totally depraved? I think we can see how ridiculous this is, how ashamed the authors and the supporters of these sin-related doctrines ought to be! God, in defining salvation, has referred to the process as being born again (John 3:5). This has been discussed in previous chapters as obedience to the gospel and being the form of doctrine patterned after the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus as demonstrated in baptism. Peter also refers to our hope as “*begotten us again to a living hope.*” This idea of begotten again or born again is going **back to our sinless state** – the pure state of our birth, meaning no sin, no sin nature.

1 Peter 1:3-5

3 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,

4 to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,

5 who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

The extent of damage done by lies (such as infant baptism) supporting this fundamental lie (inherited sin or sin nature) is more than you can imagine. The nonsense of the religions of humankind is overwhelming and, as we declare, does not fit together with all scripture and certainly not with God’s purpose.

Our heritage is not from the devil but is from God.

Genesis 1:27

27 So God created man in His own image

Paul refers to man as the “offspring of God” and tells us how we ought to think of God.

Acts 17:28-29

28 for in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, ‘For we are also His offspring.’

*29 Therefore, since we are the **offspring of God**, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, something shaped by art and man’s devising.*

It is terrible to say we “were brought forth immoral” when we were brought forth in His image and when we are His offspring. God has described our built-in character as **upright** in Ecclesiastes.

Ecclesiastes 7:29

29 Truly, this only have I found:

That God made man upright,

But they have sought out many schemes.

This verse alone defines humankind as being made upright and that the problems arise out of humankind’s own schemes. That happens to fit together perfectly with all scripture on this subject.

10.10 Focus on Romans 5:12 as claimed evidence for original sin and inherited depravity

Now, let us turn our attention to the New Testament verse used as proof for original sin and inherited sin nature. To get the context, let us look at four verses in Romans.

Romans 5:12-15

12 Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned—

13 (For until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law.

14 Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come.

15 But the free gift is not like the offense. For if by the one man's offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many.)

Once again, Romans 5:12 as Psalm 51:5 does not teach inherited sin or sin nature, but in fact, they both teach the opposite, that sin, whenever it occurs, is solely the responsibility of the individual. Romans 5:12 declares that sin and death (spiritual death, separation from God) entered by one man, but it does not say or imply that this first sin passed unto all men, that all men receive sin or a sin nature because of Adam's sin. It does teach that all sinned and that death came upon all men because all sinned. Adam sinned, and (spiritual) death entered his life, and now physical death would also eventually overtake Adam. As Romans 6:23 teaches, "For the wages of sin is death," but Adam was the first to sin so that the statement can be made in Romans 5:12, wherefore as by one man sin entered the world and death by sin. There is absolutely no indication of sin or sin nature being transmitted to Adam's descendants – also as mentioned, see Ezekiel 18:19-20. The Bible teaches plainly, where sin originates, in Adam's life or your life or mine. James explains the origin of sin.

James 1:15

15 Then, when desire is conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.

The Bible does not attribute sin to your nature but to a choice that you make. When you have a strong desire (lust) for something and that something is a transgression of God's law, you sin of your own free will when you do it. It was your choice. God did not put the lust there.

James 1:13-14 says,

13 Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone.

14 But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed.

15 Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.

Sin, we learn, does not come to man from God in any way! Instead, sin's pattern is as follows:

- Temptation (which is not from God)
- Followed by lust (strong desire) within the heart of man or woman
- And finally, the transgression itself (whether in thought, word, or deed) committed by man or woman

Note: *The death of verse 15 is spiritual death that is, dying in sin with its eternal implications.*

Now let us look at the grammatical construction of Romans 5:12. I will substitute words for sin, death, and sinned to make a point. Respectively, eating, weight gain, and eaten are substituted.

Wherefore as by one man, eating [sin] entered into the world and weight gain [death] by eating [sin], and so weight gain [death] passed upon all men, for that all have eaten [sinned].

This teaches that you put on weight because you eat. Those who teach inherited sin or sin nature would have you believe that because Adam ate, you will put on weight. Of course, such is not true! Adam's sin caused his separation from God, just as your sin or mine causes our separation from God. God's word is never confusing and does not contain hidden meanings in verses. Thus, things like original sin or inherited sin nature or infant baptism are the inventions of humankind – because they are not in the scriptures. God's definition of sin is given and well explained, and **that eliminates all other explanations for sin's origin.**

The doctrines of inherited sin and sin nature place a part or all the blame on God for man's problems, make God a respecter of persons, and man a child of the devil and this way add to in places and take away in others from God's word. The old saying that a lie will require a bigger lie and, even yet a bigger lie to protect the first and subsequent lies has never been more accurate than it is of these Catholic and Protestant "sin" teachings.

10.11 The evolution of Catholic doctrine due to original sin

Let us look at Catholic theology associated with this "unfortunate doctrine" of original sin. The need for creating these doctrines was apparently a necessary inference due to the Catholic idea of original sin. The most common error built on the concept of original sin or sin nature is the idea of infant baptism. Since Catholicism and Protestantism created these respective sin ideas that are infused from birth, **they need to provide a solution** to their "creation." Thus, they invent infant baptism. The Catholic solution removes the sin (original sin), whereas the Protestant infant baptism is more

complicated and varied as there is no sin to be “removed.” Some Protestant groups baptize as they see it as a command from the Lord and apply it as soon as possible, i.e., to infants. Other Protestant groups teach that the children of Christians should be baptized. Infants are baptized based on the promise of faith, which will come to fruition later in life. Yet, others see infant baptism as a seal or even a commitment by the parents of leading their child into the “faith.” In all cases, the Protestant baptism (infant or adult) must in no way be associated with a person’s salvation. After all, salvation is by “faith only.”

Note: Dealing with human-devised religious doctrine leads to all kinds of nonsense that includes error building on error to creating meaningless and silly teachings. In the process, these doctrines can replace the possibility of doing the right thing, the things God requires. Obviously, infant baptism may offset the absolute requirement for baptism since they were already baptized as a baby – very confusing. Among Protestants, there have been many thousands of documents, debates on infant baptism, and incredible disagreement. This has become so divisive that Protestants say this should no longer be discussed as it causes division among those who are “Christian.” This serves as an excellent example of the horror of privately interpreting the scriptures and God’s declaration in 2 Peter 1.20, “knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation.” God means what He says and if heeded there would be no original sin or inherited sin. There are arguments about infant baptism when without these sin concepts there would be nothing to argue about. There are hundreds of doctrines either built on original sin or inherited sin or require their existence to support some religious teachings.

Catholics and most Protestant groups practice this infant baptism ritual. Of course, there is no reason for baptizing an infant since, as just shown, there is no such thing as original sin or inherited sin nature. In addition, there is no Bible authority for infant baptism, so once again, in inventing infant baptism, they must violate many other Bible

principles. Baptism is well defined by God due to its importance in fulfilling God's purpose. Infant baptism greatly confuses people due to the influential organizations that advocate this doctrine. Of course, the scriptures are there, and baptism can be easily understood. You need to rightly divide the scriptures then you will know the following:

- There is no reason for baptizing a baby.
- There is no example of an infant being baptized in the New Testament.
- There are specific requirements for baptism, which an infant cannot fulfill, and they are:
 - Hearing or reading the message
 - Believing
 - Repenting
 - Confessing Christ

Catholics never receive forgiveness of sins, and **original sin plays a part in creating a doctrine of salvation that is false**. In the normal Catholic case, babies are baptized to eliminate original sin and that is Catholic's only involvement with baptism. To manage sins that are **committed**, Catholicism invented something called confession. People from time to time confess their sins to a Catholic priest and receive forgiveness. Of course, there are no priests in the New Testament (other than all those "in Christ" are part of a royal priesthood). Indeed, by being "in Christ," you are a holy priesthood able to offer spiritual sacrifices.

1 Peter 2:9

9 But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

So where did this idea of a special Catholic priesthood originate? It appears Catholic priests are a necessary inference needed to administer Catholic rites such as baptism, confession, and the Catholic mass among others. The Catholic priest becomes

the “handyman” for an endless number of created Catholic doctrines. Our subject here is how original sin led to infant baptism but seemingly in the process “used up scriptural baptism” and now Catholics have no way to forgive committed sins. This ends up with a special priesthood and gaining forgiveness of committed sins by confessing them to this invented position of priest. We are talking about salvation, forgiveness of sins and how these Catholic doctrines evolved and as we walk backwards, we end up at original sin. What is Catholic salvation? I am not sure, but it is beginning to appear. It will include infant baptism, priests, confessing sins to a priest and it will get more complicated. Why can’t we go into the Bible and find these things? After all the Holy Spirit guided the apostles into all truth and that included the method for forgiving sins. It included examples of people receiving forgiveness of sins, all under the auspices of the guidance of the Holy Spirit and then the written record that was inspired by the Holy Spirit. Where is original sin, where is the designation of priests, where is the idea of sins being confessed. There is this never-ending spiral of doctrines associated with this original sin. You cannot build on such a foundation without creating more and more error. In some convoluted way it was determined that sins need to be categorized due to their seriousness. God never thought this was necessary, but sin was sin, and some sins were more damaging than others but “in truth” dying in sin, any sin needed to be avoided. Original sin raised issues about babies dying before being baptized. Somehow Catholicism’s bad start with sin, i.e., original sin apparently allowed the carelessness to continue, and they move from “birth-sin” to creating a means to have sins forgiven on a person’s death bed – death bed confession. Then having created a hierarchy of sins they decide that those dying with lesser sins (per their definition) should not miss out on heaven. Thus, this invented sin-mess led to creating new doctrines of the Catholic confessional, Limbo, Extreme Unction, purgatory, the Immaculate Conception, and the Assumption of Mary into heaven. Now these institutions needed to be managed and the rules are growing and all without any solid foundation. As mentioned, it would be impossible to give an accurate accounting of when and why these things were developed. **It does not matter** because they came into existence and are not scriptural

and as usual all oppose God's plan. This is the nature of changing, adding to, or taking away from the word of God. All these doctrines cover up the lie, in this case, Catholicism's sin related deceit. It began with original sin, and one must ask why such a concept totally alien to God, to the scriptures and God's plan came into existence. Whenever it is mentioned that the Catholic Church is the exact opposite of the truth on everything, people find it hard to believe. Surely, they must be right on something, but they are not! They share this condition with those of Protestantism. Certainly, they are right to believe in Christ, however in the manner they do this there is no benefit, no relationship with Christ. The scriptures make this clear throughout its pages, for example:

2 John 1:9.

9 Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son.

You cannot claim Christ or, better stated, be "in Christ" if you are not following the doctrine of Christ. That begins with obeying the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord, i.e., obeying the gospel. Those who change the message from God are very distant from God.

Note: There is something utterly amazing here that you might notice. It is how Catholic's original sin leads to baptizing babies and how subsequent committed sins are resolved by confessing them to a Catholic priest. As a result, the process provided by the Holy Spirit to the apostles of believing, confessing, repenting, and being baptized is no longer recognized. All the examples of conversions in the New Testament validate that process. Then along comes Catholicism, and God's means of conversion is changed, and of course, there is no salvation.

10.12 The Immaculate Conception of Mary - Mary, mother of Jesus, conceived without original sin

In an amazing bit of irony, Catholicism's cumulative false doctrines crash into each other, and then in a continuing ignorance of the scriptures, they envision more necessary inferences. They left the truth way back in Matthew 16.16-19 when they devised the idea of a pope. That lie may be the pinnacle of all lies and possibly **the most divisive concept in human history**. The book, "God – Catholic Audacity" cannot be read without knowing with certainty that the Catholic Church and their popes are without scriptural authority. Continuing, more of the same inventiveness arrives with the "Immaculate Conception."

From "The Teaching of Christ, a Catholic Catechism for Adults" (1976), page 122: "William of Ware and John Duns Scotus developed the concept of "anticipatory redemption." Although as a descendent of Adam in a sinful human race, Mary would naturally have incurred the guilt of original sin, a special divine decree kept her free from it in light of the foreseen or anticipated merits of Jesus Christ. Pope Pius IX solemnly defined the Immaculate Conception as a truth of revelation in 1854. "The Blessed Virgin Mary in the first instant of her conception, by a singular grace and privilege of almighty God, in view of the foreseen merits of Jesus Christ the Savior of the human race, was preserved free from all stain of original sin."

Necessarily inferred doctrines are the consequence, the burden of Catholic's inventions such as original sin. Now, in their human reasoning, Mary, in bringing Jesus, must be (they infer) free from original sin. Thus, the invention of the Immaculate Conception defines Mary as born without original sin. This is one of many doctrines justifying the honor of Mary. No one is to be honored except God. In this case the non-existent original sin had to be dealt with in the case of Mary or so they thought. This is an example of how the Catholic mode of operation is always bringing more control to Catholicism. Mariology, as it is called holds many Catholics in awe and brings worship to Mary.

10.13 The next big “inference” is the Assumption of Mary (into heaven)

The following short paragraph is typical of the Catholic doctrine of the Assumption of Mary. It explains the “logic” used by their theologians that results in Mary, like Jesus rising into heaven and as emphasized to be with her Son.

“Because she was the mother of God, she had been kept holy always by a singular gift of God. As the fruits of the redemption were anticipated to preserve her from original sin, so they were anticipated to bring her bodily to heaven **before** the general resurrection at the end of time. Since she had never been subject to sin, she, like her divine Son, was not to remain in the grave, subject to the empire of death that sin had brought into the world. It was fitting then, that she who gave bodily birth to Jesus should be with Him bodily in heaven as she adores Him in the glory of His risen body. This Roman Catholic catechism goes on to indicate that on November 1, 1950, Pope Pius XII formally defined the Assumption of Mary as doctrine.”

We have gone from inventing original sin to infant baptism, to confessing sins to a priest, to the Immaculate Conception of Mary and now to the Assumption of Mary. The world of necessary inferences has played havoc with the Catholic invention of original sin. The most damaging aspect of original sin was how it led to a devastatingly different design of God’s means to achieve reconciliation. Although the downfall of Catholicism occurs Matthew 16.16-19, original sin just adds to the confusion as it associates forgiveness of sins with infant baptism, creates a new means to have committed sins forgiven and a plethora of inference-associated doctrines. In this process another great blasphemy to God is created inasmuch as Mary is elevated to near God-like status.

10.14 The evolution of Protestant Doctrine due to inherited sin nature



Martin Luther and John Calvin might be considered the essence of the Reformation in terms of their concepts. Indeed, they are human beings and capable of developing concepts, capable of using the scriptures to formulate their ideas. They used the scriptures but had a pathetic understanding and thus arrived at very contrived doctrines. They did not understand faith, the Holy Spirit, Gods' purpose, God as He defined Himself, predestination and essentially every Bible principle. They were intelligent, passionate and persevered but there is truth and there is error, and they were careless, perhaps favoring what made sense to them. In their anxiousness to move away from Catholicism they were negligent and disrespectful of the word of God.

Protestant doctrine does not necessarily build on inherited sin the way that Catholics use original sin to directly create the doctrines of infant baptism, the Immaculate Conception, and the Assumption of Mary and all the others. Inherited sin nature is just part of the puzzle that intertwines with other basic Protestant teachings. Those teachings depend on inherited depravity as the lynchpin for other doctrines. Those key doctrines are summarized as Calvin's TULIP and given below:

Calvin's TULIP

- **Total inherited depravity** as discussed herein
- **Unconditional election** of the individual; Modern version: God selects those to be saved, and the selection is without the individual meeting any conditions, i.e., unconditional.
- **Limited atonement**: Christ died only for the elect; Modern version (same).
- **Irresistible grace**: God can affect what He wills; Modern version: irresistible grace or direct operation of the Holy Spirit.
- **Perseverance of the saints**; Those whom God elects will not defect from their calling; Modern version: Once saved, always saved.

These things make up the bulk of the fundamentals of Protestantism. There is a great deal of picking and choosing what each Protestant “denomination” believes. It should also be realized that sorting out the endless new doctrines of Protestantism claimed to have some relation to religious truth is impossible. It is too convoluted, too varied, nonsensical, and lacking scriptural evidence, and thus it is incomprehensible. God, of course, knew this and left humankind one dependable source of truth, and it is the word of God. It is the word of God that has **not been privately interpreted**. The disease of Catholicism called, “we have the right to make the rules” continues with Protestantism. The most fundamental directive from God that His word, more specifically God’s meaning **MUST NOT BE CHANGED** is ignored.

The truth is so much simpler and honors God and His goodness. It involves God’s plan and bringing the gospel message to achieve His purpose with each person of their own free will making choices. God is perfect in His plan, and everything fits perfectly together, and thus the nonsense of God placing evil upon humankind originates in the mind of men. These men do not respect God as seen in their disrespect of God’s word. One obvious result of these doctrines is that people develop teachings **such that the**

gospel message is never obeyed. That is exactly what has happened as Protestants (like Catholics) “never” obey the gospel.

The message from God fits perfectly together, meaning the scriptures were overseen by God. As the scriptures teach, “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God.” God’s purpose will be accomplished with every piece of the plan fitting perfectly together. There is a single plan beginning with creation that will fulfill God’s purpose. Unfortunately, humankind likes to insert their ideas, and in this case, it is inherited depravity and the other teachings that flow from that erroneous doctrine.

Error sticks out “like a sore thumb” amid the truth. It is fair to say that like an iceberg in the ocean, and in that analogy, the boat’s captain ignores or downplays the obvious but insignificant protuberance. There is more to the iceberg than meets the eye, as there is with “modifying” the word of God. John Calvin, Martin Luther did not heed the warnings of God – the very visible iceberg (**do not change the word of God**) and suffered the consequences of the unseen ice. When humankind applies their wisdom to the message from God, they will create error. Nevertheless, if it is the pre-Catholic councils beginning in Nicaea (325) of “Christian” bishops or the Protestant council of Dort (1618-1619) they are opposing God’s will regarding how His word is to be handled. The “unsaid” is that these men in these councils will be changing God’s word – the meaning of God will be changed under the auspices of clarifying the scriptures. The very words such as Calvin’s Tulip or Luther’s faith only, point to something different than the scriptures and immediately should be rejected. Humankind loves the ideas of those who explain the scriptures in a way they can appreciate; that agrees with what they want to believe. This process continues over history and the word of God is changed that is, God’s meanings are changed. In Protestantism (as in Catholicism) the doctrines have been accepted and are deeply engrained to the point they are not questioned. The scriptures that fit everything perfectly together have seemingly disappeared in the doctrines of Protestantism and Catholicism and the outcome has been the loss of the gospel message. Nonetheless, we will continue to understand the development of

Calvin's theory that gained popularity and acceptance and remains the core of Protestant doctrine. It is again the reasoning of humankind in the matters of God.

Repeating John Calvin's' five points (TULIP):

- Total inherited depravity
- Unconditional election
- Limited atonement
- Irresistible grace
- Perseverance of the saints

Again, reasoning men, accepting a doctrine like total inherited depravity wrongly assumed to be placed on man by God, conclude that God must therefore act directly on those He elects to save. Let me clarify, since man is totally depraved, he cannot choose, or will to be saved; therefore, God will choose certain individuals for salvation before the foundation of the world without regard to their situation, character, or conduct, and hence, arbitrary. Here we go on the roller coaster of men's logic. Since God acts in some way to save those whom He chose, and since God could not be wrong, therefore, "once you are saved, you are always saved no matter how you live, you cannot be lost." When the **foundation is wrong**, what follows can appear logical, maybe even necessary, and yet be terribly wrong to the point of being ridiculous.

There is a noticeable interconnectivity or dependence to various degrees on Total Inherited Depravity in developing the other four of Calvin's points. Since inherited sin nature fails (a fabrication), the other four points also fail, and essentially with that, Protestantism fails.

We see that Total Inherited Depravity is the kingpin for developing the Protestant doctrine. Still, the associated basic deceit is related to the word predestination and how Calvin's concept is used in the development of TULIP. Namely, Calvin and Protestants assume predestination refers to **individuals being predestined** when the correct, consistent with all scripture meaning is **God's plan is predestined**. We have addressed

predestination in detail in Chapter 9, “What it Means to Believe.” As expected, the correct understanding of predestination fits with all scripture.

All five TULIP points are unscriptural and easily refuted. If the false idea of inherited sin nature had not been “invented,” these other teachings of Calvin, which have found their way into so many Protestant religions (in a wide variety of forms), would never have existed.

Note: Calvin’s five points (TULIP) came from the Synod of Dort (1618-1619), an international gathering of reformed churches. The reformation was floundering under disputes and persecution, and doctrine was volatile. Nonetheless, the Canons of Dort published the Five Points of Calvinism for the first time. Calvin’s doctrine was summarized at the Synod of Dort into a simplistic version represented in English as TULIP. As mentioned earlier, getting to the bottom of the historical errors of religion is incredibly difficult with all the changes for many reasons. The primary reason is that they are “invented” doctrines and possess no coherence. We have something from God that is perfect – His word. Why do we honor the dictates of humankind in things they cannot know?

10.15 The horror of humankind speaking for God

I appreciate your patience and courage as we dealt with this subject of original sin and inherited sin nature. The thing that is so wrong is humankind's efforts, as seen frequently in their councils and committees convened to make rules, to explain God and life, and define a person’s success or failure. Abomination is an extremely negative word, and it fits exactly with those who privately interpret God’s word. All these men who have claimed association with God, including the early church fathers, various councils, and committees, gained acceptance (early on by force) without much questioning.

Examination of their teachings indicates they did not understand God's purpose or His nature and never appreciated the seriousness of His word.

Perhaps you can understand why God characterizes success as **requiring a love of the truth**. Sadly, so many different groups of people have fallen into doctrine that is eternally dangerous. Largely because of this error (inherited depravity or original sin), God's simple, straightforward plan has been corrupted. There are so many people caught up in this serious error who want to do the right thing, and most believe they have done the right thing. As we end this lesson, let me highlight how God in the Bible emphasized the treatment of His word and then mention why this is so important. Only the truth can make a person free from sin (John 8:32). It is only doing the will of the Father that allows one to enter the kingdom of God (Matthew 7:21). There is no relationship with God unless one abides in the doctrine of Christ (2 John 1:9). Our discussion of these imputed sins at birth simply demonstrate God's word is not respected; it is ignored or changed. In the case of inherited depravity or original sin, the damage to souls is devastating. So, both Catholicism and Protestantism fall from these doctrines. These are not close "theological calls." The truth is simple and does not contain teachings created by men, which bring much confusion and even the necessity to create additional man-made doctrines to support the original inventions.

Chapter 11

Summary of “Life is about the soul”

It might seem that the topic of this book appears to be a nice assortment of “Christian” subjects. If examined closely, there is a pattern in this book of teaching the truth that simultaneously exposes error. The error appears in some cases to be silly and not just because of the nonsensical ideas but because God in His perfection provided something that fits perfectly together. None of the teachings that vary from the TRUTH can even be slightly fitted together.

A big part of the problem is people's confidence in other people. This is precisely the wrong place to put your trust. The person you need to trust turns out to be yourself, which is **only valid when you love the truth**. Thus, in that case, the One you are trusting is God. In other words, God has provided the truth, and if nothing satisfies you short of the truth, you will have the right source to trust. In all things spiritual, you must understand what you believe. Only with this truth-loving attitude can you have confidence in yourself, and that is having confidence in God's word. One of the **misconceptions** to confront is that God and the Bible are hard to understand inasmuch as the scriptures are complex, and “everyone” seems to believe differently. Help is available, but the starting point needs to be your sincere search for God. Ultimately you need to understand what you believe and trust yourself since you have an undying commitment to the truth. We can easily eliminate all the doctrines of humankind since they typically are nonsensical and do not fit together as would be expected from God. Time is precious, and in your day-to-day life, you are busy with things that matter to you, and the truth about God and life are often a low or non-existent priority. Consequently, people never come to grips with the importance of their souls.

One source of confusion in seeking the truth is all the schools that teach religion, which produce theologians, and produce many different doctrines. These were never part of God's plan but can easily be seen as problems for those seeking the truth. If you are a brain surgeon or a car mechanic, the expectation is you have been trained and continually

improve as those technologies improve. The “technology” of the Bible is already perfect and cannot be improved and, in fact, must not be changed. If a person were seeking the best theologian, they would look for strong intellectual characteristics like higher learning degrees, well known to the world, peer recognition, and perhaps various publications and books. A good observation might be that there are thousands of such “expert theologians,” who typically **believe quite differently**, usually aligned with the organization that trained them. It might be logical to say no one possesses the truth about life in consideration of the diversity of these “so-called Christian” beliefs.

There is a fundamental error in the background of these organizations, and sometimes over centuries of building on error, there is little resemblance to the truth. Thus, these expert theologians are proficient in error. In the “Christian world,” the root cause of the error is a history of private interpretations of the scriptures. Over time this casual view of God’s word becomes the pattern, and doctrine can be just about anything. Also, this liberality listens to the wishes of the people (members), and over time the religious organization looks more and more like the world. An example would be that things defined as sin by God are now acceptable or are allowed with certain minimal restrictions. We have come a long way to reach the current deplorable condition of religion. A potential new member might inquire which traditional sins are acceptable to the religion they are considering. It is accepted (really expected) that each of these religions has their rule-making bodies and are very flexible in a modern world. The one seeking answers should be able to find a “church” that aligns with what they want from religion. This attitude is quite different from one who loves the truth.

The point is you do not want great theological minds as they do not bring the truth – any of them. They have been “raised” in some philosophy, as seen in the “schools” they attended. None of it is the truth, and it will only get worse. God in His perfection wants those with good hearts, not some often snobbish and profoundly prudent men or women entrapped in making a living by abiding in the key points of their centuries-old, human-constructed doctrines. There does seem to be a pattern in these religious schools

of great learning, and amazingly it is towards atheism. If they possessed the truth, they would not consider God as non-existent.

The world tries so hard to be better than the God of the Bible. They do this by accepting many of the things God condemns as sinful. Of course, they reject God because “deep down” they doubt His existence. However, many are unsure and never declare themselves atheists or agnostics. Nonetheless, they reject God’s definition of sin and the need to fear God and the threat of punishment. Humankind’s “desired” definition of God is different than the scriptures, and therefore the scriptures are unacceptable.

The world, in general, believes they can strike a compromise where they can demonstrate a more profound love of people by accepting behavior prohibited by God and still succeed in the next life (in case there is a next life). Extolling **their virtue**, they demonstrate they do not understand God or His purpose. Certainly, they do not realize that life is about the soul and that life is a test that includes defined sin and people’s response to sin as the prime parameter allowing God to make the separation.

The one solid thing for humankind is the certainty of death and the relative shortness of life and particularly the uncertainty about its duration. However, for the wise and thoughtful person who loves the truth, the one solid thing is the word of God. **Religion has become the philosophies of humankind that fit their idea of God.** Yet most the people see the “religions of the world” as having some connection with God. Unfortunately, the “religions of the world” provide no spiritual help to their members and confuse the world regarding religion. These religions work very hard at “looking good,” and one way is to appear to be a helper of the needy. In effect, they are focused on **promoting the temporary things of life. The business of the religion must be spiritually focused on eternity.** There is, of course, a compelling requirement for Christians to help those in need, and Jesus is very clear about this, but it is not the focus, it is not the reason Jesus suffered and died, and it is not an authorized work of the local church. It is not the reason to seek God, seek religion. Also, a characteristic of the “religions of the world” is their emphasis on seeking quantity (numbers of people), whereas God only accepts quality in each individual. Quality is directly proportional to

the truth and living it. Your eternal success will always come back to seeking the truth, loving the truth as God has required.

We have seen in this book that life is about the soul, and essentially everything is about the soul. Nothing else will matter to you at your end, and nothing else should matter to you now. The other things only truly matter now in the way they contribute to a soul's ultimate success or failure. An example may help. You live your life and have a family, a job, and friends. In that life, there are many things to be managed. The manner you deal with these things defines who you are and your character. Your speech and actions can be deemed wise, unwise, and good or evil. You may receive praise or punishment for your humanity, and those things might be deserved or undeserved. There will eventually be a correct accounting in the next existence. God knows all would fail (sin). God's plan for recovery has been progressing since Genesis 3.15 and culminated in Jesus' sacrifice. Now, the soul can be reconciled to God in Christ. Thus, despite all the things that fill your daily existence, in the background, life is about the soul.

We have seen that the religions of humankind have a great diversity of doctrine, and the most fundamental teachings we analyzed were terribly wrong. For example, the correct understanding of the church and kingdom and the pattern of conversions as seen in the New Testament record may have been enlightening. In opposition to the truth, the meaning of the word "BELIEVE" as used concerning salvation and the doctrines of original sin and inherited depravity are all obviously in conflict with Bible teaching. Of course, we just scratched the surface in discussing a few of the massive number of errors developed over hundreds of years. Essentially, "everything is in error" because the fundamentals are wrong. Then building on error, of course, makes everything worse, even more confused. You are comfortable with what you believe and may even be satisfied that you will be successful in life – heaven. The things discussed in this book are the basics, and your interest in God, heaven, and truth may have been brought into question. You might wonder why to this point; you were unaware of the things discussed herein. Is it possible that you have been deceived? Here is where you need to love the truth and become more serious about spiritual matters. It is a strange question, but do

you want heaven badly enough to do something about achieving it even if it requires turning from your current beliefs?

11.1 Commitment to the truth, not a commitment to a person or group

In the most crucial decision of your life, you decided to do the right thing, but it required considerable courage. God's word is falling in place for you, and it is undeniable, and it all started with your dedicated search for God and truth. The decision to obey the gospel and live faithfully did not make your life easier but made it meaningful. Now your life is lived for Christ and the gospel and not for yourself. As you grow in the grace and knowledge of God (as God admonishes), your view of life and the world is more precise. The physical world (including the world of religion) is filled with confusion, deceit, selfishness, pride, greed, and at times great cruelty, and a world without remorse. There is one solid thing, namely, the assurance from God of justice and a wonderful ending. There will be sadness, but it will not be that you are missing out on running with the world in their temporary pleasures. The sadness will be in the realization of the many people, especially those caught up in the "religions of the world" that are headed for a poor ending. In some way, they are falling short of what God requires. There is a lack of seriousness about God's message often because they cannot let loose of their love of the world. The teaching they accept is right for them, and their minds are effectively closed. As a child of God, you see the futility and unimportance of what the world views as very important. Instead, you see that, indeed, life is about the soul.

Chapter 12

Final thoughts for this book

We live in a physical world, and as would be expected, our lives are filled with worldly needs. That is, our minds are constantly on everything physical. It is difficult to see past those things to something spiritual. The spiritual things may not seem “real enough” to be real, true, or of interest, and certainly not urgent. There is not enough time in the day to think about anything other than working our job, making money, eating, sleeping, getting some rest, and spending time with our loved ones. Is it any wonder that when it comes to thoughts of the next life, a **person accepts what seems reasonable** and believes any man or woman who can make sense and be enthusiastic and maybe a bit charismatic? Even taking what little time we have available to consider such things seems wasteful. Nonetheless, we say life is about the soul and not about all those other things that have our attention. We need to realize the seriousness of the time we have, that is, our lifetime. Only then will you do what is required and begin living your life for Christ and the gospel and not for yourself.

As we end this book, it has been alluded to herein why life is about the soul, but in case repetition helps, think about this. At the end of your earthly existence, you are no longer physical, and ultimately, at Christ’s return, all things material, including the works therein, will be gone. **You are your soul and nothing else**, and it is the thing you need to care for in your lifetime. When you pass, there will only be one concern, and it will be if you died “in Christ.” This is a very spiritual matter, a matter of your soul.

Jesus had this incredible focus on the soul as it was the purpose of God. One might expect the focus of the church Jesus was building, His spiritual body consisting of those “in Christ” that is souls on the road to success would continue to be a concern until they receive the crown of life. The efforts of Jesus on your behalf have been unspeakable (2 Corinthians 9.15) and every soul has great value. People may fail to see that from the first moment of Jesus’ ministry He saw the seriousness of each person in terms of their soul. One thing we have talked about in this book is that “life is about the soul” and

absolutely about nothing else. Jesus in His ministry spoke a parable about greed. He begins by saying, “one’s life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses” and then teaches the value of the soul.

Luke 12.15-22

15 And He said to them, “Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses.”

16 Then He spoke a parable to them, saying: “The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully.

17 And he thought within himself, saying, ‘What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops?’

18 So he said, ‘I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods.

19 And I will say to my soul, “Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry.” ’

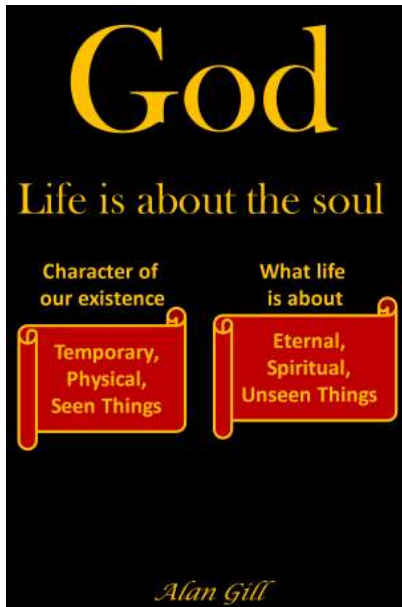
*20 But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night **your soul will be required** of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?’*

21 “So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.”

Consider everything important in your life and then realize you will leave with nothing; however, your soul is the one thing that remains. What is the condition of your soul? Let me put that another way, “Life is about the soul.” Did you spend your life caring for your soul? How do you care for the soul? Let me mention a few ways. You make sure your sins are forgiven, your repentance remains valid, and you live for Christ and the gospel. Thus, wisdom lies in seeing these things as valued instead of the many things in our life that are **seemingly so important** but known to be temporary. One day you will face the eternal, and in the wisdom of God, did you care for your soul. The

things spoken in the scriptures will be very real **then**. You might note that the only way to succeed is to care for your soul during your lifetime.

12.1 Explanation of the book's cover



It is appropriate to end the book thinking about the front cover. Unlike the scriptures, this image is human-designed and can have various private interpretations. The meaning will be evident for many, yet most will not understand the implications before reading this book. The book explains that life is about the soul and why this is true. There is nothing left of you at the end of your life except your soul. At the end of the world, all the physical “stuff” is gone, but you remain as a soul. Given this, your soul should be of concern during your lifetime. Indeed, your eternal success or failure depends on the **final condition of your soul**. Many do not believe that, but that changes nothing. The character of our current existence is as indicated on the book cover: Temporary, Physical, and Seen Things.

Unfortunately, life is about something much different – quite the opposite. Life is about the Eternal, the Spiritual, and Unseen Things.

The first contrast is Temporary versus Eternal, and this means that your existence will continue after the temporary body corrupts in death.

Next, your earthly existence is physical. You have a physical body contained in a physical universe and a time existence. The physical is all you know from observation, and it appears you are locked in these physical restraints, including a time restraint. We learn there is more from outside our physical realm – although we may not believe it. A substantial number of people are convinced they will go out of existence after death.

The final contrast is “seen versus unseen.” We see things in our physical life, meaning **we have senses that allow our observations**. Via our senses, we learn things, but life is ultimately about things we cannot observe with our senses. These are unseen, unknowable things. These are the things that life is all about. This information is transmitted to us by God through His word, which the Holy Spirit delivered. It is these things that are important. Indeed, life for each person is about one of the unseen things – the soul. Our future is a spiritual future with unseen things such as our soul, God, Jesus, heaven, the place of the lost and more. So, we spend our earthly existence in the temporary, physical, and seen world but spend eternity in a spiritual existence with things we presently cannot see, cannot imagine. In His graciousness, God tells us what is coming and how to succeed.

12.2 Helping to visualize, “Life is about the soul”

We are temporary, physical beings and live in this physical universe, which is also temporary. We are “captured” in our physical bodies, that is, the “real us” that will live on past our physical demise. We are constrained in a time domain that seems natural, since nothing else is conceivable in God’s creation. Time is a part of the stage where our existence plays out. Time will also end when God brings down the curtain on all physical things. For reference, consider a “time” when time did not exist as declared in Titus.

Titus 1.2

2 in hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began

God began time, something unnecessary for Him, and time will not be part of the next existence. In our current existence, we “see” time, but it will be gone when God destroys all things physical (including time). Our physical life is about all the things that surround us, and for some the important things are very basic and best described as the need for survival.



A great deal of the world has a “comfortable” existence, and even those who are not “comfortable” seek a certain relaxed lifestyle, and for them, life is about the things further down this page and referred to as “Some important things in life.” These are **typically important things and** achieving the best of these things is desired. These things fill our minds, as does their pursuit. They are in the category that is continually laying up treasures on earth, and unquestionably for most people, this is what life is all about. Jesus brings clarity, and He needs to be taken seriously – do not ignore these verses in Matthew.

Matthew 6:19-21

19 “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal;

20 but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.

21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Strangely enough, these verses can be another way of emphasizing that life is about the soul. What is important in our lives? The things that might typically fill our life as important are shown in the visual below. Each person would have a different list, but many would include the following things. It is appropriate to point out how Jesus speaks of whoever seeks to save his life.

Mark 8:35-36

35 For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel’s will save it.

36 For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?

Jesus says you need to live your life for Him and the gospel and not for yourself. Therefore, your list of what is important will look different than what follows. There is a diagram following the “importance visual” that shows the **relative importance** of a list of things **by the size of the circle**. I created such a bubble diagram as an example of how a person who wants to save their life might look at this same list of important things realizing life is about the soul.

Some of the most important things in life

Family and love



Money, education, and good jobs



Health and adventure



Peace, love and marriage



Home, car and food



Romance, vacations and memories



These are all reasonable things, and maybe represent our goals, and perhaps many will be achieved, and they are important. However, life is not about these things or to what degree these things are realized. **These things can fill our lives**, and there may be no room for the only thing that will matter in the end – your soul. If you included a picture of a church building among all these things, that might mean you carved out a place for God. It would be better to place a picture of the word “TRUTH.” Then make it

the top priority. People who will succeed know God needs to be first in their life – above all YOUR important things. God knows the heart of each person, and as He says, “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” Placing God first in your life is not only necessary, but it relieves the pressure of having a world of things that you may not be able to achieve and “where that might lead you.”

Interestingly, if you achieve a great deal you want, of what is important to you, then you will look like the rich man in the story of Lazarus, or the man in Jesus’ parable who was so successful that he could sit back and eat, drink, and be merry. How did they turn out? Neither of these men had good ends, eternally speaking. You can have a certain “edge” in life when you live being aware that life is about the soul. The edge could be the way you prioritize your life to achieve heaven.

You will not have the “importance bubble diagram” shown below unless you are in the body of Christ. You cannot be “in Christ” without the truth. You cannot live for Christ and the gospel unless you have the doctrine of Christ. The road to success in life begins by seeking God, then finding and obeying Him (obey the gospel), and then being faithful until death. Then the important things in your life might look like the “bubble” diagram that follows below. **We cannot avoid the physical important things in our life**, but we can live pleasing God within their framework. It is interesting that Jesus referred to living this life successfully (eternal life) as difficult (Matthew 7.13,14), and the reason has to do with the challenge of living it for Him and the gospel.

We have talked about the failure of Christian religions, specifically Catholicism, and Protestantism. Christianity is the truth, but these “churches” have changed the doctrine of Christ making it of no effect. Consequently, their followers never received forgiveness for their sins. This is devastating as these religions are very distant from the truth. Nonetheless, realizing the deceit is a very good thing. The problem can be corrected for those that love the truth by obedience to the gospel. Despite gaining an awareness of the deceit, nonetheless, acting on the truth may be difficult since it includes abandoning their current, lifetime beliefs. Their indoctrination was early and continuous, and their lives, especially family and friends, are powerful components of their daily life.

The things that are important to them contain religious elements that have become part of their lives.

As we understand God, we understand His emphasis, His seriousness in living for Christ and the gospel. When it was mentioned that the religions of the world were very distant from the truth, it was to accentuate that being added to the body of Christ was just the beginning of the race. God has high expectations for those in the body of Christ and that is expressed throughout the New Covenant. Living for Christ and the gospel is not some abstract mental exercise but includes arranging the things important in your life to emphasize Christ and the gospel. Indeed, sharing in the Divine Nature requires effort, serious dedicated effort. In effect, you have inherited the work of the apostles to bring the gospel message to the world.

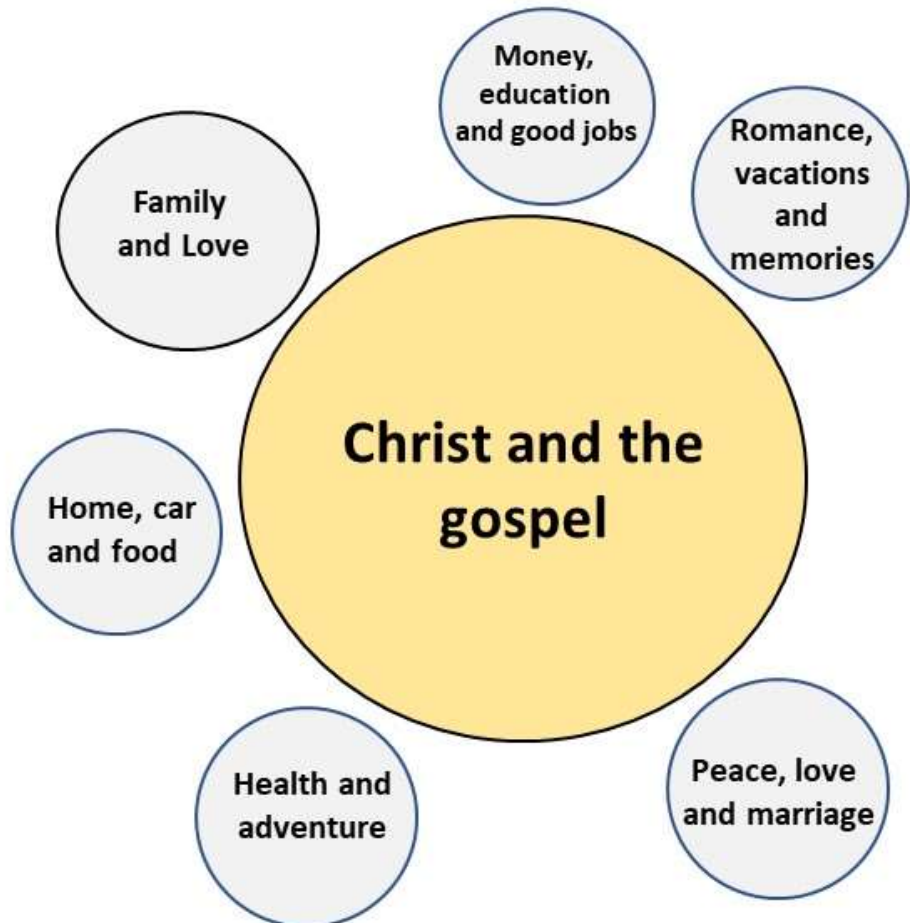
*Note: At the other end of the spectrum there are evil people, and they vary from those living in sin to those observed to be deeply evil persons. The nature of all evil persons is defined by their life and rejection of God, particularly by their association with God-defined sins. The things that are important to highly evil persons can be unabashedly, openly evil. Their large circles of important things would represent the **lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life**. They are very far from succeeding in life. They should realize that if they filled their lives with more meaningful, less harmful categories of importance, that would still leave them far from what they need to succeed. Leaving evil in repentance and being “in Christ” by obedience is just the beginning. God’s requirements are quite high for those in the body of Christ. The point is, the world’s view of what is important, and the associated priorities is **staggeringly far** from what is required to be successful. Nonetheless, every person can overcome evil and succeed. However, in fairness, continual participation in evil digs a very deep hole requiring courage and dedication to overcome, and indeed the days are evil – meaning each day brings one closer to the end. Can you be the person reflected in the diagram below?*

Important things adjusted realizing life is about the soul

Every person is different, and the “diagram” is living, changing

This diagram exists in a person’s actions and thoughts

All the smaller circles are temporary things



This would seem to be a person interested in achieving heaven. As Jesus indicated, “For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?”