



THE  
NEW  
BIRTH

Mark W. Fenison, ThD.

The New Birth

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By

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# The New Birth

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## Preface

How many people have lived out their lives where they had more regrets than good memories? How many end up in divorce, in jail, in other regretful circumstances due to their own poor decisions? Many I would say. Wouldn't it be great to have a reset button so that you could start all over again? Wouldn't it be great if you had a reset button after every day you could clean the slate of all the mistakes made in the previous day and begin afresh each day?

Well, that is what the new birth is all about. It is about starting all over again regardless of how old you may be physically, or regardless of how many mistakes you have made in the past. It is about obtaining a new heart that is inclined to do what pleases God from that moment forward. It is God laying a onetime foundation within you that abides forever so that it is possible each and every day to start out with a new fresh slate. It is the secret of being placed in a condition by God where you can live life joyfully in spite of adverse circumstances and lingering adverse consequences due to past mistakes.

The nature of the new birth and how it is received has been one of the most highly debated issues within Christendom since the first century. It has been especially a hot point of debate between sacramental and non-sacramental Christians and denominations.

What exactly is it? How does it relate to salvation in general? How does it relate to other aspects of salvation in specific (gospel conversion, justification, sanctification, glorification, etc.)? How does it relate to Old Testament saints? How does it relate to

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indwelling, spiritual union and sealing by the Spirit? How does it relate to the “*old*” and “*new*” covenants and/or the “*everlasting covenant*”?

The following pages attempt to provide a clear and easy explanation of the new birth. Whether or not this attempt proves to be successful or not, only time will tell, and the reader will be the judge.

Mark W. Fenison  
January, 8, 2015

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## My Salvation Testimony

At the age of three, my mother was tragically killed by an unfortunate accident. My father and his pastor improperly installed a gas heater which leaked gas fumes. This was before the time propane gas was required by law to contain an agent that would give off an odor so that it could be detected. My father came home from work to find my mother dead and me almost dead.

Unfortunately the guilt and strain on my father was too much and caused a chemical imbalance in his brain. From that point forward he was in and out of mental institutions for most of his remaining life.

So, my brother and I were simply passed from family to family when dad was frequently in the hospital for long periods of time. I did not realize it at the time but I was bitter and that bitterness manifested itself in continual fights and trouble in my elementary school years. Later, I began to hang out with the wrong crowds.

At the age of nine my father married a woman that he did not really love in order that we might have a mother to take care of his in his absence. However, this new mom was jealous of dad's love for us and treated us horribly. So our bitterness grew and we were always into trouble.

When I was 11 years old my father had been out of the hospital for over a year and was taking us to church. He began to bribe me with a quarter for every scripture verse I memorized. At 11, a quarter could purchase a 16oz RC cola, the largest candy bar and a package of twinkies or cupcakes. So I began to memorize scripture

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ferociously until he had to reduce it to a dime per verse. Because of this memorization program I knew more scripture than any of the children in our church Sunday school. At this little Baptist church the Sunday school children were divided up into teams to complete in Bible quizzes. Because I had memorized so much scripture our team won every competition. Because I knew more of the Bible than the teenage classes, the church awarded me entrance into the teen classes at only 12 years old. However, with all this Bible knowledge I was not a professing Christian, but a lost and bitter boy who was continuing to fight at school.

One Sunday morning in the middle of summer at the age of 13, I entered the congregational service after Sunday school and sat in my normal place at the back seat beside the door. That was the best place to sit in order to get out of church faster. Dad made us go to church or else we would not have been there.

However, as I sat there that Sunday morning minding my own business something was happening inside of me that I had no control over. I was being awakened to things I never saw before. For the very first time in my life I realized I was a sinner and deserved the wrath of God. Something or someone had awakened me to my sinful condition and I was being convicted of my sinfulness through the very scriptures I had memorized. I felt like a bowl of jello inside without any control over what was happening inside of me. I was experiencing a real change within me. I don't know to this day what the pastor preached about as I was so caught up with what was going on inside of me. By the time the service was over I knew I was a sinner and I knew that Christ was my only hope of salvation.

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That Sunday morning there occurred a real change inside of me that made a new person out of me. Dad no longer needed to bribe me to read the Bible because now I wanted to. Dad no longer needed to force me to go to church because I wanted to. I stopped fighting at school because I no longer wanted to fight anyone. God had changed my “want to” that Sunday morning. God had awakened me to my sinful condition, convicted me of my sins and changed my “want to” so that I left the church building that Sunday morning a new person inside. I entered in unbelief and left as a believer in Christ. I entered with a resistant spirit but left with a submissive heart to God. I entered loving darkness but exited loving light. I entered blind to my own sins and sinful nature but left awakened and horrified about my condition. I had experienced the new birth in spite of myself, in spite of my bitterness, and in spite of my blindness. I experienced being saved by grace and could not claim any credit for any part of that experience.

I never heard an audible voice from God during that experience, but I did experience the Word of God which I had memorized being brought to my consciousness in an orderly and powerful manner by the Spirit of God. I had experienced Paul’s words in 1 Thessalonians 1:4-5:

*Knowing, brothers beloved, your election of God. For our gospel came not to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as you know what manner of men we were among you for your sake.*



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My later public profession of faith in Christ was not in order to obtain that experience but was a consequence of that experience and a testimony of that experience. Just as Jesus had told Peter about his confession of faith in Christ – *“blessed art thou Simon bar jona for flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee but my Father in heaven”* (Mt. 16:17). Just as Paul had told the Galatians, *“But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother’s womb and called me by his Grace, to reveal his Son in me....”* Paul was on the road to Damascus going about to persecute and prosecute Christians and therefore in spite of himself, something was going on inside of him that he had no control over. He found it hard to *“kick against the pricks”* of his conscience, and when it was all over he was a changed man.

I did not walk the aisle to get saved, but I walked the isle to announce I had been saved. Everything I did was a reaction to what God had already accomplished within me.

Today, I abhor what I call manipulation evangelism, especially of small children. The manipulator asks everyone to bow their head while soft music is being played while he attempts to talk people into making a “decision” for Christ. If that does not work, then he attempts to manipulate them into making some other kind of decision. In essence, he is attempting to usurp the person and power of the Holy Spirit and as a result most are his converts rather than God’s. The invitation is not wrong, but it should be to invite those whom the Spirit has already convicted by the preaching of the gospel, already made thirsty, already made hungry, already been changed from within to simply make it manifest publicly rather than an attempt to manipulate a decision.

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## Introducing the Basics

*“Exactly what happens in regeneration is mysterious to us”* – Wayne Grudem, **Systematic Theology**, Zondervan, 1994, p. 701

Most theology books start out expressing this exact sentiment by Professor Grudem in regard to understanding the new birth. However, is his sentiment true, or is it “mysterious” because most theologians simply have a wrong understanding of it?

One reason why many find the new birth difficult to define and understand is due to the varied expressions used by Scripture to describe it.

Some of these various expressions are:

1. Birth – Jn. 3:3,5; 1 Pet. 1:1:3, 23, 1 Jn. 2:29; 4:9; Tit. 3:5
2. Creation – Eph. 2:10; 4:24; 2 Cor. 4:6; 5:17;
3. Writing on the heart – 2 Cor. 3:3-6
4. Washing – Tit. 3:5
5. Quickening – Eph. 2:1, 5
6. Circumcision of the heart – Col. 2:11
7. Translation – Col. 1:13
8. Called – Rom. 8:30; 1 Cor. 1:26-30
9. Revelation – Gal. 1:16; 2 Cor. 4:6; Mt. 16:17

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10. Regeneration

11. Resurrection

However, as will be seen, all of these expressions simply repeat the same basic truths but from a different perspective or analogy.

Another reason why most theologians do not properly grasp the new birth is their rejection of the Biblical doctrine of the tripartite nature of man. Although, all agree that man is divided into two basic parts (material and immaterial) the Bible explicitly divides the immaterial part of man into spirit and soul.

*For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*

– Heb.4:12

Paul explicitly states that the Word of God does distinguish between the “*soul and spirit*” equally as much as the Word of God distinguishes between bone marrow and bone joints and heart motives (intents) and heart thoughts. If the reader does not make such a distinction it will affect their understanding of the nature of man and the salvation of the whole man because Biblical salvation is designed to ultimately sanctify (set apart) the whole man, spirit, soul and body unto the Lord:

*And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. – 1*

Thes. 5:23

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Significantly, Moses uses the Hebrew plural but is translated as a singular “life” in Genesis 2:7. Man is given a plurality of “lives” (physical, spiritual and soulish) or three centers of consciousness. Body life provides external world consciousness. Soul life provides inner world consciousness whereas spirit life provides man with other world consciousness. However the Adamic man is dominated by soul consciousness (“became a living soul”) whereas the Second Adamic man is dominated by spirit consciousness (“became a living spirit”).

Watchman Nee explains it as follows:

“Man became a living soul” expresses not merely the fact that the combination of spirit and body produced the soul; it also suggests that the spirit and body were completely merged in this soul. In other words, soul and body were combined with the spirit, and spirit and body were merged in the soul. Adam “in his unfallen state knew nothing of thee ceaseless strivings of spirit and flesh which are matters of daily experience to us. There was a perfect blending of his three natures into one and the soul as the uniting medium became the cause of his individuality, of his existence as a distinct being.” (Pember’s Earth’s Earliest Age). Man was designated a living soul, for it was there that the spirit and body met and through which his individuality was known. Perhaps we may use an imperfect illustration: drop some dye into a cup of water. The dye and water will blend into a third substance called ink. In like manner the two independent elements of spirit and body combine to become a living soul. (The analogy fails in that the soul produced by combining of spirit and body becomes an independent, indissoluble element as much as spirit and body). – Watchman Nee, **The**

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**Spiritual Man**, (Christian Fellowship Pub. New York, 1968) Vol. 1, pp. 24-25

For many the stumbling block in the trichotomy of man is the failure to understand that the soul of man is treated in scripture in both its non-manifest and manifest expressions. The internal non-manifest workings of the soul are the internalized workings of the intellect, emotions and will. The external manifest workings of the soul are the words and actions manifested daily called our “life.” Thus, as Solomon said, “*as a man thinketh in his heart* (non-manifest) *so is he* (manifest life). The works of man consists of both the internal and external manifestations (Mt. 15:18) and thus the Law of God is spiritual as it deals first with the determinate thoughts of the heart (non-manifest soul) as well as the expression of those determinate thoughts in manifest words and actions (manifest life).

Therefore, in order to save his “life” man must first crucify his own selfish intents and thoughts so that the manifest life reflects the will of God. However, a man will “lose” his life if he attempts to live it according to his own selfish intents and thoughts.

Jesus demands that both the internal and external expressions of the soul and all of its workings be committed to loving God and neighbor as self. This includes the internal expressions of heart and mind as well as the bodily manifestations of strength and outward expressed life.

The moral nature of man’s spirit is determined by his spiritual union in the other world. The unregenerate spirit is in spiritual union with demonic forces (Eph. 2:2-3) and as a result man’s spirit

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is evil by nature. The moral nature of the spirit determines the moral inclination of the soul.

Therefore, salvation is designed for the whole tripartite man and is threefold in nature and in time (past, present progressive and future tense salvation, new birth, sanctification and glorification).

However, there are four additional reasons why the new birth is difficult for many theologians to properly understand. The first reason has to do with the proper understanding of death and life as Biblical descriptions of separation (death) versus union (life) in relationship to God.

The second reason is inseparably related to the first in properly understanding that all the varied expressions listed at the beginning of this chapter are nothing more or less than descriptions of various facets of transition between spiritual separation and spiritual union with God.

When the human problem and divine solution to that problem is reduced to its most fundamental level, it is simply a matter of spiritual separation versus spiritual union in relationship to God.

The Bible clearly teaches that God is life, light, love and holy. All of these attributes have their only source in God alone. To be spiritual separated from God means that the human spirit is spiritually dead or without the life of God (dead). Spiritual separation from God means the spirit of man is thus without light (dark), without love (enmity) and without holiness (depraved). That is the fundamental problem that resulted in the fall of man.

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Indeed, this is precisely how Paul describes the unregenerate state of man:

*Having the understanding darkened, (without light) being alienated from the life of God (without life) through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: Who being past feeling (without love) have given themselves over to lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.(without holiness) – Eph. 4:18-19*

The only possible solution to this fundamental problem is obtaining spiritual union with God

The unconscious **consequence** of spiritual union is called regeneration or quickening as spiritual life is the result. The **command** that produces spiritual union is the effectual calling. The **content** of this calling is the truth of the gospel. The **character** of this effectual calling is a transformed believing (enlightened) heart which has dispelled all darkness concerning the truth of the gospel. The consequential conscious experience of this creative act of God is called gospel **conversion**. Each of these various aspects is inseparably connected with each other.

This transition from spiritual separation to spiritual union with God is a creative act by God with regard to the human spirit, as what is born of Spirit is spirit (Jn. 3:6). Spiritual union is the work of God on the subconscious level of man (the spirit) that directly influences the conscious level of man (the soul). The moral condition of the spirit of man determines the moral inclination of the soul. When the human spirit is brought into spiritual union with

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God, the moral image of God that was lost in the fall is reestablished (Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10). Where there is no spiritual union between the Spirit of God and the spirit of man there is spiritual death which is neither cessation of the existence of the spirit of man nor a moral vacuum. Prior to spiritual union with God the moral image of the spirit of man is like unto its spiritual father the devil (Jn. 8:44; Eph. 2:2-3) which inclined the soul to evil. However, spiritual union with God changes the moral inclination of the soul (although it does not give the soul power to perform what it is morally inclined to will – Rom. 7:18).

Before the new birth I did not “want to” please God but after the new birth I wanted to please God. The new birth changes the moral condition of the human spirit which in turn changes the moral inclination of the soul. After the new birth the soul “*delights in the law of God after the inward man*” or the regenerated spirit of man (Rom. 7:21).

The new birth is somewhat analogous to the physical birth (Jn. 3:3-6) and that is probably why the term “birth” is used to describe it. Physical birth conveys physical life from parent to child. Physical life conveys the physical and moral image or likeness of the parent to the child so that the child is born in the human image becoming part of the human family. Spiritual birth conveys spiritual life from God to a fallen human. Spiritual life conveys the moral image of God to that fallen spirit of man bringing them into the family of God as a spiritual child of God with the same moral nature.



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Thus, the new birth makes man a partaker of the divine nature or image of God. This does not mean that they acquire any of the non-communicable attributes of God, or those attributes that make God to be God (omniscience, omnipresence, omnipotence, self-sustainability, immutability, etc.) which make Him eternally distinct from all creatures. No, the new birth does not create other God's and so they are not "children of God" in that sense.

What they acquire through new birth is the moral image of God which is manifested by the fruit of the Spirit (Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10; Gal. 5:22-23) as these are God's moral attributes. This new "life" is multifaceted just as the singular "fruit" of the Spirit is multifaceted. They obtain this "image" initially and permanently in their spirit (Jn. 3:6) which is then determinately and progressively applied to their conscious manifest life and ultimately completed in the glorification of their body until their whole being (spirit, soul and body) is permanently transformed into the moral image of God's Son without the presence of indwelling sin (1 Cor. 15:53-55).

The third reason why most theologians do not understand the Biblical doctrine of the new birth is because they reject spiritual union as the only possible solution to spiritual separation for all fallen mankind. Spiritual union is the union between the Spirit of God and the human spirit. The human spirit resides within the physical body of man and therefore, there can be no such thing as spiritual union apart from the indwelling Spirit of God or as Paul puts it:

*Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So*

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*then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But you are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.* – Rom. 8:7-9

Only two types of human beings exist on planet earth at any given time from Genesis to the Second Coming of Christ. (1) Those “*in Adam*” who are “*born of the flesh*” thus existing “*in the flesh*” and who therefore “*walk after the flesh*.” (2) Those “*in Christ*” who are “*born of the Spirit*” thus who “*live in the Spirit*” and should “*walk after the Spirit*” but who may also choose to “*walk after the flesh*.” Other contrasts of these two states are (1) lost versus saved; (2) unregenerate versus regenerate; (3) Satan’s family versus God’s family, (4) Citizens in God’s kingdom versus citizens in Satan’s kingdom, (5) Spiritually dead versus spiritually alive; etc.

There are no exceptions to these two different states as there are no fallen human beings who are not either “*in Adam*” or “*in Christ*.” The “*in Adam*” nature or fallen nature is universal from the creation of Adam until the Second Coming of Christ. There is no third option to any of the above contrasts. One is either in Adam by first creation or in Christ by new creation. There are no human beings existing outside of these unions with Adam or Christ.

However, many theologians deny spiritual union with God prior to Pentecost as they perceive Pentecost as the first time in human history that the Holy Spirit indwelt human beings. Instead, they wrongly assume he only indwelt prophets, priests and kings, and never consistently but only at times. However, they are confusing empowering by the Spirit (coming upon them) with indwelling.

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They fail to grasp where there is no spiritual union (life) there can only be spiritual separation (death). Pentecost had nothing to do with personal individual indwelling but had to do with the public institutional indwelling of the newly established “house of God.” This was God’s pattern for confirming all previous houses of God after they had been completed (Ex. 40:35; 2 Chron. 7:1-3) and this was the pattern followed with the new “house of God” (Acts 2:1-3) after it had already been completed. The new “house of God” was part of a new covenant administration, with new ordinances, new ordained ministry and a new world wide mission.

The fourth and final reason that many theologians do not understand the true Biblical nature of the new birth is because they do not understand the true Biblical nature of works. Jesus defines works to not merely include the external actions of the soul (words and deeds) but the internal actions of the soul (determinate thoughts which are the cause of external actions). The will of man is simply the determination of internal deliberations of thoughts and/or feelings. That is why the two Greek terms translated “will” in the New Testament convey the source to be either intellectually determined (“*boule*”) or emotionally determined (“*Thelma*”).

It is the bondage of the will to a totally depraved heart that is the object of salvation by new birth. The new birth frees the will from that bondage and therefore repentance and faith are fruits of regeneration not its cause, and gifts of God rather than the results of works or internal actions of the soul.

With these introductory remarks, the remainder of the book dives into the biblical doctrine of the new birth.

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## Understanding Death

Most Biblical Lexicons and Bible dictionaries define “death” to be the end of life. Genesis 2:7 uses the Hebrew plural translated “life” and therefore more literally “lives” to describe what God breathed into the body of man. There is more to man than merely biological life, but there is spiritual and soul life also. God said that “*in the day*” Adam committed sin that he would die. However, his body did not die until he was 930 years old (Gen. 5:5). Something other than his body died. Man is more than an animal which has biological life and soul life. Man was created in the image of God who is “spirit” (Jn. 4:34). Hence, there is a death that precedes biological death and therefore there is a quality of life (spiritual life) in addition to biological life when God created man.

### *The Ephesian Paradigm*

*Even when we were **dead** in sins, hath **quicken**ed us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)* – Eph. 2:5

It is significant that what is formerly described as “*dead*” in the above verse is also described as having been “*quicken*ed” and yet neither can refer to their physical body. Moreover, this act of being “*quicken*ed” is further described parenthetically as being “*sav*ed”

*Even when we were **dead** in sins, has **quicken**ed us together with Christ, (**by grace you are saved;**).....For by grace are ye saved....* – Eph. 2:5,8.

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Moreover, this very same “*quicken*ed....*sav*ed” action is further described as a creative work by God:

*For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to good works, which God has before ordained that we should walk in them.* – Eph. 2:10.

To be “*quicken*ed” is to be made alive, and ultimately this life is obtained by a creative work that brings us into spiritual union (“*in Christ*”) with God.

Moreover, this formerly “*dead*” condition is not a cessation of existence, but an active conscious state of spiritual warfare against God. It is the human spirit in spiritual union with Satan that is the cause or source for manifesting the spiritual image or character of Satan:

*Wherein in time past you walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.* – Eph. 2:2-3

Neither is this a metaphorical death, as that would require the quickening (saved, created in Christ) to be metaphorical also. No, Jesus explicitly identifies what had been in a conscious active but “*dead*” condition to be the “*spirit*” of man which is the object of new birth:

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*That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.* – Jn.3:6

Jesus is speaking to a physically alive Nicodemus and yet he said, that he must be born again and yet he was not speaking about a physical birth, but rather a spiritual birth?<sup>1</sup> It is the “*spirit*” of man that is born again. Although he was physically “*old*” by his own confession (Jn. 3:4) yet his body was not physically dead. Therefore, the only possible thing “*dead*” needing to be quickened or born again is his “*spirit*.”

Just as spiritual death preceded the physical death of Nicodemus and the Ephesians so also did spiritual death precede physical death in Adam. Adam died spiritually “*in the day*” he sinned, long before his physical death 930 years later (Gen. 5:5).

*But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shall not eat of it: for in the day that you eat thereof you shall surely die.* – Gen.217

*And all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years: and he died.* – Gen. 5:5

Notice that the precise time of this predicted death (Gen. 2:17) is directly related and restricted to the precise time that sin is committed “*in the day that you eat thereof you shall surely die.*” Some kind of death occurred “*in that day*” long before he physically died 930 years of age (Gen. 5:5). It is what is “*dead*” in

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<sup>1</sup> Many apply water to the body, or food and drink (communion) to the body, but it is not the body that is born of the Spirit. Many others believe new birth refers to the body and the resurrection. However, the quickening of the body is consistently called “resurrection” in the Scriptures rather than birth.

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all of Adam's posterity due to sin before they physically die that is the object of quickening.

Therefore, spiritual death precedes physical death in all fallen humans. This is why salvation must begin with the "*spirit*" of man because that is where damnation by death begins in man. Therefore, just as death begins with the spirit, so does salvation begin with the spirit as proven by Jesus telling the physically alive "*old*" man Nicodemus that he must be born again and what was born of the Spirit "*is spirit*."<sup>2</sup>

Therefore, death cannot be cessation of existence, as one can be dead *spiritually* and yet be *physically* alive! Instead, death is a state of separation. Death has three stages First, there is spiritual separation/as illustrated in Nicodemus and the Ephesians who were "*dead*" but yet existing in a state where their spirit was separated from the Spirit of God but its active resistance against God is manifest through the soul of man (Eph. 2:2-3; 4:17-19). Second, physical death is merely the existing state of the immaterial aspect of man separated from his material body (Mt. 10:28). The separated body returns to dust while the separated spirit returns to God to deal with it according to His word. Third, and last, eternal death is merely the existing state of separation of the whole resurrected lost man (spirit, soul and body) from God in a place called Gehenna.

## Two Different States of Existence

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<sup>2</sup> "*Spirit*" the human spirit of man controls the moral inclination of his soul. Therefore, regeneration of his spirit changes the moral inclination of his soul which changes his heart. The "*spirit*" of man is the object of regeneration, but the evidence is revealed by a new moral inclination of the heart/soul of man.

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Today there is a movement among Baptists and other conservatives to define “death” and “life” according to cultic definitions (JW’s Seventh Day Adventists, etc.). They call their false doctrine “Conditional Mortality.” They deceptively claim that the definition of death is cessation of life, by which they mean complete cessation of all body and soul animation or conscious existence. This doctrine is based upon the use of death and life with regard to biological life and an incomplete understanding of the tripartite nature of man. Of course at physical death, the biological life of the human body ceases and all biological animation of the body cease but that is not true of the whole man. Only that which came from dust “return” to dust (the physical body) while that which came from God (the immaterial nature of man) “return” to God:

*Then shall the dust **return** to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall **return** to God who gave it. – Eccles. 12:7*

The whole man did not come from the dust of the ground as the immaterial part of man was breathed into that body directly by God whereby man obtained a plurality of “lives” (lit. Hebrew plural – “breath of lives” Gen. 2:7). He was given biological life, but he was also given psychological life (soul) and spiritual life (spirit). In the first Adam it is the “*soul*” that dominates man (“*a living soul*”) but in the resurrected man it is the “*spirit*” (“*a living spirit*”) that dominates man (1 Cor. 15:44-45).

In the Scriptures, the terms *death* and *life* represent two different states of existence, rather than a contrast between cessation and existence. When writing Timothy, Paul describes the existing state of a young widow living in sin:



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*But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth. - 1 Tim. 5:6*

Note she is still physically alive but her physical existence is described as a “*dead*” state. This “*dead*” state is due to her lifestyle described as “*in pleasure*.” In the Ephesian saints it is described as “*in trespasses and sins*” (Eph. 2:1). In Genesis 2:17 it is due to the act of sin. In other words, sin separates a person from God and from fellowshiping with God.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, death is compatible with physical existence and is not cessation of existence. However, her state of life living “*in pleasure*” (sin) separated her from fellowshiping with God. For example Isaiah says:

*But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear. – Isa. 59:2*

When Paul describes the lost or unregenerated state of fallen man he describes him as “*alienated*” from the life of God due to the effects of sin:

*..... Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. – Eph. 2:6; 4:18-19*

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<sup>3</sup> Saved people can be separated from the “fellowship” (not relationship) with God due to sin. When we do not mortify the flesh we walk after the flesh and that is a state of separation from God with regard to our fellowship or daily “walk” with God. Such might have been the case with this woman. This young widow presumably is a saved person. Hence, her soul is expressing itself in disobedience to God and thus her fellowship with God has been broken as she is living a lifestyle that is separated from spiritual leadership.

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Therefore, fallen man is existing in a state of spiritual separation from God due to sin, and thus “*dead in sin*” but very much alive in the flesh.

Neither is cessation of existence. For example, Jesus said that killing the body does not make the soul cease to exist:

*And fear not them which kill the body, but are **not able to kill the soul**: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.* – Mt. 10:28

At physical death, the soul is merely **separated from** the physical body. Hence, physical death is merely separation of the immaterial nature of man from the material nature of man. Absolute proof that the soul continues to exist after physical death is that Jesus continues to claim that even God does not “*destroy*” the soul until it is cast into Gehenna. When does God cast the soul into Gehenna? God does not cast anything into Gehenna until after the Second Advent, and then after the Great White Throne Judgment:

*And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in*

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*the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.* – Rev. 20:11-15

Therefore, the soul continues to exist and cannot be killed by man or destroyed by God between physical death of the body and the resurrection and judgment of the whole person before the Second Death (which is being cast into Gehenna).<sup>4</sup>

Moreover, even the term “*destroy*” (Gr. *apollumi*) does not refer to cessation of existence or annihilation in Gehenna. The term translated “*destroy*” (Gr. *apollumi*) is used by the Lord three other times in this very same chapter, one time before and two times after Matthew 10:28 (Mt. 10:6, 39) and all three times it is used to describe a condition of existence:

*But go rather to the **lost** [Gr. *apollumi*] *sheep of the house of Israel.* – Mt. 10:6*

They could not possibly be sent to a non-existent, or annihilated people. However, they could be sent to a people who exist in condition or state that renders them useless for their designed purpose which was to bring glory to God. They existed in a spiritually separated state from God or a “*lost*” condition. God has purposed that such “*sheep*” come to Christ (Jn. 10:27-30) and exist in a saved condition.

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<sup>4</sup> Those who believe in *soul sleeping*, claim it exists in an unconscious state. However, sleep is a very active state of the mind. It is merely conscious existence on another level. Paul claims that this conscious level of existence is in heaven, as “*to be*” absent from the body is “*to be*” present with the Lord (2 Cor. 5:8). He uses two Aorist infinitives that grammatically demand punctiliar completed simultaneous action with no time gap between absence from the body and presence with the Lord who is in heaven.

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This agrees with the next two times the Greek term *apollumi* is used by Christ in this very same chapter after Matthew 10:28:

*He that findeth his life shall lose [apollumi] it: and he that loseth [apollumi] his life for my sake shall find it. – Mt. 10:39*

Again, Christ is using the Greek term *apollumi* to describe a certain condition of existence, rather than a contrast between existence and non-existence. For example, they can live their lives in such a manner as to “*find*” it presently, but “*lose*” it in regard to rewards (vv. 40-41) or they can live their lives in such a manner to “*lose*” it presently and yet “*find*” it in regard to future rewards. To understand *apollumi* to mean annihilation makes no sense whatsoever. The point is that a life *separated from* the revealed will of God or not in keeping with God’s purpose will be “*lost.*” or rendered useless for the glory of God. However, even in that “*lost*” (Gr. *apolummi*) condition the soul is consciously active in producing a manifest life of sin.

Throughout the scriptures the Greek term *apollumi* refers to something that exists in a state or condition that is rendered useless for its designed purpose. For example, wineskins that have burst or ripped still exist, but with regard to their design they have been “*destroyed*” (*apollumi*) or rendered useless for their designed purpose:

*And no man puts new wine into old bottles: else the new wine does burst [apollumi] the bottles, and the wine is spilled, and the bottles will be marred: but new wine must be put into new bottles. – Mark 2:22*

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The wine skins cease only in the sense of fulfilling their intended design or function – to hold wine.

In Matthew 10:28 men kill other men because they want to destroy the evil design or function expressed by the soul through the body toward them in words and actions. They don't like how the soul expressed itself through the body toward them in words or deeds and so they kill the body in order to stop the soul expressions. However, the soul does not cease functioning at physical death. It is only separated from the body which renders the use of the body inoperable by the soul. The physical body is merely the vehicle of expression for the soul. When the body dies and is buried under the sod, it no longer can be used for soul expressions, such as love, hate, memory, etc “under the sun”:

*For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun.* – Eccles. 9:5-6

Instead, at physical death the spirit of man is separated from his body and returns to God in order for God to determine where it will continue to exist (heaven or hades) until judgment day:

*Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return to God who gave it.* – Eccles. 12:7

Physical death is the separation of the soul from the body, but it is not the cessation of the soul.

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Therefore, when God does not like the evil designs being purposely expressed by the soul, he can “*destroy*” (apollumi) or make those designs ineffectual by placing it in Hades at physical death and then permanently in Gehenna on the Great Day of Judgment at the end of the world where it cannot carry out its evil design or purposes. So what man fails to do by killing the body, God accomplishes by putting the whole man, soul and body into Gehenna. Hence, the “*second death*” is not cessation of existence, but **eternal separation** from God and His people in a designed place that prevents lost unregenerate man from carrying out his evil purposes toward God and His elect, and where he suffers the just consequences.

Those who embrace “conditional mortality” often attempt to justify their view of cessation by confusing passages that deal with the destruction of the physical man at Armageddon where mankind is reduced to “ashes” with passages that deal with God’s eternal judgment in the lake of fire.

### **Spiritual Union (life) is the Reversal of Spiritual Separation (death)**

If we understand that spiritual death is the state of separation from God, then regeneration or the restoration of spiritual life is simply spiritual union with God.

Regeneration is the reversal of death. Death is spiritual separation from God who is the source of light, righteousness, and love. Thus, regeneration is simply being brought back into spiritual

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union with God, which is restoration to light, life, righteousness and love in the spirit of man.

**A. God is Life** – Jn. 1:4 “*in him was life*” Jn. 14:6 “*I am the...life*”

**B. God is Light** - 1Jo 1:5 *God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.*

**C. God is righteous** – “*There is none righteous but one and that is God.*” - Mt. 19:17

**D. God is love** – “*And we have known and believed the love that God has to us. God is love; and he that dwells in love dwells in God, and God in him.*” - 1 Jn. 4:16

Paul describes the spiritual dead state of the fallen man in exact opposite terms of spiritual life, light, love and holiness. He says;

*Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.*  
– Eph. 4:18-19

In Ephesians 4:18-19 we see the very reverse effects due to spiritual separation from God:

**A. God is Life**, but fallen man is “*alienated from the life of God*” and thus “*dead*” spiritually.

**B. God is Light**, but fallen man is in a “*darkened*” state.

**C. God is Righteous**, but fallen man is

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*“given...over...unto...all uncleanness.”*

## **D. God is love, but fallen man is – “*past feeling*”**

Therefore, the fallen condition of man is a state of spiritual separation from God which is characterized by spiritual death (absence of life), darkness (absence of light), depravity (absence of holiness), and enmity (absence of love). In contrast, the elementary description of new birth is being brought into spiritual union with God. Thus, new birth is being reunited with life, light, righteousness, and love as one becomes partaker of the divine moral nature.

Consider the illustration of an electric heater. The fallen state is like an electric heater that is unplugged from the wall socket. It is separated from the source of electrical life, and therefore is unable to produce heat, and therefore is electrically dead and cold. The regenerative state is like the heater being plugged into the wall socket. It is in union with the source of electrical life, and therefore electricity flows through it producing heat. The fallen state and the regenerative state is the difference between union with, or separation from God as life, light, righteousness, and love.

Therefore, spiritual union (new birth) is the most fundamental and primary aspect of Biblical salvation. Without it, no other aspect of salvation is remotely possible, or can any kind of salvation exist as there is no possible relationship with God as long as a person remains in a state of spiritual separation.

This state of spiritual separation from God is described in various ways in the Scriptures. Some of those ways are expressed in prepositional phrases such as “*in Adam*” or “*in the flesh*” or “*in trespasses and sins.*” It is also described by certain nouns such as “*lost*” or “*carnal*” or “*the natural man.*” It is described by certain relationships “*your father the devil*” or “*kingdom of darkness*” etc.”



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The state of those in spiritual union with God is described in exact opposite terms. Some of the prepositions phrases for this opposite state of existence are “*in Christ*” or “*in the Spirit*.” It is also described by certain nouns such as “*saved*” or “*the spiritual man*.” It is described by relationships “*your heavenly Father*” or “*kingdom of light*” etc.

Significantly, the Bible knows of no class of human beings that do not fit one of these two conditions since the fall of man.

There can be no spiritual union between the Spirit of God and the spirit of man apart from indwelling by the Holy Spirit simply because the human spirit resides within the body. If there is a union between the human spirit and the Spirit of God it must be within the human body (more on this later). Any human being without the indwelling Spirit of God is “*none of his*” – Rom. 8:9 simply because relationship with God consists of spiritual union with God. Therefore, all human beings are either “*in Adam*” or “*in Christ*” as there is no possible third option. The prepositional phrase “*in Christ*” is descriptive of spiritual union with God through Christ.

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## Understanding the fall of Man

In the Bible, God is characterized as the source of life which is characterized as light, love and righteousness, whereas, the scriptures characterizes man in his fallen state in terms that are exact polar opposites to life (dead), light (darkness), and love (past feelings) and righteousness (unclean) .

*...when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us.....  
Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.  
– Eph. 2:6; 4:18-19*

God is **light**, but *fallen* man is in a “*darkened*” state. God is **life**, but *fallen* man is “*dead in sins*” or “*alienated from the life of God*”. God is **righteous**, but *fallen* man is in a state that is “*given...over...to work all uncleanness.*” God is **love** but *fallen* man is “*past feeling.*”

Did God create man in this polar opposite condition? Is God responsible for this fallen condition?<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> God is the creator of free will and by its very nature free will includes contrary choice to God’s revealed will. Hence, God is the author of sin only in the sense of creating the potential for sin and thus permissively decreeing sin through freedom of choice. However, the creation of free will came with personal accountability in the use of that freedom of choice. Man was fully instructed concerning the right and wrong choice by the placement of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and thus made fully accountable for his choice.

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The answer is no. When God finished creation, He could look upon everything He made and proclaim it was “*very good*” (Gen. 1:31). Creation came from God’s hands “*very good*” without sin, without sickness, dying, hate, war and greed. The Bible says it was man that directly brought all these things into this “*very good*” world created by God. Mankind is responsible for the present chaotic state of this world and all the evil and harmful consequences of sin.<sup>6</sup> Paul says,

*Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned*: - Rom. 5:12

This transition from good to evil is what Theologians call *the fall of man* due to what theologians call *original sin*. It is a fall from life, light, love and righteousness into the chaos of spiritual darkness, deadness, uncleanness, and enmity. There would be no need for the new birth if it were not for the fall of man. The fall of man must be understood properly in order to understand new birth properly.

## *The Whole Human Race existed in Adam*

No Bible believer can dispute that the entire race of mankind was created when Adam was created. The whole human nature existed

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<sup>6</sup> How often do we hear men blaming God for every evil that happens to them or their loved ones? The evil consequences in this world are the “*wages of sin*” and work according to the principle of “*whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap.*” Man’s sin is the cause, not God.

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and consisted in Adam's DNA. Man does not come from monkeys, but from Adam. Therefore, the whole race was created "*in Adam*" when he was created, just like the seed was created in all other living things when they were created:

*And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so. – Gen. 1:11*

All of mankind was created seminally in Adam. All human potential existed in Adam when he was created. Adam was the whole human race and the whole human nature in one man.

## *The Whole Human Race is Culpable with Adam*

Paul plainly states that all mankind is held accountable for the singular action of Adam when he sinned as they directly receive the just consequences of that sin:

*12 Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.....*

*15 But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.*

*16 And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification.*

*17 For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of*

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*the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.)*

*18 Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.*

*19 For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.*

The whole human race received the consequences of this one action by this one man. This is repeated over and over again in the above passage:

*By one man sin entered and death by sin, so death passed upon all men.... – v. 12*

*The offence of one many be dead – v. 15*

*By one that sinned – v. 16*

*For if by one man's offence death reigned by one – v. 17*

*By the offence of one judgment came upon all men – v. 18*

*By one man's disobedience many were made sinners – v. 19*

Therefore, the whole human race acted together with Adam in some manner, as the whole human race receives the just consequences of this action. That is why many be dead, and many be made sinners when only one man sinned.

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## All men are In Adam

Paul gathers all humanity into two possible classifying contrasts at the end of the world:

*For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.* – 1 Cor. 15:22

When Adam was tested by God to see if he would be obedient to God, the whole human race existed as one undivided human nature in Adam. Therefore, when Adam failed that test the whole human race failed, and death was “*passed upon all men*” because all were “*in Adam*” and therefore as a result of all failing that test in Adam -“*all in Adam die.*”

There could be no better condition for mankind to be tested, because Adam was unhindered by a fallen nature. There could have been no better environment/circumstances for man to be tested, as it was in a sinless world without sickness, troubles, hatred, war or sorrow. Adam existed in an absolute perfect environment – the Garden of Eden.

## A Biblical Illustration

*And as I may so say, Levi also, who receiveth tithes, payed tithes in Abraham. For he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchisedec met him. – Heb. 7:10-11*

The idea of total humanity existing “*in Adam*” and acting together with Adam in the loins of Adam is based upon the same Biblical principle in regard to Levi paying tithes while still unborn

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in the loins of Abraham. Paul says that Levi paid tithes to Melchisedec when Abraham paid tithes. Hence, when Abraham acted, Levi acted together with him in one action. Likewise, all mankind existed as one undivided human nature in the loins of Adam, and when Adam acted, the whole human race acted with him in one action. When he sinned, the whole human race sinned with him. That is why the whole race is condemned with Adam, and why they receive the consequences of Adams disobedience.

Another proof that all men acted in one man and “*be dead*” and “*were made sinners*” by that one sin, is in the fact that Paul did **not** say “*death shall pass upon all men when all men sin*” nor did he say, “*by the offences of many men, many men be dead and many be made sinners.*”

However, that would be necessary if men only become sinners or suffer the consequences of sin (condemnation, judgment, death) due to their own individualized sins.

Instead, he said, “*death passed upon all men, for all have sinned*” and “*by the offence of one many be dead...many be made sinners.*”

This is why infants suffer the consequences of sin in the womb or die before they can individually discern right from wrong. All humans begin as infants in the womb, and the death of some infants in and out of the womb demonstrate they existed and acted as one indivisible human nature in Adam when he sinned, therefore “*all men have sinned.*” This is called the doctrine of Original Sin by theologians.

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## Universal Death is due to the Violation of Genesis 2:17

*12 Wherefore, as **by one man** sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that **all have sinned**:*

The “*death*” that came into the world by the singular “*sin*” of one man is what “*passed upon all men*” due to violating Genesis 2:17 by all mankind consisting in one undivided human nature existing in Adam.

*But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for **in the day** that thou eatest thereof **thou shalt surely die**.* – Gen. 2:17

God said he would die “*in the day*” he ate. However, he did not die physically until he was 930 years old. How are these two things reconciled? Death is **separation** and death begins with **spiritual** separation from God. He died spiritually in the very moment he sinned. Spiritual death initiates the indwelling principle of “*corruption*” (1 Cor. 15:53-55) or “*law of sin*” (Rom. 7:17, 20-21,23) that eventually evolved into the physical death (Rom. 7:24) of Adam 930 years later (Gen. 5:5). Physical death is the separation of the material from the immaterial substance of man.

Indeed, it is the violation of this singular law that is the only possible cause for universal death between Adam and Moses. The deaths of infants between Adam and Moses prove that the whole human race sinned when Adam sinned, as there is no other possible explanation for infants coming under the condemnation of sin. Paul proves this in verses 13-14:



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*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 them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.*

Between Adam and Moses death reigned universally. However, universal death cannot be the consequence of violating the Law of Moses during that time, simply because the Mosaic Law would not be given for another 4000 years. But some universal law had to exist, and had to have been violated or neither sin nor death could occur as Paul says sin is not imputed where there is no law, and where there is no sin there can be no condemnation (death). However, death reigned universally during that period and we have the Biblical genealogical records throughout the book of Genesis to prove that death (Gen. 5, 10-11, 25, 36, 37) was universal between Adam and Moses. Hence, some other law other than the Mosaic law had to have been violated by mankind.

## ***Death is not due to Violating Conscience***

Neither can universal death be attributed to the violation of the law of conscience as some insist.<sup>7</sup> Why? Because infants still die

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<sup>7</sup> Some quote John 1:9 to prove that God provides spiritual light to every man coming into the world. However, this "light" by context is defined as "life" (v. 4) given them by God when coming into the world. The Word is the author of **physical** "light/life" as He is the creator (Jn. 1:1-3). The Word is the author of **spiritual** "light/life" by new birth (Jn. 1:13). He is also the author of the

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within and outside of the womb without the mental ability to discern and violate conscience. Therefore, human death cannot be attributed to violation of conscience. The violation of conscience only provides a just basis for personal violation of God's law in the Day of Judgment (Rom. 2:14-15).

## *Death is not part of original Creation*

Some attempt to avoid this conclusion by claiming that death is not due to condemnation, but rather the natural result of God's original creation. However, Paul contradicts this view when he says:

*By one man sin entered into the world and death by sin...* - Rom. 5:12

*For if through the offence of one many be dead, - Rom. 5:15*

*The wages of sin is death...* - Rom. 6:23

James says that death is the direct result of sin:

*Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.* - James 1:15

Isaiah traces death to sin:

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metaphorical "light" of conscience given every man as they come into the world.

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*.....the soul that sinneth, it shall die.* – Ezek. 18:4

Finally, God told Adam that violation of his law would result in death “*in the day*” he sinned:

*But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.* – Gen. 2:17

So, death is not a part of God’s natural creation for man, but death is the direct wages, consequence, condemnation for violating the first law given to man by God in Genesis 2:17.

## *Death is not due to Post-birth willful sin*

Infants in the womb or out of the womb before the ability to discern right from wrong cannot sin “*after the similitude of Adam’s transgression.*”

*Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.* – Rom. 5:14

This text is referring to those born during the time between Adam and Moses (v. 13). He is speaking about Post-birth sin.

What does Paul mean when he says “*even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression.*” What does Paul mean by “*similitude*” (lit. likeness) of Adam’s transgression? Paul tells us that the nature of Adam’s sin was different than Eve’s:

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*And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.* – 1 Tim. 2:14

All procreated humans who come of age consciously discern right from wrong, and willingly and knowingly violate their conscience. That is the “*similitude*” (likeness) of Adam’s transgression – willful conscious sin.

There is no question that adults living between Adam and Moses could sin “*after the similitude of Adam’s transgression.*” Indeed, there are accounts of willful sin by many living during this period.

However, Paul is not speaking about those who could sin willfully during this period, but about those who could not sin willfully and yet they were subject to death.

Infants and other human beings mentally impaired from birth or still mentally undeveloped from birth are not able to “*sin after the similitude of Adam’s transgression.*” Therefore, violation of conscience, nor willful sin by infants and other under developed human beings cannot explain their death, as there can be no death where there is no violation of Law, and yet death occurred over such during this period.

Therefore, the only possible solution for the explanation of universal death between Adam and Moses is that all mankind existed and acted in Adam when Adam “*sinned*” or violated Genesis 2:17. All of humanity existed as one indivisible human nature, which willfully sinned as one man – Adam. That is the only possible Law which could have been violated, whereby death

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“*passed*” upon all mankind, including those incapable of discerning right from wrong between Adam and Moses.

*Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:..... For if by one man’s offence death reigned by one; .... Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation;.....For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, - Rom. 5:12,17,18,19*

## **Infants are born with a sinful nature:**

Still others attempt to avoid the conclusion that the whole human race existed and acted in Adam when he sinned by denying that infants are born into this world with a sinful nature. They believe that God individually creates the immaterial part of man at the point of conception.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, the infant is created untainted by sin as God cannot create anything sinful. This view denies the whole human is reproduced after its kind, but only the material shell is reproduced. However, everything else God created to reproduce after its own kind does not reproduce only part of itself. Moreover, the Scriptures indicate clearly otherwise:

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<sup>8</sup> However, the body is equally said to be formed by God in the mother’s womb. Therefore, should we deny anything of man is reproduced through natural generation? The truth is that the whole person, material and immaterial is reproduced by natural generation, but God is involved in each individual birth by arranging the right sperm and egg to form each distinct individual DNA at the right moment in time.

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*Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.* – Psa. 51:5

*The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies.* – Psa. 58:3

All humans at birth can be called “*the wicked*” because they have violated Genesis 2:17 when they existed as one indivisible human nature in Adam. Therefore “*all in Adam die*” (1 Cor. 15:22).

*Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble.....Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one.* – Job 14:1,4

*What is man, that he should be clean? and he which is born of a woman, that he should be righteous? - Job 15:14*

*How then can man be justified with God? or how can he be clean that is born of a woman? - Job 25:4*

God speaking of Israel’s origin in metaphorical terms of a birth says:

*Yes, you heard not; yes, you knew not; yes, from that time that your ear was not opened: for I knew that you would deal very treacherously, and were called a transgressor from the womb.* – Isa. 48:8

Moreover, no infant enters this world as a believer, but come into this world as unbelievers and under condemnation:

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*He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not **is condemned already**, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. –*

Jn. 3:18

After raising five children and having fourteen grandchildren, I have never needed to teach any of them to do evil, as it came natural. Instead, the major task that parents have is to train them to be and do good, as that does not come natural. Every infant comes into this world with a nature that is prone to do evil without needing an example or training because they come into this world with a sinful or rebellious nature.

Therefore “*all in Adam die*” (1 Cor. 15:22). However, not all who are “*in Adam*” are “*in Christ*” as all in Christ are made alive. Indeed, all in Christ overcome death.<sup>9</sup> For those “*in Christ*” death

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<sup>9</sup> All who are “*in Adam*” were created in Adam at the time Adam was created and fell in Adam when Adam sinned. The entire fallen image of Adam is passed down through procreation through the male. However, Christ was virgin born and not a partaker of the fallen nature which is passed through the male. Thus, Christ was without the indwelling law of sin. His humanity was like Adam prior to the Fall. With regard to his deity, Christ was never created, but is the eternal Son of God. Therefore, all who are “*in Christ*” are “*created in Christ Jesus*” (Eph. 2:1,5-10) by new birth or re-creation (new birth). Hence, it is not until we are created in Christ by new birth do we receive in our own person the consequences of His obedience. Prior to being “*created in Christ*”, the elect are only purposed these consequences “*in him*” (Eph. 1:4) before the world began. However, God’s purposes do not obtain the reality until God actually works out His purpose in time and space (Isa. 46:10-11). Therefore “*all in Adam*” does not equal “*all in Christ*” as in each case the “*all*” must first be created either in Adam or in Christ. Although “*all*” who are **created “in Christ”** were **procreated** in Adam, not “*all*” **procreated** in Adam are **created “in Christ”** or are born

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is only removed from the body by glorification or resurrection (1 Cor. 15:54-56).

It is this original sin that **separated** man from God as the source of *spiritual* light, love and righteousness and thus man fell into a *spiritual* state of darkness, enmity and unrighteousness. That state is called “death” or separation from God.

Significantly, just as death begins within man and then proceeds to affect the thoughts, words and actions of the external man and his eternal destiny, likewise, spiritual life begins within man and then proceeds to effect the thoughts, words and actions of the external man and his eternal destiny. Just as death worked in and through man, so does life work in and through man. Just as death sets apart the spirit, then soul and body of man in a spiritual digression, so eternal life sets apart the spirit, then soul and body of man (1 Thes. 5:23) in a spiritual sanctification.

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again. Indeed, Paul makes a point to distinguish all in Adam from all in Christ by stating those in Christ are only those who actually received the grace (Rom. 5:17) of regeneration.



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### How Death is “Passed Upon” all Men

*This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him; Male and female created he them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created. And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness, after his image; and called his name Seth: And the days of Adam after he had begotten Seth were eight hundred years: and he begat sons and daughters: And all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years: and he died. – Gen. 5:1-5*

Before the fall, it is said that God created man in the likeness of God, after his own image. However, after the fall, Moses says that Adam “*begat a son in his own likeness, after his image*” which was a **fallen** likeness and image. The proof is that this genealogy and every one that follows in the Old Testament scriptures, all end with “*and he died*” as “*in Adam all die.*”

Another fact about all Old Testament genealogies is they never contain women but only the fathers of the children. Why? The answer is because the principle of death “*passed upon all men*” comes through the seed of the father and not the seed of the mother.

This is why Jesus was predicted to be born of the *seed of the woman* rather than the seed of the male:

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*And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. – Gen. 3:15*

*Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. – Isa. 7:14*

*Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us. – Mt. 1:23*

It would be no “*sign*” to anyone for a young woman to bring forth a son, as that is what young women normally do. However, for a “*virgin*” to bring forth a son would truly be a miraculous “*sign*” totally unheard of in all of human history.

However, this was an essential sign, because Christ could not be conceived by the “*seed*” of the male because death is “*passed upon*” the human race through the male contribution to physical birth. Instead he was “*conceived of the Holy Ghost*.” Christ received the complete human nature from the “*seed of the woman*” and thus God “*prepared a body*” (Heb. 10:5) free from the indwelling principle or law of sin “*passed upon*” all men from their original human father Adam. Hence, the Second Adam did not have the first Adam for his father and therefore death was not “*passed upon*” Christ at birth. He had no fallen nature. No man could take his life. He would have never died by natural causes. Instead, he freely gave his life to satisfy the penalty of sin in our behalf. Therefore, the Scriptures could say there was no “*sin in him*” and that he was “without sin” and therefore, he “knew no sin.”

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This is why all the Old Testament sacrificial types of Christ must be free of spot and blemish.

However, there is one genealogy provided in the New Testament totally unlike all previous genealogies. It is the genealogy of Christ. It is the only genealogy containing women. However, more significantly, it is the only genealogy that never ends with “*and he died.*” There is no death mentioned in his genealogy. Why? Did not all those listed in his genealogy physically die? Yes! However, all who are in his genealogy were born again believers in the coming Christ (Acts 10:43) and therefore, he that “*liveth and believeth in me shall never die, believeth thou this.*” All the Jewish genealogical records were lost in the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in A.D. 70. Therefore, the only genealogy available to link anyone to the genealogies found in the Old Testament Scriptures is the genealogy of Christ. Isaiah says that Christ saw “*his seed*” although he never married and had physical children.

*Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. – Isa. 53:10*

They are the “*seed*” according to the promise of Abraham which all true believers are:

*Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, **the same are the children of Abraham.** – Gal. 3:7*

***Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise.** – Gal. 4:18*

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Therefore, the only possible way for any modern Jew to trace themselves back to Abraham or Adam is through the genealogy of Christ, which requires to be “*in him*” by new birth as they were in Adam by physical birth. They must be born of “*the Spirit of Christ*” in order to be of “*his seed*.”

## *A Universal Truth*

We are created “*in Christ Jesus*” by new birth or divine quickening (Eph. 2:1,6,10).

Here is the true difference between the phrases “*in the flesh*” and “*in the Spirit*” as used by Paul. To be “*in the flesh*”, refers to all who were born “*after the flesh*” through natural generation or natural procreation. To be “*in the Spirit*”, refers to all who are born “*after the Spirit*” through supernatural procreation by the Spirit of God:

*So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. – Romans 8:8-9*

Those who only experience natural birth are “*none of his*” because they are born into this world in a separated condition from God. They come into this world in a “*darkened*” condition in a state of spiritual “*blindness*.” They come into this world “*alienated from the life of God*” or spiritually “*dead*.” By natural birth, they come into this world completely given over to “*all uncleanness*.” That is why Paul says all who are “*in the flesh cannot please God*” and such are “*none of his*.” They come into this world at “*enmity*” with God.

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This is what Jesus was talking about when he told Nicodemus that he must be “*born again*” because “*that which is born of flesh is flesh, and that which is born of Spirit is spirit*” (Jn. 3:6). There is no third option.

There have only been two types of mankind that have ever lived upon planet earth before and after Pentecost:

*Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now.* – Gal. 4:28-29

Follow the argument of Paul. As it “*was*” then, “*even so it is now.*” There “*was*” such “*then*” who were “*born after the flesh*” and so is there “*now.*” Then, there “*was*” such “*then*” who were born after the Spirit, “*even so it is now.*”

Paul argued that not all physical born Israelites are to be counted for the “*promised seed*” to Abraham, but only those double born Israelites (physical and spiritual born ones) are the true “*children of God.*” The “*children of the flesh*” are “*none of His*”:

*Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are **of Israel**:<sup>10</sup> Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not*

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<sup>10</sup> “*Not all Israel, which are of Israel*” cannot refer to an Israel made up of all the elect Jews and Gentiles, as that doctrine demands that all “of Israel” is “all Israel.” Paul is saying that not all natural born children of ethnic Israel is of the promised Israel from the seed of his own loins in contrast to other nations that will come from him.

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*the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.* – Rom. 9:6-8

The Adamic fall demands that all human beings from Adam forward without exception are born spiritually separated from God, and therefore, “*death has passed upon all mankind.*” These are “*the children of the flesh*” and those “*in the flesh*” and “*these are not the children of God*” but are “*none of his.*” All who are born only “*after the flesh*” and thus “*in the flesh cannot please God.*”

Remember, the problem originates in the Garden of Eden “*in the day*” Adam sinned. Death is “*passed*” from that point forward through the seed of the male to all children, male or female. The woman’s seed does not pass on the indwelling principle of corruption, the law of death.<sup>11</sup>

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In all the Old Testament genealogies it is male to male. In the promise of a redeemer (Gen. 3:15) it is the “seed of the woman.” The incarnation by passed the male reproductive sperm thus producing a “virgin” birth of Christ.

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## Spiritual Separation is spiritual Opposition

*Because the carnal mind **is** enmity against God: for it **is** not subject to the law of God, **neither indeed can be**. So then they that are in the flesh **cannot** please God.- Rom. 8:7-8*

Paul uses the present tense state of being verbs “**is**” and “**are**” to show this is a continuing state of being rather than a temporal completed action(s). This fallen condition or state of being is defined as “*enmity*.” The word “*enmity*” does not describe an action, but is a noun that describes a heart condition or attitude toward God. “*Enmity*” is a state of war. This is not descriptive of external actions of war but a mindset that exists in a state of war against God, and that is why fallen man “**is**” not subject to the Law of God because he exists in a state of rebellion against God which is manifest by violating His law. It is not possible for such a state to be in submission to God (“*neither indeed can be*”), as that is contrary to this very existing condition, as they are polar opposites to each other. This is why those “*in the flesh*” or those in this lost condition cannot “*please God*.” This is why this condition is described as being under “*the law of sin*.”

Therefore, we are not sinners because we practice sin. We practice sin because we are sinners by our sinful nature or state of being, as we are “*by nature*” the children of wrath (Eph. 2:3).

Therefore, since it is a spiritual condition of opposition against God and His law, it is by definition existing in a *sinful spiritual state*. The state of spiritual *separation* (death) is a state of active opposition against God.

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## *The Fallen Nature is Evil*

When Jesus rebuked the Scribes and Pharisees he said,

*O generation of vipers, how can ye, **being evil**, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an **evil man** out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. – Mt. 12:24-25*

He first described their spiritual condition as “*being evil*” rather than *doers* of evil. He attributed their doing evil to “*being*” evil. The bringing “*forth evil things*” originates with “*being evil*.” They did not sin in order to be evil, but they sinned because they are evil.

Jesus told his disciples that evil actions originate with an evil heart (Mt. 15:19). Therefore, fallen man practices evil because his heart is ‘*evil*’ by nature, and that defines his moral state of “*being*.”

What does it mean that his heart is evil by nature? It means that man is born into this world with a heart that is governed by evil motives. This may be seen clearer when compared to what constitutes righteous motives:

*Whether therefore you eat, or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. - 1 Cor. 10:31*

*And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him. - Col. 3:17*



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*If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God gives: **that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.** - 1 Pet. 4:11*

In Romans, Paul claims that God is revealed and known to all men through his external witness (creation) and internal witness (conscience). He defines the first characteristic of evil as refusal to recognize and give thanks to God:

*Because that, when they knew God, **they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful;** but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. - Rom. 1:21*

The root of an evil heart is that it operates by the wrong motive. The glory of God is never its root motive. Natural man may live and die for many causes (love of family, nation, honor, etc.) but the glory of God is never his root motive. Therefore, fallen man is evil because his motives for everything he says and does are evil.

His motives are evil because his heart is inclined to evil. Fallen man loves darkness more than light.

*And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and **men loved darkness rather than light,** because their deeds were evil. For every one that does evil **hates the light,** neither comes to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd. - Jn 3:19-20*

The moral inclination of his heart is to love darkness and hate light. This moral inclination is a product of the fallen moral image which he received from Adam:

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*And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat a son **in his own likeness, and after his image**; and called his name Seth: - Gen. 5:3*

*You are **of your father the devil**, and the lusts of your father you will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and stayed not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. - Jn. 8:44*

*In which in time past ye **walked** according to the course of this world, **according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience**: Among whom also we all had our **manner of life** in times past **in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind**; and were by nature the **children of wrath, even as others**. - Eph. 2:2-3*

We come into this world with a heart that is inclined to evil because its moral image originates with Satan through the fall of man. Theologians call this total depravity as all the faculties of the heart are totally inclined to evil. However, just because all our faculties are inclined to evil does not mean that every man has reached his full evil potential.

## *The Fallen Nature Progresses in Evil*

When humans come into this world they are gradually exposed to various degrees of light. It is their interaction with light which manifests their moral nature is inclined to evil.

The first authority they are confronted with is their parents and as soon as they are able to express themselves a war of wills begin

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between the infant and its parents that never ceases until they are able to remove themselves out from under the direct authority of their parents. During this stage of life they are dependent upon their parents for everything at first until at last they claim complete independency. During this stage of growth they are exposed to moral rules derived by traditions, religion and/or social order that are imposed upon them. These things form the moral basis for development of their conscience.

In societies and/or families where the Law of God is not taught, the traditions, religion and/or social order train the conscience to discern right from wrong. The conscience thus trained does the same work as the Law of God performs, which is to provide a standard of right and wrong:

*For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law to themselves: **Which show the work of the law** written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;) - Rom. 2:14-15*

When every human reaches an age where they are able to understand right from wrong, they will violate that standard manifesting their evil nature.

Throughout life, they will be confronted with light in different areas of their life and in different degrees. As they are confronted with light they will rebel against that light so that their conscience becomes more and more hardened. The manifestations of this hardening process may be hatred, lying, divorce, killing, drug abuse, sexual perversion, jail, false religion, and war, etc.

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An analogy that might help understand this hardening process is damp clay exposed to sunlight. The greater degree of exposure to sunlight the greater degree of hardening will occur. The more moral light that sinners are exposed to the more hardening will occur. The more clearly they understand the light the greater degree of hardening will occur.

The nation of Israel had been exposed to light through its prophets and the result is that they killed the prophets and rejected the truth. However, when Christ came as the ultimate prophet manifesting the ultimate light, the hardening process increased in comparison of the light revealed.

*36 While you have light, believe in the light, that you may be the children of light. These things spoke Jesus, and departed, and did hide himself from them.*

*37 ¶ But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him:*

*38 That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spoke, Lord, who has believed our report? and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?*

*39 Therefore **they could not believe**, because that Esaias said again,*

*40 He has blinded their eyes, and **hardened their heart**; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them. - Jn. 12:36-40*

How does God blind their eyes and harden their hearts? He simply exposes them to more light and the blinding and hardening process is the natural consequence. What is true of Israel as a nation is true of every fallen human being.

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## God's Standard of Good Enough

..... *Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.*

– Eph. 4:18-19

Most of Christendom along with the entire non-Christian world denies this is descriptive of the universal condition of fallen man. They believe natural man is not in spiritual “*blindness*” and in a “*darkened*” state but lives in a twilight zone able to see. They believe natural man is not “*given over...to all uncleanness*” but is born into this world fully able to do good. They believe natural man is not “*alienated from the life of God*” and spiritually “*dead*”, but just spiritually sick or in a comma. They don't believe man is in a state of “*enmity*” against God, but they believe the natural man “*can please God*” if he wants. This is what most of the world believes, but is it true to the Word of God?

Is this only a matter of interpretation or is this a failure to understand God's standard of what is good versus what is evil in God's sight?

### ***Are there any born “after the flesh” who are Good?***

God provided His universal standard for defining good versus evil to the human race through the nation of Israel. It is called “*the law of God*.” It is a universal standard because Paul uses and applies it universally to Jews and Gentiles alike by universal terms:

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*What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved **both Jews and Gentiles**, that they are **all under sin**; As it is written, There is **none righteous, no, not one**: There is **none** that understands, there is **none** that seeks after God. They are **all** gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; **there is none that does good, no, not one**.....Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are **under the law**: that **every mouth** may be stopped, and **all the world** may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall **no flesh** be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. – Rom. 3:9, 18-19*

Notice the universal inclusive language:

1. *“both Jews and Gentiles”*
2. *“they are all under sin”*
3. *“none righteous”*
4. *“none good”*
5. *“every mouth”*
6. *“all the world”*
7. *“no flesh”*

Even those who lived before Moses (Gentiles) and did not know *“the Law”* given to Israel, had a conscience which Paul says does *“the work of the law”* (Rom. 2:15). What is the work of the Law? The work of the Law is to educate man in the knowledge of right and wrong (*“for by the law is the knowledge of sin”*). That is precisely how the conscience operates;

*(“their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another)” – Rom. 2:15.*

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That is the standard by which God will judge individual sins of all men who do not have the Mosaic Law as their conscience does the work of the Law. Otherwise, Paul could never say “*both Jews and Gentiles...are all under sin.*” One must be first “*under law*” before they can be “*under sin*” because sin is the violation of Law (1 Jn. 2:6) and where there is no law there is no sin (Rom. 5:13). All humanity existed “*in Adam*” and when Adam violated God’s law in Genesis 2:17 all “*in Adam*” violated that Law when Adam violated the law. Thus, in Adam, the whole human race “*have sinned.*” In addition to this race sin, all capable of discerning right from wrong have violated either the law of Moses or the law of conscience. Both reveal that man is evil by nature and therefore will fail any standard of right and wrong. Both reveal that man is a morally fallen creature that cannot be justified by God’s standard of righteousness.

Therefore, when God looked down from heaven upon the “*children of men*” (not the children of God, not merely the Jew) or those born “*after the flesh*” and therefore “*in the flesh*” what did he find?

*The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one.*

– Psa. 14:2-3

God found none good or doing good, “*no, not one.*” Could God be wrong, or let God be true and every man a liar (Rom. 3:4)?

Both Jesus and Paul told the most pious religious law keepers of their day that they did not keep the Law as they professed:

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*Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you keepeth the law?.... – Jn. 7:19*

*And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.  
– Acts 13:39*

Therefore, those who believe that prior to the cross men were justified before God by keeping the Law are proven wrong.<sup>12</sup> Indeed, as Paul says “*by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight.*”

Why is this true? Why can't anyone be justified by the deeds of the law? No flesh can be justified by the Law because the Law of God defines “good” according to God’s own personal goodness. The Law reveals “*the righteousness of God*” as the standard of good.

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<sup>12</sup> N.T. Wright and those who advocate what they call “the new perspective” deny that Israel during the New Testament period viewed the law as a means for moral justification before God. Rather, they claim that keeping the Law was merely for identification as the covenant people of God. They claim that in Romans and Galatians that the phrase “not of works” in connection with justification by faith simply meant one does not have to become a covenant keeping Jew in order to be justified before God. This view is wrong. Jesus made it clear that the works of the law was understood by Israel as a means to obtain life and thus ultimate moral justification before God by his discussion with the Lawyer and the rich young ruler. Indeed, Christ himself understood the law was a valid way to obtain moral justification before God by works if one was able to keep the Law as defined by God – sinless perfection (Mt. 5:20-48). The problem was not in the law but in the fallen nature of man – the flesh. Paul’s denial that justification is by works with regard to Abraham was prior to, thus outside and apart from any covenant relationship (Rom.4:1-11). Therefore, “works” was understood to refer to his own personal attempts (thoughts, words and actions) by Abraham to find a right standing before God.



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*But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; - Rom. 3:21*

Paul is arguing that in the Person of Jesus Christ, who was witnessed by the Law and the prophets (Acts 10:43) is the righteousness of God manifested “*without the Law.*” In other words, the Law was given to manifest “*the righteousness of God*” which “*now*” is manifested in the Person and life of Jesus Christ (who is God). What previously was only revealed in the written word and preached by the prophets is now revealed in the incarnate God made flesh.

What kind of righteousness is “*the righteousness of God*”? How good is God? God is sinless or absolutely perfect throughout His existence. For example, Jesus told His disciples that the kind of righteousness needed to enter heaven is the kind that exceeds the best of religious men:

*For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven. – Mt. 5:20*

All who make the claim that they keep the Law, do so by either lowering the standards of the Law (by misinterpretation and application - Mt. 5:21-45) or by delusional thinking (1 Jn. 1:8-10). For example, Jesus went on in Matthew 5:21-45 to show that the proper interpretation of the Law of God must “*exceed*” the interpretations of the Traditions of the elders followed by the Scribes and Pharisees:

*Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time... - Mt. 5:21*

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Notice that Jesus did not say “*by the prophets*” or “*It is written*” which are both descriptions of the Word of God. Instead, Jesus is referring to the “*traditions of the elders*” that was the final authority for interpreting the scriptures in the day of Christ by the scribes and Pharisees. The traditional interpretations of the law lowered the standard of the Law to merely external and visible acts (murder and adultery). However, the law “*is spiritual*” (Rom. 7:12) and defines sin according to the motive of the heart, regardless if those motives ever develop into external actions or are ever committed externally. Therefore, in order to be justified by the law’s standards the motives and intents of the heart must not violate the Law in principle. Thus, obedience to the Law required both inward and outward conformation to the Law’s standards. Ultimately one must be as sinless, as God Himself. That is precisely the conclusion Jesus draws. One must be good as God in order to enter heaven:

*Be ye therefore perfect, **even as** your Father which is in heaven **is** perfect.* – Matt. 5:46

Your Father in heaven has never sinned throughout His entire existence. He has never needed to be forgiven, because He is sinless and remains sinless. That is what the Law requires to be justified before God. James says it this way:

*For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in **one point, he is guilty of all.** For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law.* – James 2:10-11

Violation of one point of the law condemns a person as a sinner and brings that person “*under the curse*” of the law or death.

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Therefore, to be justified by the law, one must keep every point, and **continue in all points** throughout all of your life in order to be regarded as righteous by the Law.

*For as many as are of the works of the law **are under the curse**: for it is written, **Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things** which are written in the book of the law **to do them**. But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: - Gal. 3:10-11*

This is why the sacrificial type of Christ under the law had to be “*without spot, wherein is no blemish*” (Num. 19:2; Ex. 12:5; 1 Pet. 1:19) from birth to death. This is why Jesus must be born of a virgin in order to avoid having death being passed down to him through physical birth. This is why Jesus was “*without sin*” and who “*did no sin*” nor could sin be “*found in him*” from birth to his death. This is why Jesus came into the world to be and to do what no natural born sinner could do – satisfy the Law’s demands. Christ fulfilled all the Law’s demands as the Second Adam and substitute for His people. Anyone attempting to be justified by the law must be sinless from birth to death or they “*come short*” of the glory of God.

## **None Good but God**

This is why when the rich young pious ruler came to Jesus and placed himself on an equal ability to perform goodness with Christ by saying “*Good master, what good thing must I do to inherit eternal life*” that Christ responded, “*there is none good but one, and that is God.*” Then Christ pointed him to God’s standard to qualify as “*good*” enough for eternal life or entrance into heaven, and the young man claimed to have kept the law all his life “*from my youth up.*” He kept it like the rest of the Jews – externally and

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improperly, and that is why Jesus continued to say “*if thou wilt be perfect*” (which is what keeping the Law actually demands) he was to go sell all that he had and come follow Christ. In other words, the Law demands complete self-denial and total commitment to God with all your mind, heart, life and strength all the time. Natural born man has already fallen, already failed, already “*come short of the glory of God*” and is therefore already “*under the curse of the Law*” and that is why there is “*none good, no, not one*” by God’s standard of “*good.*”

That is why the apostle John said that any professed Christian is deceived if they think they are without sin, even if they are so under the control of the Spirit of God to the extent that they are presently writing scriptures without error as John was when writing:

*If we say, we are without sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us* – 1 Jn. 1:8

John includes himself (“*we*”) using the present tense (“*are*”) while writing under the influence of the Holy Spirit.

Man comes into this world “*condemned already*” (Jn. 3:18) because he is a sinner by nature due to original sin. Even during the period of his life between conception and before he has the ability to discern right from wrong he manifests that fallen nature. However, when fallen man is confronted with any discernible standard of right and wrong, whether it is his conscience or in the written Law of God, he manifests that sinful nature by willfully violating any discernible law. That is why Paul can say “*there is none that doeth good, no, not one*” – Rom. 3:11

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Therefore, a man may compare himself with others and be better than others. He may compare himself with himself and be better than what he was. However, the standard of good established by God is to be as good as God. Therefore, when God looked down from heaven to see if there were any that measured up to his standard of good he could find no “*children of men*” good, no, not one.

## *Good begins with the Heart*

However, some will object and claim that many people do real “*good*” things for other people. Some even give up their own life for their country and for others.

The Bible also uses “*good*” as a relative term to describe those who outwardly manifest conformity to God’s law in contrast with those who outwardly manifest violation of God’s Law. However, it is never used this way in the context of justification before God. It is merely used to describe the superficiality differences between unregenerate men.

For example, Jesus said of the Scribes and Pharisees they were outwardly spotless, clean before men:

*Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men’s bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but within you are full of hypocrisy and iniquity. - Matt. 23:27-28*

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However, all unregenerate people with regard to the **internal state** of the heart are equally evil. While man judges the inward by the outward appearance, God judges the outward appearance by the inward condition of the heart

*But the LORD said to Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD sees not as man sees; for man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart.* - 1Sam.16:7

*All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes; but the LORD weighs the spirits.* – Prov. 16:2

*But, O LORD of hosts, that judge righteously, that **try the reins and the heart**, let me see your vengeance on them: for to you have I revealed my cause.* – Jer. 11:20

*I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.* – Jer. 17:10

*But, O LORD of hosts, that try the righteous, and **see the reins and the heart**, let me see your vengeance on them: for to you have I opened my cause.* – Jer. 20:12

*And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searches **the reins and hearts**: and I will give to every one of you according to your works.* – Rev. 2:23

God determines the moral value of the external works by the heart motive that prompted them. There is only one heart motive that God regards as “*good*” for all that a person may say or do, and

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that is saying it or doing it for the “*glory of God.*” Anything that comes “*short of the glory of God*” is defined by God as sin (Rom. 3:23).

*Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.* – 1 Cor. 10:31

*And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.* – Col. 3:17

*And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men;* – Col. 3:23

*For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God* – Rom. 3:23

Fallen man does not sin in order to become a sinner. He sins because he already is a sinner by nature. Sins originate from a sinful heart rather than a sinful heart originating from sins:

*But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: - Mt. 15:18-19*

*..... Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart:* – Eph. 4:18

The root of this problem of total inability to perceive, understand and know the things of God is a heart problem – “*because of the*

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*blindness of their heart.*” The unregenerate spirit determines the moral inclination of the human heart.

It is their heart condition that is the root of their total inability to please God or to participate in the light, life, righteousness, and love found only in spiritual union with God. Their heart condition is a state of opposition to God. Their heart is in a condition of “*blindness.*” The word “*blindness*” in Ephesians 4:18 translate the Greek term *porosis* which literally refers to a *hardened* or *callous* condition. The heart is in a hardened or callous condition of opposition to God. Opposition to God is sin. Therefore, the heart is in a hardened or callous condition of active sin toward God. They have an “evil” heart that is hardened and callous in its evil or opposition toward God.

However, this is not the condition of heart that God created in man. God created man “*upright in heart.*” Therefore, the *fall* of man was from this “*upright*” condition of heart to an evil heart. God described fallen man prior to the judgment of the flood by saying:

*And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.* – Gen. 6:5

After the flood, God said of fallen man:

*And the LORD smelled a sweet smell; and the LORD said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man’s sake; for the imagination of man’s heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done.* – Gen. 8:21

Notice, that God says the same moral condition of the human heart before the flood is the same condition after the flood “*from*”

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*his youth.*” The Hebrew term “youth” is *na’awr* and is translated “childhood” in 1 Samuel 12:2 where Samuel claims to have walked before Israel from the time of his “childhood.” He was brought to the temple and given to Eli after he was weaned from his mother:

*But Hannah went not up; for she said unto her husband, I will not go up until the child be weaned, and then I will bring him, that he may appear before the LORD, and there abide for ever.* – 1 Sam. 1:22

David says of his own birth:

*Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.* – Psa. 50:5

David speaking of fallen human beings as being prone toward evil as soon as they are born says:

*The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies.* – Psa. 58:3

Job confirmed this was the condition by natural birth and impossible for change to arise out of that natural fallen state from birth.

*Man that is **born of a woman** is of few days, and full of **trouble**. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not. And dost thou open thine eyes **upon such an one**, and bringest me into judgment with thee? **Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one.*** – Job 14:1

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Again,

*What is man, that he should be clean? and he which is **born of a woman**, that he should be righteous? – Job 15:17*

*How then can man be justified with God? or how can he be clean **that is born of a woman**? – Job. 25:4*

God speaking of Israel origin in metaphorical terms of a birth says:

*Yes, you heard not; yes, you knew not; yes, from that time that your ear was not opened: for I knew that you would deal very treacherously, and were **called a transgressor from the womb**. – Isa. 48:8*

Therefore, the sinful condition of the heart is not a post-birth phenomenon, or caused by post-birth acts of sin. We sin because we are born sinners by nature as this is the condition or state of the human heart by birth.

The wise man said concerning the heart within the sons men or sons of Adam (not the sons of God):

*....therefore **the heart** of the sons of men is **fully set in them to do evil**. – Eccles. 8:11*

*This is an evil among all things that are done under the sun, that there is one event to all: yes, also **the heart of the sons of men is full of evil**, and madness is in their heart while they live, and after that they go to the dead. – Eccles. 9:3*

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Jesus says that the root of all evil is the heart of men:

*For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies:  
- Mt. 15:19<sup>13</sup>*

Jesus likened the heart of men to a tree and its works to the fruit of trees and said that the fruit of a tree/heart reveals the condition of the tree/heart:

*Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by his fruit. – Matthew 12:33*

He then applies it to his audience in the following way:

*O generation of vipers, how can you, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart brings forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things. – Mt. 12:34-35*

It is this heart condition of “*being evil*” that makes it totally unable to bring forth any good thing:

*A good tree **cannot** bring forth evil fruit, **neither** can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. – Mt. 7:19*

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<sup>13</sup> Here is the proper definition of “works.” Works are inclusive of the thought, words and actions. Violation of the law began with “evil thoughts.” To merely “look” with lust upon a woman violated the seventh commandment. To merely pronounce the words “fool” unjustly toward someone violated the sixth commandment. Thus “works” is inclusive of thoughts, words and deeds.

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We sin because we are sinners. We do not sin in order to become sinners. We are born into this world with a sinful nature as our hearts are inclined to sin by nature.

The total inability to respond to the things of God from birth to death of the wicked is described in metaphors by David:

*The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies. Their poison is like the poison of a serpent: they are like the deaf adder **that stoppeth her ear; Which will not hearken to the voice of charmers, charming never so wisely.** – Psa. 58:3-5*

Jeremiah says the same thing as Jesus about the complete inability of fallen man to do good said:

*Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? **then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.** – Jer. 13:23*

The reason for this inability was due to the state of the fallen heart of man as described by Jeremiah:

*The heart **is** deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? – Jer. 17:9*

From birth, the fallen children of men have a heart that exists in an unchangeable calloused, hardened state of opposition to God and the things of God. This inward condition of the heart is then progressively manifested as it is confronted with God's light, life and righteousness, as expressed in nature, conscience, the Word of God and in the born again people of God. The hatred of the fallen heart for light is expressed by Jesus when he says:

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*And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. **For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.** – Jn. 3:19-20*

However, that hardened, calloused evil state of the heart is never allowed complete freedom by God. God restrains it by progressive human developmental growth, by divine providences, by human governments and the influence of God's people. He never allows the evil potential of the fallen human heart to ever cross the boundary of what God will use to glorify Himself, and use for the ultimate good of His people:

*Surely the wrath of man shall praise you: **the remainder of wrath shall you restrain.** – Psa. 76:10*

*For we know that God worketh all things for the good of those who love God and are the called according to His purpose. – Rom. 8:28*

Therefore, the fallen human heart has the full potential to give evil expression equal to Satan. All fallen human beings are equally dead in sin and have the same potential, but not all have yet discovered their evil potential or if they have, not all are allowed to develop the same level of corruptness because of divine restraints on their lives.

All corpses are dead, but not all are in the same stages of corruption. A person who has just died may look still alive, but is as dead as a corpse that has been through a funeral service, and as dead as, a corpse that has been in the grave for four days. However, there is a difference in the manifest stages of corruption. Likewise, all who are born into this world are born dead in sin with

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the same potential to sin. However, infants, youth and religious people may look alive, more than the outright ungodly crowd, and the worldly crowd may appear to be better than those that society describes as the greatest outright evil persons (e.g. Hitler), but they are all equally dead in sin and all have the very same potential.

This evil potential is progressively discovered by fallen men as they are confronted with light, life and righteousness. The more exposure to light, life and righteousness the more their hatred and resistance of the light is made manifest.

The different response to light by the children of men in contrast to the children of God is like the difference between how soft wet clay and butter respond to exposure of the Sun. The same Sun that melts the butter, hardens the clay. The difference is not the Sun (truth) but in the nature of the clay (the unregenerate) versus the butter (the regenerate). The more the unregenerate heart is exposed to the light of God the more hardened it becomes.

However, the degree of hardness and resistance may be partially concealed by false religion that mixes truth with error and/or denies the absolute essentials of salvation. Those who embrace false religion claim they can discern and see the truth. However, when they are exposed to absolute truth their professed open eyes to truth begin to close and their professed receptive heart to truth is hardened. Therefore, exposure of lost religious people to the truth who claim to perceive, to see, to understand and embrace truth, produces a manifest hardening to the truth in the form of unbelief. Jesus speaks of such when he says:

*Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor*

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*understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them.* – Jn. 12:39-40

This is applied only to lost religious people who claim to see, perceive and understand the truth, but when actually exposed to the truth, it is that exposure that produces these effects in them due to the real condition of their heart.

## **Good hearts precede good desire and actions:**

The difference between those “*born after the flesh*” and who are living “*in the flesh*” and those “*born after the Spirit*” and who are living “*in the Spirit*” is their heart. The natural born man does not have a “*good*” heart, and therefore cannot please God.

*O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!*  
– Deut. 5:29

Such a heart to even perceive, see and hear God must be given by God through new birth:

*Yet the LORD hath not given you an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day.* – Deut. 29:4

Good desires and actions originate with the new heart, not the old heart. God must give a new heart before a person will desire to do those things that please God:

*A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of*

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*your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.- Ezek. 36:26-27*

There is no neutral heart that is neither good nor evil or in the process of obtaining a new heart:

*Either make<sup>14</sup> the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by his fruit. O generation of vipers, how can ye, **being evil**, speak good things? for out of the abundance of **the heart** the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of **the heart** bringeth forth good things: and an **evil man** out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. – Mt. 12:33-35*

Evil hearts cannot produce good. Hence, a good heart cannot come from an evil heart

*Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. – Mt. 7:18-19*

Therefore, there is no twilight zone between lost and saved where an evil heart can participate in obtaining a good heart. The evil heart neither “**seeketh**” after God nor participates with God in

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<sup>14</sup> “**Make**” Jesus is not claiming that unregenerate man can make his own heart good. He is calling them to “make” a decision concerning what kind of heart they have. They cannot have both a good and evil heart. Either it is one or the other. The fruit manifests which one it is.



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producing anything “*good*.” Jesus says it “*cannot*” bring forth good fruit.

Job said long ago, that there is none that can bring something good out of something evil:

*Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one.* –  
Job 14:4

This is why Jesus told Nicodemus that he “*must*” be born again by the Spirit of God (Jn. 3:3-6) before he shared the gospel with him (Jn. 3:14-16). Even after he shared the gospel with him, he told him that those living in and loving a state of darkness will not come to the light (Jn. 3:19-20).

This is why God told Ezekiel that He must give his people a new heart before they would do anything good:

*A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.* –  
Ezek. 36:26-27

However, some will reply that such an evil heart can cooperate with the Spirit of God to obtain a good heart. However, the Scriptures clearly deny that the unregenerate or uncircumcised heart will ever cooperate with the Spirit of God but “*always*” resists the Spirit:

*Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye.* – Acts 7:51

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Indeed, the unregenerate nature “*cannot*” cooperate with the Spirit of God because by its very nature it is in a state of war against God (Rom. 8:7).

The new birth transforms the moral nature of the spirit. The spirit of man determines the moral inclination of the human heart. That is why the spirit of man must be born again.

The Bible describes regenerate men as “*good*” in contrast to lost people, as “*wicked*” or “*evil*”, because they have been justified by the **imputed** righteousness of Christ by faith. Therefore, they have a legal standing before God, and are positionally as good as Christ because they are “*in Christ*” judicially by faith. They are also born of the Spirit and their inward man is “*created in righteousness and true holiness*” (Eph. 4:24). Therefore, their spirit has been “*created in Christ*” by quickening (Eph. 2:10). When this new inward created man is put on in the outward life, they are called “*good*” because their outward life conforms to God’s command.

Hence, the children of God are called “*good*.” But none of this is their inherent goodness by birth or by nature. Instead, they are called “*good*” with regard to either **imputed** or **imparted** righteousness of Christ.

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### Spiritual Separation from God is Opposition to God

Spiritual separation from God is separation from the life, light, love and righteousness of God. That is a state of spiritual warfare against God.

#### **Separation from the Life of God is Opposition to God**

Fallen man is “*alienated from the life of God*” (Eph. 4:18) and therefore spiritually “*dead in sin*” (Eph. 2:1, 6). However, he is only dead to the things of God, but very spiritually active in the things of darkness;

*Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. – Eph. 2:2-3*

They are by “*nature*” the children of wrath and therefore by practice the children of “*disobedience*.” There is a spiritual “*power*” of opposition to God at work “*in*” them, so that their actions are merely the fruits of the “*lusts of the flesh....desires of the flesh and of the mind*.”

This condition or nature of evil is in opposition to life found in God, as Jesus says:

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*And ye **will not** come to me, that ye might have life. – Jn. 5:40*

*Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do **always resist** the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. – Acts 7:51*

The unregenerate nature is a state of active opposition to God. it is therefore not a spiritually inactive state of existence, as it is very active in “*being evil*” and producing evil works. That state of opposition by definition is sin. Therefore, we are sinners by nature.

### *Separation from light is Opposition to Light*

The unregenerated condition is a state of spiritual darkness and blindness, but it is not a passive state or condition, but an active state of opposition to the light:

*And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men **loved darkness rather than light**, because their deeds were evil. **For every one that doeth evil hateth the light**, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. – Jn. 3:19-20*

The *heart* of man involves his intellectual, volitional and emotional make up or the self-conscious person, but under the dominion of his affections. Thus, under the dominion of the affections it is called “*the heart*” of man. This emphasis on the affections is seen in the words “*loved*” and “*hateth*” as a spiritual state of opposition to the light. Both the intellect and will are involved but it is the affections that dominate. His affections are engaged in opposition to the light as Jesus says he “*loved darkness rather than light.....hateth the light*” His will is engaged in

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opposition to the light as Jesus said, “*neither cometh to the light.*” This is the “*enmity*” state of mind or intellect described by Paul in Romans 8:7. His inability to come to the light is due to his active opposition to the light due to a sinful condition of his heart.

Of course, Christ is the personification of this light, as he is the light of the world. However, the metaphor “*light*” finds its meaning in the contrast to darkness. John said that light consists of all that “*reveals*” sin. In the text the fallen man will not come to the light because his evil works will be revealed as evil. In relation to the unregenerate condition the absence of light is the presence of darkness. Light is a metaphor of knowledge and understanding, or the ability to perceive and understand. The absence of light in the lost condition is the inability to perceive, see or understand experientially the Person of God. Look at Paul’s description of the unregenerate state again and notice how the metaphor of darkness and blindness is applied:

..... *Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart:— Eph. 4:18*

Spiritual separation is not only complete spiritual opposition to God and the things of God, but it is the complete absence of any **experiential** reference or knowledge of God.

*But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. – 1 Cor. 2:14*

The fallen unregenerate condition of man is unable to discern the things of God because he has no experiential spiritual framework

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to make sense of them. His spiritual framework is one of opposition to God and the things of God.

For example, when a person puts together a puzzle, they usually begin with corner pieces and pieces that all have straight edges in order to provide a framework to fit all the other pieces of the puzzle. They need a framework to fit all the other puzzle pieces with. The fallen man has no corner or straight edged pieces to fit any of the spiritual things of God into his framework of thinking. He can discern the color and size (the meaning of words and their contextual relationships) of the pieces, but he has no experiential spiritual framework (experiential knowledge and relationship with God) to put the pieces together to form the correct picture.

## *Separation from Righteousness is Opposition to Righteousness:*

*Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. – Rom. 8:7*

It is this state of “*enmity*” or war or opposition against God that produces total inability to be “*subject to the law of God.*” It is this enmity or condition of the unregenerate state of man that is the cause of inability to please God by obedience to the things of God “*neither indeed can be ....cannot please God.*”

Therefore, total inability in the things of God is not due to spiritual inability, but rather due to spiritual ability that is in opposition (“*is enmity against God*”) to the things of God. Fallen man cannot, because man will not, due to his spiritual condition of enmity against God. Therefore, his spiritual nature must be

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changed before he can become willing to come to God through Christ, as Jesus says,

*No man can come unto me except the Father draw him...*  
- Jn. 6:40

He did not say “no Jew can” but “*no man can.*” He did not say “some men” can’t but “*no man can.*” This is an explicit and clear assertion of universal inability to come to Christ by any man. If that were not so, then there would be no reason for the exception clause that follows “*except the Father draw.*”

However, this universal inability is due to the universal enmity against God. He cannot come to God through Christ because He will not come, and he will not come because he is in a state of war against God. Therefore, spiritual separation from God is spiritual opposition to God, and that is the fallen condition which is “*enmity against God.*”

Remember, spiritual separation from God is separation from light, life, righteousness, and love which have their source in God. Therefore, the resultant condition of separation from life, light, righteousness, and love is a state of spiritual darkness, deadness, uncleanness, and enmity. That condition is a state of opposition toward God and is therefore a state of sin.

## Separation from love is opposition to love

*And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that does evil hates the light, neither comes to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.*- Jn. 3:19-20

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From birth the human is at war with all who oppose his will. Enmity is not merely the absence of love but it is an active state of war. He is in a struggle to secure his own will, his own desires and laws, courts, jails, divorce and battles between nations testify of this war of wills.

Sin is the act of the human will in defiance against God and His laws.

*Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.* – Rom.

8:7-8

This is why Jesus told Nicodemus that man must be born again or he cannot see or enter the kingdom of God.



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## Understanding the Biblical nature of works

*And Jesus said, Are ye also yet without understanding? Do ye not yet understand, that whatever entereth in at the mouth goeth into the stomach, and is cast out into the draught? But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: These are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashed hands defileth not a man.- Mt. 15:16-20*

Most define evil “works” to be those external things listed by Christ beginning with “*murders*.” However, Christ defines evil works beginning with “*evil thoughts*.” The Greek term translated “thoughts” is *dialogismoi* which refers to the whole deliberating process within man. It involves the entire thought processes being driven by intent or motive unto the determined conclusion of those processes which then, if providence permits (Psa. 76:10) is manifested in words and deeds.

Jesus makes it clear in the Sermon on the Mount that violation of God’s moral law begins with internal actions in the heart rather than external actions (Mt. 5:21-22, 28). Even if providence does not permit external violation of the moral law, God looks upon the deliberating processes of the heart as the violation of His moral law, and thus evil works.

Therefore, the Biblical understanding of “works” is not restricted to the Jews or to those under the “old” covenant administration but refers to the moral state and internal actions of the heart in addition to the outward manifest actions (words and deeds).

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What are the consequences of a proper understanding of the nature of Biblical works?

First, works include the action of the human will as it is the human will that is the final internal action of the deliberating process. Therefore, “of works” includes the action of the human will and we are saved by grace and “not of works” and therefore salvation is not a product of the human will.

That is precisely why both repentance and faith are said to be gifts of God and “*of grace*” (Philip. 1:29; Rom. 4:16; Eph. 2:10 Acts 11:18) rather than “*of works*” (Eph. 2:8-9) thus making Jesus both the “author and finisher of our faith” (Heb. 12:2) rather than man’s will.

That is precisely why Jesus said “no man can come unto me” (Jn. 6:44) based purely upon will power because the human will is controlled and disposed to evil due to the evil state of the human heart (Mt. 12:32-35).

This is precisely why Paul said “*it is not him that willeth*” (Rom. 9:17). Even within the born again man it is God that worketh “both to will and to do” as the will is powerless to activate *good* works (Rom.7:18).

This is precisely why Jesus and James said concerning the new birth that it was not due to the will of man but due to the will of God (Jn. 1:13; Jms. 1:17).

Secondly, “of works” is not limited to the Jews or those under the administration of the “old” covenant as Dr. N.T. Wright argues in his new perspective of Paul. Wright argues that “of works” does not refer to the moral state of the heart of man but rather refers only to those who were in a Mosaic covenant relationship with

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God. However, as it has been shown, Jesus defines evil works as the moral state of the human heart rather than an external covenant relationship to God.

Moreover, Paul begins his doctrine of justification “without works” with pre-Mosaic Abraham’s “works” in contrast to faith (Rom. 4:1-4). Hence, “works” cannot possibly be restricted to only those under the “old” covenant administration as Dr. Wright imagines.<sup>15</sup>

The Biblical understanding of “of works” with regard to regeneration, justification and progressive sanctification has its origin with the internal moral state and actions of the heart. The external actions whether considered good or bad works is not restricted to the “old” covenant and Jews but is the moral product of conscience trained by culture or by covenant.

In the present study, the new birth is not a “of works” product and so is not a product of fallen man’s will. The heart that believeth is the product of the new birth.

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<sup>15</sup> The doctrine of justification promoted by Dr. N.T. Wright is nothing less than repudiation of salvation by grace and nothing more than Roman Catholic Sacramentalism dressed in Reformation language.

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### The New Birth is the Gospel revelation of God in the Heart

*And this is life eternal, that they might know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. – Jn. 17:3*

The unregenerate state is a condition of complete absence of light. We are not speaking of natural light or literal light, as given off by the Sun or a light bulb. We are speaking of metaphorical light, or the “*light of knowledge*.” Nor are we speaking of ordinary knowledge generated through exercise of the mind, or by instruction coming from human sources, but we are talking about revelatory knowledge that originates directly from God.

For example, when Jesus asked “*who am I*” Peter responded:

*Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God – Mt. 16:16*

How did Peter come to this conclusion about Christ? Did he arrive at this conclusion through the teaching of Jesus or by applying the scriptures to Jesus? Not according to Jesus. Here is how Jesus explains Peter’s response:

*Blessed art thou Simon bar Jona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee, but my Father in heaven – Matthew 16:17.*

This “*light of knowledge*” of the Person of Jesus Christ came by direct revelation from God. Paul told the Corinthians that the unregenerate man is blinded so that he cannot see the light of the

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gospel (2 Cor. 4:2-3), that the only solution was a creative act in comparison to the creation of light in Genesis.

***For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.*** – 2 Cor. 4:6

In Genesis 1:3 God merely spoke light into existence. He said “*let there be light and there was light.*” God effectually called light into existence out of darkness. This was a creative act of God by effectual calling. Paul is claiming that the “*light of knowledge*” or the knowledge of Jesus Christ in the heart does not come through ordinary means, but is the direct creative act of God by effectual calling as a divine revelation from God. He is saying that God by an act of creation makes the blind heart see “*the face of Jesus Christ.*” He is saying that God enabled the heart by a creative act to know “*the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.*” Jesus says this revelatory knowledge “*is eternal life*”

***And this is eternal life that they may know thee the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.*** – Jn. 17:3

Therefore, Paul is saying eternal life is communicated into the hearts of men by a creative act of God, a direct revelation, an effectual calling that makes the heart see Christ. This is the creation of a believing heart. This is a heart “*created in Christ.*”

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Paul ought to know as he claims that his own initial salvation was due to the very same divine revelation from God in his own heart:

*But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is **not after man**. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.....But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood:..... – Gal. 1:12-13,15-16*

There are three things mentioned by Paul that did not originate with him or come to him through natural means; (1) His gospel; (2) natural birth; (3) Christ in him or his salvation calling.

Hence, the phrase “*flesh and blood*” is synonymous with “*not after men*” or “*of men*” nor “*was I taught it*” by men. It did not come from the natural man or natural means. His gospel came by direct “*revelation*” by Jesus Christ and his new birth came by direct revelation of Christ in him by God’s command or effectual calling according as his own natural birth was not of him or by him but according to God’s timetable and calling.

Look at the analogy he makes between his natural birth and his new birth. Just as God separated Paul from the womb of his mother at the time it pleased God, so did God reveal Christ in Paul or “*called him by his grace*” when it pleased God. Paul had no part to play in either birth. This revelation of Christ in him is attributed to being “*called by his grace*.” This is the same divine calling defined as the effectual call by God’s command in 2 Corinthians 4:6 –

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“*For God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, has shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”* By a direct creative act God gave Paul a heart that could see Christ. When you look into the “*face of Jesus Christ*” you are seeing him. The effectual call reveals Christ in the heart so that you see him. That seeing ability or believing heart is the result of divine creation. This is the knowledge that “*is*” eternal life (Jn. 17:3) and this is the substance, as well as, the hope of saving faith (Heb. 11:1).

Therefore, effectual calling is the act of regeneration or the dispelling of spiritual darkness, death and uncleanness from the human heart, thus providing a new heart.

For example, Paul says there are those who are “*the called according to his purpose*” whom God “*foreknew*” according to his purpose, he also predestinated the same to be conformed to the image of His son, and those he predestinated he “*called*” and those he “*called*” them he also justified and glorified (Rom. 8:28-30). This was not a general or ordinary call through men preaching the gospel because only those who were predestinated were “*called*” and only those who were “*called*” were justified and glorified. He is explicitly speaking of his “*elect*” (Rom. 8:32). This is an effectual calling of the elect that precedes both justification and glorification. Regeneration is the effectual calling out of darkness into light that precedes justification and glorification.

Paul tells the Thessalonians that they can know their election of God because the gospel came to them more than “*in word only*” or more than merely an outward general call:

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*Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God. For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake. And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost: – 1 Thes. 1:4-6*

He is not instructing them how they can know the preachers were the elect of God,<sup>16</sup> but how they can know they are the elect of God. They can know their election because the gospel came to them “not in word only, but also” or **in addition to** the “*word*” it also came “*in power, and in the Holy Ghost and in much assurance*” so that it transformed them into the same “*manner of men*” who preached the gospel unto them.

To the Corinthians, Paul says that their calling was according to election so that God would receive all the glory rather than themselves or the human instruments God used to preach the gospel unto them:

*For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things*

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<sup>16</sup> Those who oppose this interpretation insist that Paul is speaking of the preacher of the gospel rather than just the gospel. However, the context will not support that view. Take note that Paul's intent is to convey unto them how the Thessalonians can know they are the elect (v. 4). One's election is not known by how a preacher comes to them, but how the gospel comes to them “in power, and in the Holy Ghost and in much assurance” so that it transforms them into the same manner of men who preached the gospel unto them.



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*of the world to confound the wise; and **God hath chosen** the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, **hath God chosen**, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence. **But of him** are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord. – 1 Cor. 1:26-31*

Notice that the phrase “*not many are called*” is further described in positive terms “*God hath chosen*” identifying the “*called*” as the “*chosen*” just as the “*called*” were identified as the “*elect*” in Romans 8:29, 32. They were “*chosen to salvation*” (2 Thes. 2:13) rather than chosen as a consequence of salvation.

Notice that “*not many are called*” but that is not true when the general call of the gospel goes forth unto men because all are being called to repent and believe within the voice of that preacher. Paul is not speaking about vocational calling but he is speaking about the totality of salvation as it is found “*in Christ*.” He is denying that any aspect of being put “*in Christ*” can be attributed to anyone but God - “*But OF HIM are ye in Christ, who of God IS MADE UNTO US...*”

This is the effectual calling described by Paul in 2 Corinthians 4:6 where he used the Genesis 1:3 analogy “*For God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness*” to help us understand that “*the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ*” that was revealed “*in our hearts*” was a creative act by God. Therefore, we are “*created in Christ*” (Eph. 2:10a).

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## *This is a Creative Act of God*

*For God, who commanded the light to shine out of man, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.*

– 2 Cor. 4:6

Paul had told the Corinthians “*But of God are ye in Christ Jesus*” (1 Cor. 1:30) and when describing the divine act of quickening to the Ephesians (Eph. 2:1, 6) he demands they were “*created in Christ Jesus*” by the quickening work of God:

*For we are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works... - Eph. 2:10*

To be “*in Christ Jesus*” is to be saved, as no lost person can be “*in Christ.*” Moreover, there is no salvation **outside** of Christ for anyone at anytime because God has made no provision for salvation **outside** of Christ. Paul had been teaching the Ephesians about the quickening work of God (Eph. 2:1) and described this quickening work as the saving work of God by grace (Eph. 2:6,8) as opposed to works (Eph. 2:9) but rather is “*His workmanship*” which is impossible for men to do as it is a work of creation – “*created in Christ Jesus.*”

To “*quicken*” means *to make alive*. Remember, that the fallen unregenerate condition is a state of spiritual separation from God as light, life and righteousness as described in Ephesians 4:18-19, and therefore the regenerate condition is the reversal of separation from God. Instead of spiritual *separation*, it is spiritual *union* with God, which is spiritual union with light, life, and righteousness. To

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be “*in Christ*” is synonymous in Scripture to be “*in the Spirit*” which is spiritual union with God through Christ.

## *New Birth is by the Will of God*

*Of his own will, begat he us by the Word of truth* – James 1:18

*Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.* – Jn. 1:13

The imparted revelation “*in our hearts*” whereby the heart is enabled to see “*the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ*” is a creative act of God by divine command “*when it pleased God.*” All creative acts by God are exclusively performed by the power of God’s will. No creature has the will power to create anything, and therefore they have no capability to participate in creating anything. Hence, the believing or seeing heart is the creative work of God:

*This is the work of God that ye believe on him* – Jn. 6:29

*For we are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus....* – Eph. 2:10a

If any unregenerate chooses to receive or come to Christ (Jn. 1:12) it is because God first chose them and by His own will quickened them (Jn. 1:13) by creating a seeing or believing heart in Christ by divine revelation “*of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ*” in that heart. Thus producing a believing heart:

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*Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.* – Jn. 15:16

*Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth.* – Psa. 110:3

It is all a matter of cause and effect. The quickening work of God is the creative act that brings the elect into spiritual union with God. The creative word that produces that divine union is the gospel energized by God as the divine revelation of “*the light of knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ*” in our hearts. Thus the entire action by God is the effectual call or the creative word producing the “*light of knowledge of the glory in the face of Jesus Christ*” within the previously darkened heart. This creative light is the creation of the “substance” and “hope” of saving faith or the creation of a seeing heart. Hence, gospel faith is the result of the regenerate work of God in our hearts. There is no such thing as an unregenerate believer in Christ, any more than there is such a thing as a regenerate unbeliever in Christ. Regeneration is the cause while conversion is the immediate consequence and they are inseparable from each other in a cause and effect relationship.

### **This is the New Covenant Work of God**

Therefore, the unregenerate state does not possess a heart that will or can believe:

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*O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!*

– Deut. 5:29

*Yet the LORD hath not given you an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day. – Deut. 29:4*

A believing heart is what God gives all His Covenant People:

*For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. **A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.** – Ezek. 36:24-27*

This is the heart God gives by a creative command that imparts direct revelation of Christ in the heart so that none of the covenant children need to be taught who is God but all know him by direct revelation:

*But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his*

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*neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more. - Jer. 31:33-34*

This is the heart of the new covenant under which we are now under:

*For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away. – Heb. 8:10-13*

*This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin. – Heb. 10:16-18*

This is what Jesus was referring to in John 6:45 where he defined “*draw*” to be God’s work of teaching “*all*” his covenant people the knowledge of God:

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*It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me. – Jn. 6:45*

*And all thy children shall be taught of the LORD; and great shall be the peace of thy children. – Isa. 54:13*

*But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more. – Jer. 31:33-34*

This is why no man can come to Christ by faith (Jn. 6:44), unless the Father provide direct revelation of Jesus Christ by the creative command of God in the heart, or the revelation of the “*light of knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.*”

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## Faith Cometh by Hearing

*So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. But I say, Have they not heard? Yes truly, their sound went into all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world. – Rom. 10:17-18*

Usually, Romans 10:17 is simply jerked out of its context and quoted as a proof text to support the false narrative that faith is the cause of the new birth. Yes, that is a false narrative as verse 18 demonstrates. “*Their words*” (general call) did not produce, or bring about “*hearing*” and therefore did not bring about faith within anyone who heard “*their words*” (the preachers of the gospel).

Note the difference between the singular “*the word of God*” versus the plural “*their words*.” Faith cometh by hearing, but the hearing that produces faith comes by “*the word of God*” rather than by “*their words*.” The words of human preachers come only to the outer ear of their listeners. However, the singular word of God that produces hearing comes by God’s word of command (effectual calling) within the hearts of men that makes the heart see:

*For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, has shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.  
– 2 Cor. 4:6*

Paul’s analogy is clear. In Genesis 1:2-3 darkness was upon the face of the deep and Genesis 1:3 states “*And God said, let there be light and there was light.*” This was no suggestion but an effectual

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word of command that effectually called light into existence. The light produced was not in response to darkness meeting certain conditions. Darkness did not enter into any cooperative or conditional terms that produced light. Light was produced by the sovereign effectual command of God. Moreover, the very nature and presence of light effectually displaced and dispelled darkness.

Arminians go to one extreme and hardshells go to the other extreme. The Arminian claims the new birth is conditioned upon faith in the gospel, while hardshells claim the new birth can occur without gospel preaching. **Both are wrong.**

God has chosen both the means and the end without contradiction between either. In Romans 10:14-16 God has ordained and chosen the preaching of the gospel. However, that instrumentality only brings the gospel to the outer ear of man and as Romans 10:18 so clearly demonstrates. If the gospel comes only to the outer ear there is no internal hearing, and thus no faith is produced.

Let's consider this in more detail. Paul says that "*hearing*" comes "*by the Word of God.*" He cannot possibly be speaking about physical hearing as that does not come "*by the Word of God*" but comes by natural birth. He is speaking about the receptivity of the heart to God and the things of God. God said concerning those who had physical ears to hear and physical eyes to see:

*Yet the LORD has not given you an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, to this day.* – Deut. 29:4

They did have physical ears that could audibly hear and they had physical eyes that could visually see. They did not have a

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perceptive heart to God and the things of God. In other words they were spiritually dead to the things of God. Their lack of **spiritual** perceptivity to God and the things of God is described in **physical** terms of perception or “*eyes to see, and ears to hear.*” Yet, it is clear he is not speaking of the physical body and its functions but spiritual functions of the heart “*an heart to perceive.*”

The writer of Hebrews speaking of the very same generation and of the very same problem states it this way:

*For to us was the gospel preached, as well as to them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it. – Heb. 4:2*

In other words God did not give them a heart to believe. Previous to the statement in Deuteronomy 29:4 God had said at the time he gave them the Ten Commandments:

*O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!*  
– Deut. 5:29

However, natural birth does not supply such a heart. Moses concluded from how they responded to God that “*the Lord has not given you an heart to perceive...*” (Deut. 29:4)

Yet, when God described the New Covenant he described it as the act of God giving such a heart:

*A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will*

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*put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and you shall keep my judgments, and do them. – Ezek. 36:26-27*

*But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, said the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, said the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.- Jer. 31:34*

The writer of Hebrews quotes this very passage in describing the “new” covenant:

*For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, said the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: And they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. –Heb 8:10-11*

It is the effectual call (the command by God) as a creative act that mixes faith with the gospel in the human heart. The gospel is delivered to the external ear by men, but it is the Spirit of God that takes it from the human ear to the heart of men and empowers it as a creative act that calls (creative command) light into existence within the darkened heart.

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*Knowing, brothers beloved, your election of God. For our gospel came not to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as you know what manner of men we were among you for your sake. And you became followers of us,... - 1 Thes. 1:4-6a*

Notice that Paul is providing them with a way to know they are God's elect (v. 4). That is his intent. This knowledge of their election is assured by the way the gospel came to them. He does not deny it came to them "*in word*" as he is the one who preached it unto them. However, he denies it came "*in word only*." It came as an effectual word of command because it came "*in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance*." The consequence of this effectual call was that they "*became followers of us*." In other words, it changed their very moral nature from being God haters to followers of those who loved God. Paul distinguishes between the general gospel call that comes to the external ear by means of human instrumentality from the gospel that comes to the internal heart of man by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Let us consider 2 Corinthians 4:6 in greater detail:

*For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, has shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.*  
– 2 Cor. 4:6

God used words to effectually call into existence light in Genesis 1:3 "*and God said, Let there be light and there was light*." This was God's call that effectually produced natural light in a natural darkened world. However, in 2 Cor. 4:6 it is not natural light but

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spiritual light that is being created in the heart of the lost man by the command of God.

Let us consider the nature of this light that Paul says comes as a direct command of God. He says this command of God produces in the heart “*the light of knowledge*” and so what is provided is divine revelation. This divine revelation is specific knowledge “*of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.*” In other words, God is revealed in the heart through the person of Jesus Christ as presented in the Gospel. This light replaces or immediately dispels all the darkness as light and darkness cannot coexist. Thus in essence, this divine revelation is the creative act of God that produces a new heart that is seeing, hearing and thus receiving the truth of the gospel.

Therefore, this effectual command that produces this revelatory light within the darkened heart of the sinner is the creation of saving faith in the gospel.

*Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.* – Heb. 11:1

The light of revelation produced by the direct command of God in the heart of the lost sinner provides both the “substance” and “hope” of saving faith. It is the revelation of God in the person of Jesus Christ as presented in the gospel that is created in the heart by the direct command and power of God. The truth of the Gospel as revealed by God in the human heart is the “substance” of saving faith. The promise of the gospel as revealed by God in the human heart is the “hope” of saving faith. Therefore, creation of that “*light of knowledge*” removes the darkness of unbelief as that

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“*light of knowledge*” is both the “substance” and “hope” of saving faith being created in the heart and thus the act whereby God mixes faith in the gospel within the heart (Heb. 4:2).

Therefore, saving faith is the creative work of God in the human heart as a pure act of grace (Rom. 4:16; Jn. 6:29) which Jesus identifies as revelatory knowledge that He says “*is eternal life*” (Jn. 17:3).

The new birth is bringing the human spirit of man into spiritual union with God by the act of God’s will of command. The truth of the gospel is God’s creative word of command that speaks (calls) a new enlightened heart into existence.

*Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures.* – James 1:18

***Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which lives and stays for ever..... But the word of the Lord endures for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached to you.*** - 1 Pet. 1:23-25

The gospel is first delivered by human instrumentality to the external ear, but in the case of the elect according to God’s own time table, it is then taken by the Holy Spirit and empowered as an effectual word of command by God that produces the “light of knowledge” which creates both the “substance” and “hope” of saving faith in the heart, thus removing the “darkness” of unbelief and that is the new birth as it gives a new heart perceptive to God and the things of God.

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Finally, the power is not found in the human preaching of the gospel but in the effectual application by the Spirit to the heart.

*So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is **the power of God** to salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith. – Rom. 1:15-17*

The “power” is not found in the gospel but in God as Paul says it is the “power of God.” Paul uses the genitive of source that defines the source of power to be God rather than in the gospel itself or in the preacher.

Neither does Paul use a conditional clause that would make believing the condition for the power of God to save. Indeed, the Greek grammar demonstrates the very reverse. Paul uses the Greek preposition eis (“to”) with the accusative case “saves” that declares this power effectually terminates in salvation, whereas the phrase “everyone that believeth” is the manifestation of that power within both Jews and Gentiles alike. Paul preaches the gospel in dependence upon the Holy Spirit to make it effectual in the hearts of those he addresses.

For example, Paul had been preaching the gospel faithfully at Corinth with absolutely no results and was ready to give up when Christ came to him by revelation and said:

*Then spoke the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not your peace: For I am*

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*with you, and no man shall set on you to hurt you: for **I have much people in this city.*** – Acts 18:9-10

These are not yet saved people. These are those people that God would empower the gospel within their hearts producing saving faith or as Paul previously explained:

*And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and **as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.*** – Acts 13:48

Paul does not say “as many as believed were ordained to eternal life” but “*as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.*”

The effectual call is clearly taught throughout scripture and some of the more obvious passages are:

*Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.* – Rom.8:30

In this context, “*whom.....them he also*” is not only repetitive but demands effectual application to the very same group. In other words, if you are part of “whom” you are also part of “them he also.” Thus all who are predestinated are also called, and all who are called are also justified, and all who are justified are also glorified, and these are contextually identified as “*the elect*” (Rom. 8:32). “Called” in this passage is an effectual calling that concludes in glorification of all who are called. “Called” here describes the new birth that precedes being “justified.”



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## The Called

Effectually calling and God's elective purpose go hand in hand together as it is those whom God hath chosen who are "called" effectually to salvation:

*For you see your calling, brothers, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God has chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, has God chosen, yes, and things which are not, to bring to nothing things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence. But of him are you in Christ Jesus, who of God is made to us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: That, according as it is written, He that glories, let him glory in the Lord. – 1 Cor. 1:26-31*

When the gospel is being preached by men to men, **all** who are in the presence of the preacher are being called. Obviously, not all who are called by preachers to repent and believe respond. However, "of all" that the Father hath chosen to give to the son none fail to come to Christ by faith (Jn. 6:37-39). In the above text all who are called equal all who are chosen by God. Hence, this is not the general call by men but the effectual call by God with regard to the elect or those chosen by God. Therefore, when men preach the gospel "many are called" but with regard to those who actual respond to the gospel "few are chosen." With regard to the elect the gospel comes to them in more than "word only but in

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power and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance” (1 Thes. 1:4-5). Paul addressed those who had been saved says:

*Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.- 2 Thes. 2:14*

*For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, has shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.  
– 2 Cor. 4:6*

*But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that you should show forth the praises of him who has called you out of darkness into his marvelous light; - 1 Pet. 2:9*

This command by God is an effectual calling. When God said, “*let there be light*” in Genesis 1:3 it was not a suggestion but an effectual calling of light into darkness. Likewise, after the gospel is preached to the external ear, it is God who empowers that word as His creative word that effectually calls light into the darkness of the human heart. The new birth is an supernatural internal revelation that by its very nature displaces and removes darkness.

Not all who are called by men through the preaching of the gospel will come to Christ and be saved. However, every human being called by God will be saved:

*And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose....Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also*

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***justified**: and whom he justified, **them he also glorified**. –  
Rom. 8:28, 30*

Notice the very same “them who are called” are the very same “*whom*” which he did predestinate, called, justified and glorified. All called by God will obtain eternal life:

***Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto you are also called, and have professed a good profession before many witnesses.** - 1 Tim. 6:12*

***God is faithful, by whom you were called to the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.....But to them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.....For you see your calling, brothers, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God has chosen....God has chosen...has God chosen.....** 1 Cor. 1:9, 24, 26, 27, 28, 29*

In the above context, the congregation at Corinth was divided over their baptismal administrators. They were boasting in men. Men could administer baptism to their bodies but could not administer the gospel to their souls. Paul argues that the gospel is superior to baptism because to them which are saved it is “*the power of salvation*” (1 Cor. 1:18) when applied by God to their souls. In this context the “*called*” are those “*chosen*” by God whereby the gospel is made effectual to salvation by divine calling:

***But of him** are you in Christ Jesus, who of God is **made to us** wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:- 1 Cor. 1:30*

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This removes their grounds for boasting in men but demands only God receives the glory – “*That, according as it is written, He that glories, let him glory in the Lord*” (1 Cor. 1:31)

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## Gospel Faith is the Work of God

*....no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.* – 1 Cor. 12:3

Much of modern evangelism functions on the assumption that all human beings have inherent ability to come to Christ by faith. They claim all humans have faith and they use it every day. They exercise faith when they sit down on a chair believing it will hold their weight. They exercise faith in friends and family to do what they promise. They exercise faith in government to protect their rights. They exercise faith in many of the things they do every day. Therefore, they assume they are also equally capable of coming to Christ by faith. They argue, why else preach the gospel unless it is assumed that man has ability to respond to it? These are persuasive arguments.

However, natural faith is only possible where there is willingness to exercise faith in such things. It is equally true that people choose not to exercise faith in many things every day. Many do not choose to place their trust in government, politicians or in certain other people and things simply because they are not willing to do so.

Willingness is always determined by how a person thinks or how a person feels toward a certain person or thing. If we don't like someone or something, or have reason to be suspicious of someone or something, we will never be inclined to place our trust in that something or someone until our mind and/or feelings are positively disposed toward that someone or something. Therefore, the ability

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to trust is determined by the inward disposition of thought and feelings toward someone or something.

The position of natural faith assumes that nothing affects the natural inclination of fallen men toward God, and therefore fallen man has no dispositional problems with God which would prevent willing trust in the gospel or God. However, if the fallen nature is naturally disposed against God, then that would prevent willingness to trust or submit to either God or the gospel.

There is sufficient Biblical evidence to demonstrate that fallen man is naturally disposed against God (Jn. 3:19-20; Rom. 8:7; 1 Cor. 2:14). The emotional (Jn. 3:19-20) and intellectual (Rom. 8:7; 1 Cor. 2:14) dispositions of fallen man are in opposition to God, so that he will not come to Christ by faith (Jn. 6:40). Indeed, the Scriptures demand that this internal opposition to God is irreversible by man but can only be changed by a supernatural work of God.

This must be the case with all fallen men or why else would Christ say, “*No man can come to me*” (Jn. 6:44)? Christ did not say “some” men cannot come to me, but “*no man*” can. That is at minimum, an assertion of universal unwillingness to come to Christ. It is this unwillingness that is the root of man’s inability to come to Christ. He said no man “*can*.” The Greek term translated “*can*” is *dunamis* or the common Greek term translated “power” or ability. Jesus is saying in the clearest possible language that “*no man IS ABLE to come to me*.” If that were not true, then why would the exception clause immediately follow - “*except the Father draw him*”? This exception clause demands that only a

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supernatural work of God can change that natural inability to come to Christ by faith. Therefore, this proves that natural faith is not sufficient for men to come to Christ or else there would be no exception clause at all.

In response to those who ask, why preach the gospel if men are not inherently able to come to Christ by faith, the answer is that the gospel is God's chosen means (2 Thes. 2:13) to change that inward disposition against God to a willingness to come to Christ (1 Thes. 1:4-5) and that is why we are to preach the gospel.

*Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent. – Jn. 6:29*

Notice the contrast between the plural “*works*” they had asked and claimed they could “*do*” versus the singular “*work*” that only God can do and which had to be given unto them. They envisioned obtaining eternal life by their works, whereas, Jesus claimed that eternal life was a gift obtained by faith which is “*the work of God.*” Paul also taught this in Ephesians 2:8-10:

*For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it<sup>17</sup> is a gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works..... - Eph. 2:8-10a*

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<sup>17</sup> “It” – refers to the whole phrase “*for by grace are ye saved through faith*” as the completed act (perfect tense participle) of salvation includes “*through faith*” as a singular completed action. Furthermore, he denies that “this” salvation through faith originates “out of you” (Gr. *exs*). Hence, faith is inclusive in this “*gift of God.*”

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However, just as they rejected that eternal life was a gift (vv. 27-28) and insisted they can do the works of God, they also reject that believing in Christ is the work of God, but insist they are capable of believing in him based solely upon proper visible miraculous evidence to support their faith.

*30 They said therefore unto him, What sign shewest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? what dost thou work?*

It must be remembered that these are the very ones who already saw Him miraculously feed 5000, and yet they remained in unbelief. This proves that mere exposure to miracles is not sufficient to bring them to faith in Christ. Indeed, Jesus told another crowd that asked for the very same thing, that only an unbelieving and rebellious people seek after miracles for the purpose to believe:

*Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee. But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: - Mt. 12:38-39*

Outward miracles, signs and wonders do not change inward problems of the heart (Rom. 8:7). Only God can change the inward obstacles that prevent lost people from coming to Christ by faith. He had told them that believing in him was the work of God (Jn. 6:29), but they told him they were inherently able to believe in him



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if he just supplied sufficient evidence to warrant their faith (Jn. 6:30). Christ denied this was true and said:

*But I said unto you, That ye also have seen me, and believe not.* – Jn. 6:36

They had seen him do miracles and more miracles would not be sufficient to change their inward resistance to believe in him. Only the work of God would predispose fallen men to come to Christ by faith, and so he contrasts their unbelieving response (v. 36) to the response by “*all*” the Father gives to the Son. The giving work of the Father is followed by the drawing work of the Father, both of which result in “*all*” given and drawn, coming to Christ by faith, thus proving that believing in him is “the work of God.”

*36 But I said unto you, That ye also have seen me, and believe not. 37 All that the Father giveth me shall come to me;... that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. 40 And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life:.....44 No man can come to me except the Father draw him, and him will I raise up in the last day....45...Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.*

Therefore, the only fallen men who come to Christ by Faith are those whom the Father gives to Christ. This giving work by the Father never fails to bring “*all*” to Christ that the Father gives to Christ (“*of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing*”).

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However, it is in this dispute over faith as a natural inherent ability of man versus the product of God's effectual work that the transition between literal food and metaphorical food takes place:

**27 Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.....30 They said therefore unto him, What sign shewest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? what dost thou work? 31 Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat. 32 Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. 33 For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. 34 Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread. 35 And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.**

They sought him for literal food to sustain their literal physical life. Christ is a master teacher and he takes the literal and uses it metaphorically to teach a spiritual lesson. Just as they had physically come to him in order to partake of literal food in order to sustain their physical lives, they ought to have come to him by faith in order to partake of him as the metaphorical food for eternal life.

Jesus then tells them that he is the bread that the Father has sent down from heaven that the world might have life:

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*32 Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you **not** that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven.*

*33 For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.*

*34 Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread.*

What was their response to this? They acknowledge him as “*Lord*” and then request “*evermore give us this bread.*” Most modern day evangelists would claim that was a true profession of faith in Christ. However, here is how Christ responded:

*36 But I said unto you, That ye also **have seen me, and believe not.***

He says the very same thing concerning those who claimed to be his “*disciples*” (vv. 63-66) who had not only publicly professed faith in him, but had submitted to baptism and were following him.

*64 But there are some of you that believe not. **For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him.***

Christ attributes the very same reason for the unbelief of “some” of his own disciples as he does this audience. True saving faith is the work of God by faith is given unto them but God had not done this work in regard to them (vv. 36-39; 64-65).

*65 And he said, Therefore said I to you, that no man can come to me, except it were **given to him** of my Father.*

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The word “therefore” transitions between their unbelief in the previous verse and the explanation that follows for why they continued in that unbelief “*no man can....except it were given unto him of my Father.*” Their remaining in the condition of unbelief is due to the fact that ability to come to Christ by faith was never given unto them by the Father. Here Jesus more fully explains what it means to be drawn, or having heard and been taught by the Father really means. It means that the ability to believe had not been “*given to*” them by the Father. In verse 44 Jesus uses the word “draw” but in verse 65 he replaces it with the words “given to” as faith is the “gift of God” (Eph. 2:8) as well as “the work of God” making Him to be both the “*author*” and its “*finisher*” (Heb. 12:2) of our faith.

However, let us return to the transition language between literal and metaphorical food. Take note of the language Jesus uses in verse 35 where the same transition between literal and metaphorical food first introduced in verse 27 is again introduced with regard to the literal manna God provided in the wilderness to the Person of Christ:

*And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. – v. 35*

The phrases “*cometh to me*” and “*believeth on me*” are parallel expressions<sup>18</sup> of the very same thing – **coming to him by faith.**

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<sup>18</sup> Both equally obtain complete satisfaction “*never hunger....never thirst*”. The absence of this in his audience is interpreted by the words “believe not” in verse 36. Therefore, the words “cometh to me” and “believeth on me” are parallel expressions of the same thing – coming to him by faith.

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Thus partaking of him by faith eternally satisfies all spiritual “*hunger*” and “*thirst*.”

Obviously he was not **literal** bread. Thus, he is speaking of himself as **metaphorical** bread, and as such, he is not referring to **literally** partaking of him by the mouth, but partaking of him metaphorically by faith. He is not teaching cannibalism of his physical body.

If this doesn't make it sufficiently clear that he is not teaching cannibalism of his body and blood, he again makes this same transition in John 6:47-51 but this time from metaphor to literal so that there should be no confusion as to what he means by partaking of his flesh and blood:

*47 Verily, verily, I say unto you, **He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.***

*48 I am that bread of life.*

*49 Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead.*

*50 This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die.*

*51 I am the living bread which came down from heaven: **if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever:** and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.*

Therefore, he explicitly and clearly tells them that obtaining eternal life is by believing on him and then he proceeds to relate it to them again in metaphorical terms of partaking of Christ as metaphorical bread (vv. 48-51). Thus, “*he that believeth on me*

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*shall have eternal life*” is the same thing metaphorically as “*if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever.*”

He would give his life on the cross to satisfy God’s demand for righteousness and wrath in the place of the sinner (2 Cor. 5:21), thus securing eternal life for all who received His substitutionary atonement by faith. Just as one would partake of food and drink which would become inseparably part of them to sustain physical life, so also those who partook of Christ by faith, He would be “*in*” them by regeneration, and they would be “*in*” him by positional justification through faith.

If this was not sufficiently clear, He then later tells them that his physical flesh will be removed to heaven after his resurrection, completely out of their reach (v. 62), making it impossible to literally eat his flesh and drink his blood. Moreover, he further explains that it is the Spirit that gives life (“*quickeneth*”), but not the “*flesh*” of which they thought he wanted them to physically digest. The flesh “*profiteth nothing.*” The instrumental means by which the Holy Spirit uses to quicken them is his “*words*” not his physical “*flesh.*”

**63 *It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.***

Yet, like the Roman Catholics, the Jews, as well as “some” of his own disciples failed to understand he was speaking metaphorically. The root problem was not in his “*words*” but in their state of unbelief:

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*64 But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him.*

*65 And he said, **Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.***

*66 From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.*

Jesus attributes their inability to understand and believe his words due to the fact that the work of God had never been performed in them – “*therefore I said unto you, that **no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.***”

However, Peter understood that Jesus was not calling upon them to literally cannibalize His flesh and blood, but that eternal life was partaken through faith in His gospel words:

*67 Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away?*

*68 Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? **thou hast the words of eternal life.***

*69 And we believe and are sure that thou art that **Christ, the Son of the living God.***

Jesus used many such metaphors about himself. He said “*I am **the door***” and that only by entrance through him could one obtain eternal life. However, he was not speaking **literally**, or suggesting anyone must **literally** walk through His body as a literal door to obtain eternal life. These are all **metaphorical** statements which mean he represents characteristics found in these literal things. He simply **represented** a “door” in the sense of the only access to

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eternal life by coming to Him in faith for eternal life – “*I am the way, the truth and the life, no man cometh to the Father but by me*” (Jn. 14:6). He said “*I am the vine*” but he did not mean he was to be understood as a **literal** vine. . He said, “*I am the light*” but not a **literal** light.

When he did speak of the bread and wine used in the Supper and said “*This is my body*” and “*this is my blood*” he was speaking **metaphorically**, as He was still in his body, and the blood was still pumping throughout his body when he said this. He is simply conveying to them that the literal bread and wine represent my body and represent my blood, as the Supper is performed “*in remembrance of him*” rather than in recreating his real literal presence in bread and wine.

Therefore, partaking of Him by faith is metaphorically represented by partaking of the Lord’s Supper. Eating and drinking are metaphors for partaking of Christ by faith.

## *Universal in Scope – Jn. 6:44*

There are no infant children of Adam that enter this world as believers. That is generally recognized by all, or else there would be no reason to give the Great Commission.

However, the issue is not that they come into the world as unbelievers, but the issue is do unbelievers have the inherent natural ability to come to Christ by faith?



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Jesus answers this question in the negative – “***no man can come to me...***” He did not say *some* men cannot come to me, but “***no man can.***” The English term “*can*” is used to translate the Greek term *dunamis* which is commonly translated “*power*” or “*able*”. No man has the power or is able to come to Christ by faith. If they had such inherent ability there would be no reason for the exception clause “***except the Father draw him.***” This exception clause loudly denies that any unbeliever has inherent ability to come to Christ by faith by themselves. Therefore, it is false that all men have inherent ability to come to Christ by faith. The phrase, “***no man can come to me***” asserts in the clearest possible terms the fact of universal inability to believe in Christ, and therefore there is a universal vacuum of faith.

## ***Universal in Nature – Rom. 8:7-9***

Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are ***in the flesh*** cannot please God. But ye are not ***in the flesh***, but ***in the Spirit***, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, ***he is none of his.***— Rom. 8:7-9

Paul provides only two possible classifications for all mankind. You are either “***in the flesh***” or “***in the Spirit***” as there is no third category according to Paul (Rom. 8:8-9). If you are not “***in the Spirit***” you are “***in the flesh***” and therefore, “***none of his***” according to Paul. Therefore, to be classified as “***in the flesh***” is to be classified as “***none of his.***”

Those “***in the flesh***” have a fallen condition previously described in verse 7 that provides the basis for why fallen man is incapable

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of coming to Christ by faith and the reason for saying those “*in the flesh cannot please God.*”

*Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. – Rom. 8:7-8*

*But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. – Heb. 11:6*

This is why Paul formerly declared

*As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. – Rom. 3:10-11*

This is why Jesus described the lost man in the following words:

*And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men **loved** darkness **rather than** light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil **hateth** the light, **neither cometh** to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd. – Jn. 3:19-20*

The fallen human nature of man is in an **intellectual** state of unbelief even as it comes into this world. It is **emotionally** in love with darkness and hates light. **Volitionally** it “*neither cometh to the light*” and therefore, “*there is none that seeketh after God.*”

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Seeking after God is the act of the will. No lost person is willing to seek after God.<sup>19</sup>

Thus, the lost carnal mindset is irreversibly fixed (“*not subject...neither indeed can be*” – Rom. 8:7b) in a state of “**enmity against God**” (Rom. 8:7a) or in a state of war against God. In Romans 8:7 the word “can” translates the Greek term *dunamis* which is commonly translated “power” or “able.” Thus, the fallen nature has no ability to come to Christ by faith. This inability is not due to the lack of the power of volitional choice, but due to enmity against God that directs the will against God and the things of God (1 Cor. 2:14).

Thus the fallen nature makes it impossible for man to come to Christ by faith. Jesus said “*no man can come to me*” (Jn. 6:44a). No kind of persuasion can bring a lost man to come to Christ by faith:

*The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies. Their poison is like the poison of a serpent: they are like the deaf adder that stoppeth her ear; Which will not hearken to the voice of charmers, charming never so wisely. – Psa. 58:3-5*

All come into this world “*in the flesh*” or in a lost unbelieving resistant condition. Hence, inability to come to Christ by faith is universal in scope.

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<sup>19</sup> Those involved in false religions think they are seeking God, when in fact they are in rebellion against God. Being religious is not seeking God. Seeking God means coming to God by faith in the true gospel of Christ (Heb. 11:6).

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This is why coming to Christ in genuine saving faith is “*the work of God*” (Jn. 6:29); a creative quickening work of God (Eph. 2:1,5,10) which only occurs in those “given” (Jn. 6:37-39) by the Father to the Son and drawn by the Father to the Son (Jn. 6:44-65). Apart from this supernatural work of God, the lost man will “*always resist the Holy Spirit*” by rejecting the preaching of the gospel through the prophets and preachers of God (Acts 7:51).

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## Does Elective Faith make God Unjust

*(For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;) It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated. What shall we say then? **Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid.** – Rom. 9:11-14*

Whether or not you believe that Paul is speaking about election to salvation in the above passage, you must agree that what he says aptly describes the position taken in this book about elective faith or effectual calling. Many would react to effectually calling according to elective grace as unfair to choose some and not choose all equally, as in their minds that would make God a respecter of persons.

However, do you remember the first chapter in this book where it was established that all mankind existed as one indivisible human nature in one man – Adam – and when Adam sinned the whole human nature with all of its potential divisions which ultimately separate into the children of Adam sinned when Adam sinned as all were actually “in Adam” and that is why “in Adam ALL die”?

Do you remember the words of Jesus in John 3:18 that man comes into this world condemned already in a state of unbelief? Do you remember the words of John the Baptist in that very same chapter where he says that the “*wrath of God abideth*” on all unbelievers (Jn. 3:36)?

Therefore, can you agree that all human beings are already under the condemnation and wrath of God and serve under the sentence

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of death even as they come into the world as individuals? If so, then cannot the potter do what he wills with the condemned fallen mass of humanity, as all equally deserve justice and none deserve salvation? Isn't this the analogy Paul makes with the Potter and the clay?

*Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory, Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles? – Rom. 9:20-24*

To claim he is simply speaking of Israel as a nation is directly contradicted by the phrase “*also of the Gentiles*” and the reference to Pharaoh.

The subject preceding this text has been, that God will “*have mercy upon whom he will have mercy*” (Rom. 9:16, 18). The very meaning of “*mercy*” has to do with those who are already justly condemned. The “*same lump*” represents the justly condemned fallen race of mankind. Mercy only has meaning in relationship with those already justly condemned. Mercy is not receiving what one justly deserves. If the “*same lump*” represents unfallen humanity then neither mercy nor justice would apply as they would be without sin and thus without condemnation.

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Paul is saying, since all humanity is already *“fitted for wrath”* according to just condemnation. Therefore, cannot God do what he wills with those already justly condemned? If he chooses to go ahead and justly allow some to freely go right on their way to hell, while choosing to have mercy upon others is that not His right, as long as justice is satisfied in both cases? In the case of the *“vessels of wrath”* justice is served. In the case of the *“vessels of mercy”* justice is satisfied completely by Christ. It is only those *“vessels of mercy....whom he hath called”* effectually to salvation consisting of both Jews and Gentiles.

Do you remember that the condition of spiritual separation from God is a condition of spiritual opposition towards God? To exist in a state of separation from the light, life, righteousness, and love of God is a state of rebellion and resistance to God and that is why none in that state will come unto Christ for eternal life. Is it unjust if God simply allows them to freely choose to continue in their rebellion and justly condemns them?

The truth is that nothing prevents the greatest sinner from repenting of their sins and coming to Christ by faith except their own willful choice to resist and rebel against the gospel. So their condemnation is just and right.

The truth is that nothing explains the salvation of any justly condemned rebellious and resisting child of Adam, but the mercy of God by effectually calling them out of the kingdom of darkness into the light of His dear Son (Col. 1:13). That is the meaning of *“saved by grace”* (Eph. 2:6). That is the meaning of *“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;”* (Tit. 3:5). Therefore, the real question is not why he saved some and not others, but why He chose to save any? The only Biblical answer provided for that question is given by Paul:

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*According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him: In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. – Eph. 1:4-12*

If all men were guiltless, you may have a point, however, all men are justly condemned “*already*” (Jn. 3:18) and **already** under the “*wrath of God*” (Jn. 3:36) and every single one of them is at “*enmity with God, and not subject to the Law of God, and neither indeed can be*” (Rom. 8:7).

*So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy..... Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth. – Rom. 9:16,18*



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Try witnessing to the lost and see the response you get? Apart from the power of God accompanying the gospel, you will get reviled, mocked and ridiculed and possibly killed as that is precisely the response that Jesus received by the condemned.

When the gospel truth is presented apart from the power of God, it stirs up the evil heart of man in resistance and hardening to the truth. That is how God hardened Pharaoh, and hardens the non-elect. He simply exposes them to the light of truth. This is how Paul responded to truth before he was saved by the power of God:

*What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, **I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead. For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me.** – Rom. 7:7-11*

The purpose of the Law is to reveal the knowledge of Sin (v. 7). The law reveals sin by defining what it is (v. 8). However, the evil heart reacts to the law by willful violation of the law (v.9). Before the Law did its work in Paul, Paul regarded himself a keeper of the law and therefore justified as a candidate for “life” by the Law. However, after the law stirred upon his evil heart to commit sin, he realized he came under the condemnation of the Law to eternal death (v. 10). The Law deceived Paul as a lost person, because it said do this and live, and Paul thought he could keep the law and obtain eternal life, but in attempting to do so, the Law only pointed out where he failed and thus condemned him to death rather than

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justified him for life (v. 11). Exposure to the law stirs up the evil nature and hardens the lost man in his rebellion and sin.

So whenever the gospel is preached there will always be one of two reactions, but the preacher is always victorious:

*Now thanks be unto God, which **always causeth us to triumph** in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place. For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, **in them that are saved, and in them that perish: To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life.** And who is sufficient for these things? – 2 Cor. 2:14-16*

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## Regeneration and Gospel Repentance

*And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. – Lk. 24:47*

*And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: - Acts 17:30*

These two texts should forever repudiate the “Free Grace” teaching that gospel repentance is restricted to the gentiles and is not preached “*among all nations*” including lost gentiles in Athens.

However, the “Free Grace” doctrine is not the only heresy that perverts gospel repentance. Repentance must first be properly understood before its relationship to regeneration can be addressed. Many believe that John the Baptist preached another gospel and administered another baptism different than the only gospel of salvation given under heaven among men, and the only baptism ordained by God among men simply because John’s baptism is called a “*baptism of repentance*.”

It is called the “*baptism of repentance*” because John required not only repentance toward God but fruits of it before men before he would baptize them (Mt. 3:6-8). He required faith in the coming Christ before he would baptize anyone (Acts 19:5). Indeed, the gospel he preached is the same gospel we preach as it is recorded for us by the apostle John:

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*He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life, and he that believed not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him – Jn. 3:36*

This is the very same gospel preached by Jesus in John 3:15-16:

*That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. – Jn. 3:15-16*

This is “*the gospel of the kingdom*” that both Jesus and John preached. It is the call to repent toward God and submit to the spiritual rule of Christ in your heart. Paul calls this one of the fundamentals of the faith:

*Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, - Heb. 6:1*

This was the same gospel preached unto the Israelites by Moses under the Old Covenant administration, who rejected it, as well as to the Jews under the New Testament Covenant administration:

*For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them; but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it – Heb. 4:2*

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This is the very same gospel preached from the fall of man by all the prophets in progressive revelation until its fulfillment in the coming of Christ:

*To him give all the prophets witness that whosoever believeth in his name shall receive remission of sins –*  
Acts 10:43

This is the very same gospel commissioned by Christ in the Great Commission in Matthew 28:19-20 and preached throughout the book of Acts to Jews and Gentiles alike:

## 1. To the Samaritans:

*But when they believed Philip **preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God**, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. –* Acts 8:12

## 2. To the Gentile Ephesians Church

*And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone **preaching the kingdom of God**, shall see my face no more. –* Acts 20:25

## 3. To all in Rome:

***Preaching the kingdom of God**, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him.-* Acts 28:31

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And as we have seen repentance was an inseparable part of that preaching to Gentiles and Jews alike (Lk. 24:47; Acts 17:30).

However, what is repentance and how is it related to regeneration?

## **A. What is Repentance**

Gospel repentance is not “penance.” Penance is doing a good work to demonstrate you are sorry for your sin. However, the Biblical doctrine of gospel repentance is an internal change of mind. The Greek term translated “repent” means “change of mind.” Gospel repentance has to do with the change of the intellect, will and affections in regard to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

1. In regard to the intellect it is a change from unbelief in the gospel to belief in the gospel.
2. In regard to the affections it is a change from hating the light of the gospel to love for the light of the gospel. It is a change from loving darkness to loving light and hating darkness.
3. In regard to the will, it is change from resistance and rebellion against the gospel to submission and yielding to the gospel.

Therefore, repentance is a change of direction that is inseparable from faith in the gospel, as repentance is in part the change of the mind from unbelief to belief in the gospel.

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## **B. How is Repentance related to Regeneration?**

Repentance is the experience of the intellect, affections and will, changing in regard to the gospel. However, regeneration is the power producing that change.

*Turn thou us unto thee, O LORD, and we shall be turned;  
renew our days as of old.* – Lam. 5:21

If God is turning us then we are experiencing turning. Regeneration is being brought into spiritual union with God by the creative command of God. That creative command produces a new heart or a believing heart by removing the darkness of unbelief, by altering the moral inclination of the heart from the love of sin to the love of righteousness. God is doing the changing but the experience of being changed is called gospel repentance. Hence, repentance and faith are the immediate fruits of regeneration as the old Baptists Confessions of faith teach.

## **C. How is Repentance related to Conviction?**

We read, and hear of many experiences of conviction of sin that lasted in some cases for years without actual gospel conversion. Isn't conviction of sin part of repentance? If so, then how could repentance be inseparable from regeneration which is an instantaneous act of creation by God?

There are natural processes of conviction that occur prior to gospel repentance. For example, the conscience can convict a person of sin and bother them for a long time without ever leading

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to salvation and even cause them to commit suicide (e.g. Judas). The word of God can be used by the natural power of the conscience to bring a person under natural conviction over a long period of time without ever ending in salvation. Paul contrasts this natural power of conviction with Biblical repentance when he said:

*For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.* – 2 Cor. 7:10

Judas is an example of prolonged natural conviction or “sorrow of the world” that ended in suicide. However, not all natural conviction ends in suicide. Some ends in searing the conscience (1 Tim. 4:2-3). However, it is this natural sorrow that precedes Biblical repentance. It was the natural power of conviction that Jesus told Saul on the road to Damascus that it was “*hard for him to kick against the pricks*” but it was not gospel repentance until Christ revealed himself in Paul which effectually wrought salvation – “*repentance to salvation not to be repented of.*” Remember, Paul described his actual salvation experience as the act of God revealing “Christ in me” (Gal. 1:15-16). Natural conviction or repentance is agonizing and does not produce peace within. There is no transition from unbelief to belief under natural conviction – only internal misery without relief. If left in that state, either insanity, suicide or searing of the conscience will occur. It is regeneration that concludes gospel repentance which brings instant change from unbelief to belief in the gospel and peace with God.



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## Other Synonyms of Spiritual Union

There are various synonyms used throughout the scriptures for spiritual union with God. These were mentioned in the first chapter. They are:

1. Washing of Regeneration – Tit. 3:5
2. Circumcision of the heart – Col. 2:11
3. New heart – Ezek. 36:26
4. Writing on the heart – 2 Cor. 3:3-6

### A. The Washing of Regeneration

*Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; - Tit. 3:5*

The issue of baptismal regeneration or remission of sin in connection with baptism has been a long standing contention between evangelical and sacramental Christianity. Indeed, it was one of the earliest errors that crept into professing Christendom shortly after the second century.

Titus 3:5 along with several other texts (Jn. 3:5; Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16 etc.) are used by sacramental Christendom to defend baptismal regeneration or the inseparability of water baptism with literal remission of sins. Most contend what baptism is to regeneration under the New Covenant, circumcision is to

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regeneration under the Old Covenant. For example, the Roman Catholic Church, arguably the mother of all sacramentarian denominations within Christendom says in *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* that circumcision in the Old Testament is parallel to baptism in the New Testament as a sacrament:

*“CIRCUMCISION.....was a sign of the covenant between God and his people Israel and **prefigured the rite of Christian institution in baptism.**”* – The Catechism of the Catholic Church, Second Edition, p. 871 (emphasis mine)

*“527 Jesus circumcision, on the eighth day after his birth.....This sign prefigures that ‘circumcision of Christ’ **which is Baptism**”* – Ibid., p. 133 (emphasis mine)

*“1150 Signs of the Covenant.....Among these liturgical signs from the Old Covenant are circumcision.....The Church sees in these signs a **prefiguring of the sacraments of the New Covenant.**”* Ibid.,- p. 297 (emphasis mine)

The whole soteriological structure of Roman Catholicism rests upon this premise, and if this premise is wrong, then the whole salvation doctrine of Rome is proven to be wrong. Indeed, the whole system of Catholicism collapses if they are wrong about sacramentalism.

Rome asserts that justifying grace, regeneration and indwelling of the Spirit of God are conveyed in baptism and maintained by the other sacraments:

*“1275 Christian initiation is accomplished by three sacraments together: **Baptism which is the beginning of***

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*new life; Confirmation which is its strengthening; and the Eucharist which nourishes the disciple with Christ's Body and Blood for his transformation in Christ.” - p. 324*

## *The Biblical Pattern for Remission of Sins*

However, the dilemma for Rome is that Paul purposely uses circumcision in the case of Abraham in Romans 4:9-11, but denies that remission of sins (Rom. 4:6-8) is received “*in circumcision*” but obtained fully by faith prior to, and without circumcision while Abraham was still “*in uncircumcision*.”

Since Rome claims that circumcision is parallel to baptism, as a sacramental rite, then Paul is completely repudiating the whole idea of sacramental salvation. Indeed, if the word circumcision were replaced with the word baptism, in keeping with Rome's demand that baptism is the replacement under the New Covenant for circumcision under the Old Covenant, then Romans 4:9-11 would read as follows:

*¶ Cometh this blessedness<sup>20</sup> then upon the **baptized** only, or upon the **unbaptized** also? for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness.*

*How was it then reckoned? when he was **baptized**, or in **unbaptism**? Not in **baptism**, but in **unbaptism**.*

*And he received the sign of **baptism**, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being*

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<sup>20</sup> “*This Blessedness*” is referring to the state of remitted sins and imputed righteousness, which together make up the act of justification – vv. 5-8. One cannot be justified before God while unrighteous or in sin. Hence, justification requires obtaining of righteousness and remission of sins. He who has obtained that is the “*blessed man*” and that is the state of “*this blessedness*.”

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*unbaptized: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not baptized; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also: - Rom. 4:9-11*

Their dilemma is obvious and increases with the fact that Paul sets forth Abraham as the pattern for “*all them that believe*” whether they lived before or after the coming of Christ. Thus Paul is clearly confirming the words of Peter that remission of sins is received by faith in Christ rather than by a sacramental act:

*To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins. -Acts 10:43*

The elect have always been justified by faith without connection to any external divine rites. Such external rites are nothing more than an external “*sign*” and visible “*seal*” of the imputed righteousness already received by faith in Christ (Rom. 4:11 “*had*”).

Hence, sacramentalism is proven to be false altogether and thus the whole doctrine of Rome comes crashing down.

## *The Biblical Motif for Remission of Sins*

The book of Hebrews makes it clear that the ceremonial laws, especially the sacrificial rites were only shadows (Heb. 10:1) or figures of the literal reality which is spelled out in Hebrews 11:5-17), and therefore, such shadows could never literally remove sins (Heb. 10:4). It is only by faith in what the ordinances foreshadowed that literally removed sins. The literal remission of

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sins was always by faith in the reality of what the sacrifices pre-shadowed – the Person and work of Jesus Christ:

*To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins. -Acts 10:43*

Peter says that “*all the prophets*” gave forth this witness about how to receive remission of sins by faith in the coming Christ. For, example, consider whom Jesus lists as the very first in the list of prophets:

*That the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation; From the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, which perished between the altar and the temple: verily I say unto you, It shall be required of this generation.- Lk. 11:50-51*

However, the writer of Hebrews claims that the sacrifice did not obtain literal righteousness for Abel, but only obtained an external witness that he was already righteous by faith:

*By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh. – Heb. 11:4*

He did not obtain remission of sins or salvation by offering up the sacrifice, but offered up the sacrifice only as a witness that he was already righteous by faith in what the sacrifice provided in figure – the coming Christ.

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In reality, God requires not merely external qualifications to worship in His Old Testament House of God but required internal qualifications of new birth:

*In that ye have brought into my sanctuary strangers, uncircumcised in heart, and uncircumcised in flesh, to be in my sanctuary, to pollute it, even my house, when ye offer my bread, the fat and the blood, and they have broken my covenant because of all your abominations. – Ezek. 44:7*

The worship and sacrificial system was designed for the circumcised in heart, or those already regenerated as a means to express or give witness to their salvation through shadows or figurative types of redemption.

Therefore, the Biblical motif or pattern in the Old Testament was to use such redemptive language in direct connection with the act of sacrifices, as expressions of an already the already redeemed people through faith in the coming Christ, rather than a literal means to obtain remission of sins and righteousness before God.

*For on that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that you may be clean from all your sins before the LORD. – Lev. 16:30*

*And this shall be an everlasting statute to you, to make an atonement for the children of Israel for all their sins once a year. And he did as the LORD commanded Moses. – Lev. 16:34*

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*And for an unclean person they shall take of the ashes of the burnt heifer of purification for sin, and running water shall be put thereto in a vessel: - Numb. 19:17*

They remitted or cleansed sin figuratively as they were merely types of the reality (the redemptive Persona and work of Christ) that remission of sins were received by faith. For example, take the case of the Leper already cleansed by faith in Christ:

*And it came to pass, when he was in a certain city, behold a man full of leprosy: who seeing Jesus fell on his face, and besought him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And he put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will: **be thou clean**. And immediately the leprosy departed from him. And he charged him to tell no man: but go, and shew thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing, according as Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them. – Lk. 5:12-15*

The Leper expressed his faith in Christ by submitting to him with a full confession of faith that he believed Christ could remove his leprosy. Christ removed it “*immediately*” upon that expression of faith by the Leper in him. However, he now instructs him to go to the priests and to “*offer for thy cleansing*.” He had already been literally cleansed from his leprosy as Jesus said “*be thou clean. And immediately the leprosy departed from him*.” He was being sent to the Priests with the suitable animal for sacrifice to offer up to God in order to express ceremonially or figuratively his cleansing rather than to literal obtain his cleansing. The sacrifice was designed to be a “*shadow*” or figure of what was already received by faith. It was not designed to literally remit sins, but

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was designed by God to be a “*testimony*” to his faith in Christ for literal cleansing. His cleansing occurred long before the ceremonial rite was administered to him.

Likewise, this Old Testament motif is what is behind the language with New Testament ceremonial rites (baptism, the Lord’s Supper).

The believer in Christ is to be “saved” (Mk. 16:16) baptized for remission of sin (Acts 2:38), and to wash away sins (Acts 22:16), in “*figure*” only:

*The like **figure** whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ: - 1 Pet. 3:21*

When Jesus told the apostles while instituting the Lord’s Supper that “*this is my body*” and “*this is my blood*” in regard to the bread and wine “*for remission of sins*” he was not saying this is my **literal** body or blood, because the **literal** blood of Christ was still flowing in his **literal** body **literally** seated before them. He was using common metaphorical language which meant “*This represents my body...blood*” which shall literally be offered up “*for the remission of sin*”. The literal bread and wine were no more the **literal** blood and body of Christ than Christ was a **literal** door, vine or light when he used similar metaphorical language, “*I am the door*” or “*I am the vine*” etc.

The Biblical motif was to directly associate redemptive language with the figure or “shadow” of the gospel because literal remission



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of sins was obtained by previous faith in what the figure expressed as a testimony.

## Baptism as an external Figure

Remember, that the fall of man consisted in a literal spiritual separation from God as light, life and righteousness. Therefore, the internal unregenerate state of fallen man is one of spiritual darkness, deadness and “*uncleanness*” (Eph. 4:18). It is the union between the Spirit of Christ and man’s spirit that removes spiritual darkness, deadness and uncleanness. The problem of indwelling sin is an **internal** issue, not an **external** issue. The human spirit has been occupied by unclean spiritual power that has defiled him spiritually:

*But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you. Or else how can one enter into a strong man’s house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house – Mt. 12:28-29*

Regeneration is binding and casting this spiritual power of uncleanness out of a child of God thus cleansing the spirit of man of that spiritual defilement.

*And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh,*

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*fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. – Eph. 2:1-3*

Baptism, on the other hand, saves only figurative and is not able to literally remove the filth of the flesh nature:

*The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ: - 1 Pet. 3:21*

Literal water does put away literal filth (dirt) of the flesh. So he cannot be speaking of the literal cleansing by literal water. Paul is speaking about baptism as a “*figure*” and a “*figure*” cannot obtain a literal act (our salvation from sin) or else it ceases to be a “*figure*” but becomes a *literal* means of salvation.

This is why Peter says that baptism is “*the answer*” or *response* of an already cleansed conscience from the defilement of sin. The terms “*the flesh*” is often used as an expression of the unregenerated state (Rom. 8:8-9).

In the immediate context, baptism is the response or testimony of a conscience cleansed from sin, just as building the ark by Noah and entering into it before it even rained was a testimony or response, or answer of his faith and the grace of God already possessed. The ark was a picture of Christ and all who are already “*in Christ*” by faith, and therefore, when the waters of the flood lifted up the ark it provided a “*like*” figure with baptism of the “*resurrection of Jesus Christ*” which is the object of faith for literal salvation from sin as testified by all the prophets (Acts 10:43).

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Hence, Noah was “*saved by water*” (1 Pet. 2:19) in regard to remission of sins in the very same sense “*Baptism doth also now save us*” – by “*like figure.*” Surely, no one would say the literal waters of the flood saved Noah from his literal sins???? It literally saved his physical life from the destruction of those literal waters, but his spiritual life was already saved, as that is what moved him to build the ark as the “answer” or response of an already “good” conscience cleansed from sin.

## *Titus 3:5 and the Image of God*

The first half of Titus 3:5 clearly demonstrates that Paul is dealing with the issue of how we have been “*saved*” as a completed action in the past. He uses two aorist tense verbs that refer to a past completed action (“*have done*” and “*saved.*”). He first asserts a denial. We were not saved by “*works of righteousness which we have done.*” Baptism is a righteous work, as even Jesus characterized his own baptism as an act of “*righteousness*” (Mt. 3:15). The initial act of being “*saved*” cannot be traced back to us or anything we did that God would regard as righteous. Instead it is traced to what God did (“*he saved us*”) “*according to his mercy*” rather than our works.

The second half of Titus 3:5 explains the means by which God saved us – “*by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost.*” Both the washing and renewing are the descriptive work by the Holy Spirit of how we were “*saved*” by his mercy. This renewing work is further described by Paul to the Colossians:

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*And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: - Col. 3:10*

This is a creative act by the Spirit of God that has to do with the “*new man*” or what Paul elsewhere calls the “*inward man*” (Rom. 7:22). Specifically it is a creative act that obtains renewal in “*knowledge*.” Remember, that Paul likens the new birth to the effectually calling of light out of darkness in Genesis 1:2-3, except it is the metaphorical “*light of knowledge*” that is imparted “*in our hearts*” by the creative act of God (2 Cor. 4:6). That revelation **is** eternal life (Jn. 17:3) and is the very substance and hope of saving faith, as it makes the heart see Jesus Christ (“in the face of Jesus Christ” – 2 Cor. 4:6). Therefore, this is revelatory “*knowledge*” as a creative act of the Spirit of God that effectually calls us out of spiritual darkness into the light of the kingdom of His Son. Paul tells the Colossians that this is revelatory knowledge that renews us “*after the image of God*” which he has just told them is an “*invisible*” image (Col. 1:15). Paul describes this image that is renewed within us by this revelatory knowledge as a creative act of God to the Ephesians:

*And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. – Eph. 4:24*

Again, this is a creative act by the Spirit of God. It is the renewal of the invisible “image of God” or restoring man to the spiritual likeness “*after God*.” This likeness is what was lost in the fall of man. He fell from an “upright in heart” condition through spiritual separation from God as light, life and righteousness. This renewal

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in the invisible image of God is restoration of “*righteousness and true holiness*” through spiritual union with the Spirit of God.

Therefore, the removal of the negative aspects of the fall through spiritual separation or the removal of spiritual darkness, deadness and uncleanness, is conveyed by the metaphor of “washing.” The restoral of spiritual light, life and righteousness is described under the metaphor of “*renewing*”. Paul is merely describing the internal work of the new birth by the Holy Spirit by use of a negative (washing) and positive (renewing) metaphor.

## **B. Circumcision of the heart**

Physical circumcision was the cutting off of the foreskin upon the male reproductive organ. Physical birth/life was the product of the male reproductive organ. Hence, the cutting off of the foreskin was a type of reproductive birth/ life without the fleshly nature, thus the new birth. This is a negative metaphorical expression that refers to taking away the enmity toward God and the things of God. Man in his spiritually separated state from God is separated from the love, life, light and holiness of God and he is therefore spiritually dead, depraved, darkened and at enmity with God and the things of God. Circumcision of the flesh, is the metaphorical removal of these negatives (dead, depraved, darkened state of enmity).

When this physical type is applied to the “heart” it conveys the idea of a heart that is not governed by the fleshly nature. God often commanded Israel to “*circumcise their hearts*” which is parallel with the New Testament command to “*crucify the flesh*” or to stop

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walking after the flesh but walk after the Spirit or to “*put off the old man*” and “*put on the new man*” which is created after the image of God.

*Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiff necked.*- Deut. 10:16

*Circumcise yourselves to the LORD, and take away the foreskins of your heart, you men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem: lest my fury come forth like fire, and burn that none can quench it, because of the evil of your doings.* – Jer.4:4

However, when it is God doing the circumcision of the heart, it refers to the act of new birth whereby the fleshly nature is removed and a new heart is given that delights in doing the will of God:

*And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart, and the heart of your seed, to love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, that you may live.* – Deut. 30:6

*In whom also you are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ:* - Col. 2:11

Just as physical circumcision typified spiritual circumcision or circumcising of the heart in the Old Testament so the physical act of baptism typifies spiritual union with Christ in death, burial and resurrection:

*Buried with him in baptism, wherein also you are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who*

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*has raised him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, has he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; - Col. 2:11-12*

### C. Writing upon the heart/new heart

*But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, said the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. – Jer. 31:33*

*For as much as you are manifestly declared to be the letter of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart. And such trust have we through Christ to God-ward: Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God; Who also has made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter kills, but the spirit gives life. – 2 Cor. 3:3-6*

*For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, said the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: And they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their*

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*iniquities will I remember no more. In that he said, A new covenant, he has made the first old.*- Heb. 8:10-13

Writing the Law of God upon the heart is a metaphorical expression for giving a new heart that is morally disposed to delight in the law of God.

The lost man is spiritually separated from God, which means he is separated from the love, light, life, and righteousness of God. Spiritual union with God is the bestowment of God's love, that is, to love what God loves. It is to give man a heart for the things of God. It is the metaphorical bestowment of the life, love, holiness and light of God.



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## The Evidences of New Birth

### A. The internal evidences

The internal experience of new birth is that the gospel comes “*in power, and in the Holy Ghost and in much assurance*” thoroughly transforming the inward person (1 Thes. 1:4-5). They are a new creature and all things are new (2 Cor. 5:17). They have a new relationship with God through Christ. They are no longer unbelievers in the gospel but believers. They are no longer in love with sin but bothered by sin. They no longer want to displease God but want to please him. They are no longer at “enmity against God” but like the things that God likes and hates the things that God hates.

Their mind has been changed from unbelief to belief in the gospel. Their emotions have been changed from loving sin to loving light. Their will has been changed from being inclined to resistance and rebellion to submission and yielding.

In other words, their internal state of deadness, darkness, depravity and enmity due to spiritual separation from God has been changed to life, light, holiness and love for God and the things of God.

### B. The external evidences

The new birth removes the “*law of sin*” or the principle of corruption and enmity against God out of the domain of the spirit of man into the outer domain of the body of man (Rom. 7:14-25).

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This indwelling “*law of sin*” in regard to our bodies is not removed from us until we depart from the body for heaven and/or the redemption of the body at the Lord’s return (1 Cor. 15:52-57).

In the mean time, between regeneration and entrance into heaven there is a spiritual battle between our newly created spirit wherein the Spirit of God dwells and the “*law of sin*” in our bodies (Rom. 7:15-25). Whenever we attempt to live according to our own strength, the indwelling “*law of sin*” always wins and prevents the righteousness found in our inner man from being manifested in our words and actions (realm of the body).

Therefore, the scriptures command every child of God to be “*filled*” (Eph. 4:18) with the Spirit or to “*walk*” in the Spirit (Gal. 5:25) if we want to experience victory over indwelling sin and glorify God in our lives, thus redeeming the time (Eph. 5:16).

This means we must consciously recognize we “*can do nothing*” without Christ (Jn. 15:5) but fail. We must consciously “mortify” the law of sin in the flesh by recognizing our weakness (2 Cor. 12:5-7) and yielding (Rom. 6:10-12) to the power of the indwelling Spirit alone to overcome the “*law of sin*” or of “*the flesh.*” Once we have acknowledged our weakness and yielded to the power of the indwelling Spirit then we are to step out in faith trusting the Spirit of Christ to work out the righteousness found in our inner new man. In so doing, we “*put on*” (Eph. 4:20-24; Col. 3:8-10) the new man in our minds, affections and outer life and God is glorified, thus bringing every thought in to obedience to Christ (2 Cor. 10:5).

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Being able to do this on a consistent basis is a process that is never finished in this life. It is one of trial and error and progressive growth. No one is capable of living without sin (1 Jn. 1:8-10).

However, the difference between the true child of God and the false professor is not sin, but their attitude toward sin and consequences for sinning. The true child of God sins more than they want to and when they become persistent in sin the Lord chastens them (Heb. 12:5-10).

## C. Lordship and Grace Salvation argument

The Lordship versus Grace Debate is quite complicated. However, there is no such thing as salvation apart from gospel repentance. Gospel repentance is entirely an INWARD response to the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is the mind of the sinner changing from unbelief to belief in the gospel. It is the heart of the sinner changing from hatred of God to love for God. It is the will of the sinner changing from resistance and rejection of the gospel to acceptance and submission to the gospel. These three things constitute gospel repentance.

Moreover, gospel repentance is to be preached to all nations according to the Great Commission:

***And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.** – Lk. 24:47*

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Luke is writing to a Gentile whose name is “*Theophilus*” (Lk. 1:3). This is part of the great Commission to the Gentiles (“all nations”).

Moreover, on Mars Hill, in Athens, directly speaking to Gentiles Paul said,

*And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:* - Acts 17:30

The argument that gospel repentance is not found in the gospel of John simply because the term “*repent*” or “*repentance*” is not found is a false argument. It is false because gospel repentance is inseparable from the command to “*believe*” in the gospel. None come into this world as believers but under condemnation because they are not believers (Jn. 3:18). Believing in the gospel requires a change of mind from unbelief to belief or it cannot occur among unbelievers. Belief in the gospel requires a change from hatred of God (light) or no unbeliever will come to Christ in faith (Jn. 3:19-20). This inner change is “*wrought*” by God (Jn. 3:21) and is described throughout the epistles of Paul as “*repentance unto salvation*” or “*unto life*” (2 Cor. 7:10; Acts 11:17).

Moreover, this is the essence of receiving Christ as Lord. However, this does not mean that all true Christians manifest external righteousness in their life equally or more characteristically than sin characterizes their life. Here is the flaw of “Lordship salvation” that demands perseverance in good works.

The truth is, there are saints side by side, as different as Abraham is to Lot, and both are equally saved, but not equal in external manifestation in good works. Indeed, the Biblical record of Lot’s

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life is one of characteristic failures and with little to no external evidence of salvation. However, one thing that is externally characteristic of the “Lot” type of Christians is external chastening accompanied by internal conflict. Peter says that Lot’s “*righteous heart was vexed.*”

True believers do not all persevere equally in good works but manifest great differences due to spiritual growth and the measure of God’s grace and faith given to each to accomplish God’s purpose for their individual lives (Rom. 12:3,7). They do not all characteristically persevere in external good works, and all who do not persevere externally in good works do persevere externally in chastening by God (Heb. 12:5-10) and internally by vexation of heart or in an internal miserable condition (2 Pet. 2:11). It is possible to be saved and yet receive no rewards in heaven (1 Cor. 3:15). There are some that must be pulled out of the fire (Jude 17) who are like Lot and end up like Lot dying in sin (drunken and in incest). These are the most miserable people on earth. In contrast the lost man glories in such things. These miserable believers suffer much “loss” (1 Cor. 3:15). Not only do they suffer the loss of future rewards, but the loss of present joy, assurance, blessings and peace of mind. It is this “loss” that distinguishes them from the lost not their sins.

The saved persevere in saving faith (1 Jn. 2:19) but they do not always persevere in external good works.

Hence, both “Lordship” and “free grace” advocates are wrong, as both go to extreme positions, neither of which the Bible supports. The “Lordship” advocates ultimately deny salvation is by grace,

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but rather ultimately by works. The “Free Grace” advocates deny the true Biblical nature of saving faith and deny any change of mind, heart or will toward sin.

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## Regeneration, Justification and Sanctification

Obviously, if faith is the logical consequence and conclusion of regeneration, then justification is the consequence of repentant faith (gospel conversion). Thus the logical order would be regeneration, repentant faith, and justification. All of these together are included in the term “*saved*” as a past tense completed action. They are all inseparable from each other but in a logical order.

However, they are not identical with each other. Regeneration has to do with the supernatural change of your spiritual state from darkness to light, from deadness to life and from uncleanness to righteousness or true holiness. Repentant faith has to do with perceiving, seeing and understanding Christ as your Savior (Rom. 3:24-26; 4:22-25) so that your mind is changed from the state of unbelief to belief, and your affections are changed from hatred of Christ as light to love for Christ as light, and your will is changed from resistance to the gospel to submission to the gospel. Justification has to do with reversing your legal position before God from unrighteousness to righteousness, and from condemnation under sin to remission of sins (Rom. 4:6-8) by imputing your sins to Christ and by imputing his righteousness to you (2 Cor. 5:21). Hence, our sins are expiated based upon the death of Christ for our sins, while the righteousness of Christ propitiates or satisfies God’s demand of righteousness from us.

Regeneration has to do with the condition of the spirit in the physical *person* of the saved. Conversion has to do with the experience of the soul to regeneration. Justification has to do with the legal *position* of the saved before the Law of God in heaven.

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Regeneration is a *birth* term, whereas, justification is a *legal* or *forensic* term used in courts. Regeneration is the act of God that “*creates righteousness and true holiness*” within you, thus *making* your spirit righteous. Justification is a legal act of God outside your person that *declares* you are righteous before God. Regeneration *imparts* the righteousness of God to your spirit, whereas justification *imputes* the righteousness of God to your person. Regeneration is what God does in our person at the point of our initial salvation, whereas, justification is based upon what God does for us in the Person and works of Christ while he was on earth.

Regeneration is the cause of progressive sanctification in and through our lives while on earth, as it is the progressive working out of the righteousness worked into our new man by the creative act of God. Regeneration is the creative act of God that restores our spiritual union with God, as light, life and righteousness, thus producing a new creation within us or the new “*inward man*” created in “*righteousness and true holiness.*” The spirit of man controls the ruling inclination or disposition of the soul. Hence, regeneration of the spirit inclines the soul to desire after righteousness and to do what pleases God (Rom. 7:15-18, 19-21). However, the power to implement that desire in our life comes from the indwelling Spirit of God (Rom. 7:18; 8:9-13). This regenerate nature is the source of that righteous desire while being filled with the Spirit is the source of power to implement that righteous desire. The degree of righteousness implemented in and through us differs from Christian to Christian and is never perfected until glorification of the body when the indwelling principle of sin/corruption is removed. We are rewarded in heaven



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according to the degree of power manifested in good works performed in our lives while on earth.

However, justification is based upon the static unchangeable righteousness performed in the Person and life of Christ which satisfies the static unchangeable standard of the sinless righteousness demanded by God's Law. That is why variant degrees of progressive imparted righteousness through sanctification can never justify any sinner because sanctified righteousness differs from saint to saint and is always progressive and never completed in this life. However, the righteousness necessary to justify sinners is the static unchangeable righteousness of a sinless God found only in the Person and works of Jesus Christ.

Hence, the bottom line difference between justification and sanctification is that justification has to do with the works performed in the body of Christ when he lived on earth, while sanctification has to do with the works performed in and through our bodies while we live on earth. The former works by Christ obtain our entrance into heaven, while the latter works by us obtain only rewards and positions in heaven.

## **Life by new birth versus life by justification**

Many will reason that faith cannot be the product of regeneration because many scriptures declare eternal life is the consequence rather than the cause of faith (Jn. 3:16; 5:24; etc.).

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However, the failure here is to understand the difference between imparted life (new birth) versus imputed life (justification) or the difference between being a child by birth versus being a son by adoption, or the difference between literal versus legal life.

With regard to the law of God all mankind have been “condemned” unto “death” and are criminals in God’s sight and/or “enemies” of God. This is their legal status or condition before God. In the act of justification all three of these characteristics are legally changed. Instead of being “condemned” they are justified. Instead of the penalty of “death” they are granted the gift of “eternal life.” Instead of “enemies” they are now adopted “sons.” Eternal life is merited by Christ’s obedience to the law in our behalf. All of these things are ours by legal imputation.

However, regeneration is not a legal act by God but a creative act whereby eternal life is imparted by being brought into spiritual union with God rather than legally imparted. We are “born” into God’s family or birthed into his family as children (teknia) rather than adopted as sons (huios).

Hence, the proper logical order is that God uses the gospel as His creative word to not only bring us into spiritual union with Himself (life) but to create faith within us by the “light of knowledge” implanted in our hearts making us children (teknia) of God by new birth. At the very same time faith is created within us we are justified before God by that faith. In that act of justification our condemnation is legally reversed to a right status with God and our penalty is reversed to “eternal life” based upon Christ’s righteousness and our legal status as “enemies” is changed to the legal status of sons (huios). Therefore, imparted life by new birth logically precedes imputed life by justification as birth logically precedes adoption.

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## The New Birth and Romans 7:14-25

Many deny Romans 7:14-25 applies to the regenerated man primarily because of Romans 7:14:

*For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. – Rom. 7:14*

However, this conclusion is drawn because of at least three interpretational failures on the part of those who object this passage refers to the born again Paul.

First, the whole man has not been born again. The flesh or body of Paul was not born of the Spirit and the principle of “corruption” or the law of sin still remains in his body and will not be removed in this life, but is only removed by glorification at the resurrection or translation of the body (1 Cor. 15:51-57).

Second, the entire following context makes it clear he is referring to his body:

*For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. – v. 18*

*But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin. – vv. 23-25*

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Therefore, his body is what is being described as evil, needing to be delivered from sin and in which the law of sin or the principle of corruption operates.

Third, the man who is “*in the flesh*” or without the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:8-9) is dominated by enmity against the Law of God and will not subject himself to the Law of God. However, the man in Romans 7:21-25 not only “*would do good*” but “*delights in the law of God*” and does presently “*serve the law of God*.”

*....when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:....So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin. – Rom. 7:21-22,25*

*Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. – Rom. 8:7-9*

Hence, the man in Romans 7:14-25 is the saved man who is attempting to serve God in his own power, instead of the power of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:9-27).

Moreover, notice the triune nature of man in this passage. We have the “I...I myself” of self consciousness or the soul of man, which expresses volition “*to will is present with me....I would do*” as well as affections “*I delight in the law of God*” and intellect “*I myself....with the mind*.” Moreover, we have his physical body or

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flesh “*my members....the body...with the flesh.*” Then we have the redeemed spirit of man “*after the inward man.*” It is the redeemed spirit that controls the governing moral inclination of the soul. That is why the soul or self-conscious “*I*” delights in the Law of God, and “*would do good.*” Although, the spirit of man determines the moral inclination of the soul/heart/mind/will it does not possess the power to implement that inclination into actions. Paul discovers this natural inability of the regenerate spirit to live out the Christian life even though the soul is inclined to do so. It is the Spirit of God that created the spirit of man in righteousness and true holiness, and called him out of darkness into light and removed the uncleanness from his spirit that must also empower the inclination of the spirit in the heart of man.

Therefore, the key to walking in the Spirit is that the soul or seat of self-consciousness not merely delighting in the law of God after the inward regenerated spirit of man, but also yielding to the regenerating power of the Spirit by faith mortifying or putting to death the law of indwelling sin by the power of the indwelling Spirit of God (Rom. 6:11-13; 8:9-13).

Paul tells the Galatians the very same truth:

*This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.* – Gal. 5:16-17

They already “*live in the Spirit*” but they are called upon to “*walk in the Spirit*” (v. 16) because if they do not they learn the same lesson Paul learned in Romans 7:14-25 and that is “*For the flesh*

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*listeth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to the other: **so ye cannot do the things ye would**.”*

Living in the Spirit is not the same as walking in the Spirit as Paul addresses those living in the Spirit to also walk in the Spirit:

*If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit – Gal. 5:25*

These commands are not addressed to the lost but to the saved in the churches of Galatia. Moreover, Paul commands the saved person to “*put on the new man*” and to “*put off the old man*” (Eph. 4:

*The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore **cast off** the works of darkness, and let us **put on** the armor of light. ...But **put you on** the Lord Jesus Christ, and **make not** provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof. – Rom. 13:12, 14*

*That **ye put off** concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And **be renewed** in the spirit of your mind; And that **ye put on** the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. Wherefore **putting away** lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.. – Eph. 4:22-25*

***Put on** the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. – Eph. 6:11*

*But now ye also **put off** all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have **put off the old man** with his deeds; And have*

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*put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: ....Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering.....And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.* - Col. 3:8-10, 12,14

Those who reject this interpretation claim this was done at salvation once and for all because all the verbs are found in the Aorist tense – completed action.

However, to “*put on*” the new man is to put on his fruit in your life, just as putting off the old man is to put off “*his deeds*” or “works” out of your life. Moreover, the new man was created by God at the beginning of your salvation and is therefore not something you can “*put on*” nor are you able to “*put off*” the old man at the point of regeneration as that too is the creative act of God. In regard to the Aorist tense verbs they also can mean a *punctiliar* or point action. When we “*put on*” the new man by yielding to the indwelling Spirit of God, we at the same point in time “*put off*” the old man and his deeds. It is a *punctiliar* action. Finally, this is found in the imperative mode and is a command to Christians, as the lost man is “*at enmity with God and is not subject to the law of God and neither indeed can be. So they that are in flesh cannot please God.*”

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## The New Birth before Pentecost

*Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. – Acts 7:51*

*Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now. – Gal. 4:28-29*

Remember, the unregenerate condition of spiritual separation from God as light, life and righteousness is due to the pre-Pentecost fall of man in the garden. That spiritual separation from God (death) was passed upon all children of Adam from the fall to the present. That is what is meant by being “*born after the flesh*” and thereby being “*in the flesh*.” None who are “*in the flesh*” can please God, because that is a condition of spiritual separation from God as light, life and righteousness. It is a state of spiritual separation which is rebellion and resistance toward God and thus a state of sin.

The only possible solution to this spiritual state of death (separation from God) is quickening or being “*created in Christ Jesus*” or “*in the Spirit*” which is the reversal of the state of spiritual separation from God. It is bringing the fallen man back into spiritual union with God as light, life and righteousness.

The Old Testament Scriptures described the new birth as “*circumcision in heart*” and the unregenerated condition as “*uncircumcised in heart*.” The circumcised in heart were called



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“the righteous” whereas, the uncircumcised in heart were called “the wicked.”

Prior to Pentecost at the very beginning of his ministry Christ rebuked Nicodemus for being a master teacher over Israel but ignorant of the new birth:

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

*Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit. Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be? Jesus answered and said unto him, **Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?** – Jn. 3:6-11*

Of course, if the new birth was strictly a Pentecost phenomena then Christ could never have rebuked him for being ignorant of the new birth, because it would be non-existent until Pentecost. However, Ezekiel was not ignorant of the new birth:

*In that ye have brought into my sanctuary strangers, **uncircumcised in heart, AND uncircumcised in flesh**, to be in my sanctuary, to pollute it, even my house, when ye offer my bread, the fat and the blood, and they have broken my covenant because of all your abominations. – Ezek. 44:7*

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God was rebuking Israel for bringing the Gentile into His house not merely because he was “*uncircumcised in flesh*” but in addition he was “*uncircumcised in heart*.”

Circumcision in the flesh was designed to teach Israel the necessity of circumcision in heart. In the flesh, it was the cutting off of the flesh in regard to the natural organ for natural generation. However, it was a type of the cutting off of the fleshly nature by regeneration of the heart.

Circumcision of the heart is carried over into the New Testament as a symbol of the new birth or “the circumcision of Christ” (Col. 2:11) or the “new creature” (Gal. 6:15).

Abraham was a new creature “in Christ” 430 years prior to the Law of Moses before he was circumcised in the flesh by faith in the gospel of promise (Gal. 3:6-8).

*And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God **in Christ**, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect. – Gal. 3:17*

There is no salvation outside of Christ for any fallen child of Adam at anytime. All who are saved are “chosen in him before the foundation of the world” (Eph. 1:4) and “created in him” by the work of God (Eph. 2:10), and Abraham is the pattern for “all who are of faith” regardless of when they live before or after Abraham lived (Rom. 4:11-12, 16; Gal. 3:6-7).

When Jesus told Nicodemus “except a man be born again” he did not use the future tense as though it was something to be expected some day in the future on Pentecost but used the Aorist passive tense verb. When Jesus applied it personally to Nicodemus he

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again used the Aorist passive tense verb indicating it is a punctiliar completed action now necessary for anyone to enter or see the kingdom of God:

*Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.*  
– Jn. 3:7

It was not something he could do for or to neither himself, nor that any man could do for or to him (Jn. 1:13) as this assertion is found in the passive voice. Hence, being “born of water” has nothing to do with baptism that you can obtain for yourself through actions of men. The natural birth came via water but the supernatural birth came by the internal work of the Spirit:

*What is born of flesh is flesh, but what is born of Spirit is spirit* – Jn. 3:6

In the Old Testament ceremonial cleansing with water is an outward symbol of the internal work of regeneration by the Spirit of God. Therefore, baptism saves only in providing the “figure” of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ (1 Pet. 3:21) or the gospel which is empowered by God in regeneration of the spirit of man (1 Thes. 1:5; 2 Cor. 4:6; Jam. 1:18; 1 Pet. 1:23, 25).

Regeneration of Pre-Pentecost saints is referred to as “*circumcised in heart*” or “*upright in heart*” or “*the righteous*” or the “*perfect.*” Regeneration is the spirit of man being “created in righteousness and true holiness” (Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10). It is the absolute glorification of the spirit of man that changes the ruling inclination of the heart toward righteousness (Rom. 7:15-17, 19-20) even though this new creature has no power to overrule indwelling sin (Rom. 7:18) and work out that “good” in the life of

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the believer. The new birth supplies the inclination of the heart toward goodness, but it is the indwelling Spirit of God that empowers that inclination for good in the life of the believer (Rom. 8:9-27).

There are only two types of humans living on earth from the fall of man to the present. (1) Those who are “*in the flesh*” because they are “*born after the flesh*” and therefore “what is born of the *flesh is flesh*” and all who are “*in the flesh*” cannot please God because they are “*none of His.*” – Rom. 8:8-9; (2) Those who are “*in the Spirit*” because they are “*born after the Spirit*” and therefore, “*what is born of Spirit is spirit*” and can please God because they are His children.

The new birth has nothing to do with Pentecost but has only to do with the reversal of spiritual death or spiritual separation from God as light, life and righteousness.

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## Indwelling before Pentecost

Pentecost has nothing to do with the individual indwelling by the Spirit of God. Rather, Pentecost has to do with the corporate or institutional indwelling in the new “*house of God.*” There is a clear difference between individual and institutional indwelling as Paul shows the church at Corinth. Addressing the congregational body of Christ located at Corinth, Paul says:

*Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? – 1 Cor. 3:16*

In the preceding context (1 Cor. 3:5-10) he had been explaining how God used different ministers to build the congregation at Corinth as God’s “house” or God’s “building” at Corinth. Notice, he says “ye” not “we” as he was not a member of this “temple of God” at Corinth. The Spirit of God indwelt this corporate temple as an institutional house of God at Corinth.

However, addressing the individual believer in this temple at Corinth Paul says:

*What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? – 1 Cor. 6:19*

In the preceding context he is referring to the individuals physical body and why it should not be joined with a prostitute in committing fornication (1 Cor. 6:17). In order to make his case why they should not join their physical bodies with a harlot in fornication (physical union) he appealed to the fact that their

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physical bodies were metaphorical members of the congregational body of Christ at Corinth wherein the Spirit of God dwelt corporately as an institutional house of public worship (v. 17), as well as indwelling their individual physical body through spiritual union or regeneration (v. 20).

The baptism in the Spirit on the day of Pentecost was the immersion and indwelling of the new institutional public house of worship – the church.

The baptism in the Spirit on the day of Pentecost was one aspect of the promise of the Spirit in regard to establishing a new covenant administration in contrast to how the old covenant administration was established.

When God established the Old Covenant administration with Israel it included several facets.

1. New “house of God” with an appointed builder and appointed ministry and ordinances.
2. New body of Scriptures with prophets, and revelatory gifts confirmed by prophetic signs and wonders.
3. New People of God
4. New Mission
5. Baptism in the shikinah glory to publicly accredit it and indwell it as God’s new institutional house of God for public worship and administrator of the “keys of the kingdom.”

Likewise, when Christ established a new covenant administration within his kingdom on earth it included these very same facets:

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1. New “house of God” (1 Tim. 3:15) with an appointed ministry (1 Tim. 3:1-13) and ordinances.
2. A New body of Scriptures with prophets and revelatory gifts confirmed by miraculous signs and wonders.
3. New People of God – Jews and Gentiles
4. New Mission – preaching to the Gentiles
5. Baptism in the shikinah glory to publicly accredit it and indwell it as God’s new institutional house of God for public worship and authorized administrator of the “keys of the kingdom.”

The baptism in the shikinah glory occurred one time at the beginning of each new house of God after it was built.

1. The Tabernacle – Ex. 40:35
2. The Temple – 2 Chron. 7:1-3
3. The Church – Acts 2:1-3

There was no change in the gospel (Heb. 4:2; Acts 10:43; Acts 26:22-23) or the way of salvation (Jn. 14:6; Acts 4; 12) as the pattern for salvation “in Christ” had been established in the life of Abraham (Gal. 3:17 “in Christ”) for “all who are of faith” - (Rom. 4:11, 16, 22-25; Gal. 3:6-8). Including regeneration (Gal. 4:28-29) and indwelling by the Spirit of God (Rom. 8:8-9).

The Old Covenant was established prior to the First Advent of Christ and was designed to anticipate that advent. The New Covenant was established by Christ in his earthly ministry and was designed to fulfill the anticipatory character of the Old Covenant, and anticipate the Second Advent. The New Covenant was superior and replaced the Old Covenant Administration (Heb. 8-

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10). However, both covenants were earthly administrative covenants (Heb. 9:1) that publicly declared the “*blood of the everlasting covenant*” (Heb. 13:20) among men. The “everlasting covenant” is the direct heavenly administration of salvation to all of God’s elect in all generations under the Triune God. This heavenly “everlasting covenant” consisted of the Triune Persons of the Godhead symbolized by the Old Testament fathers of Israel (Deut. 7:7-8) or the persons of Abraham (the Father) Isaac (the Son) and Jacob (The Spirit). Therefore, God often presented himself as “the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.” The Old Covenant with Israel was established on the basis of the covenant made with these fathers of Israel (Deut. 9:5) which symbolized the everlasting covenant between the Triune Persons of the Godhead.

The Old Covenant administered the gospel of Christ symbolically through its sacrificial and ceremonial system. The Ten Commandments and their civil application administered the holiness of God. The tabernacle and Temple, with their qualified ministry and ordinances, were the earthly administrative center of this covenant administration of the gospel of Christ and holiness of God among the covenant people. The Law was never designed to save or convey life to anyone (Gal. 3:21) but serve as a “school master” to instruct the covenant people in the nature of sin (Rom. 3:20) and lead them to Christ for personal and individual salvation by faith in the gospel as presented in the ceremonial system (Gal. 3:22-24).

The New Covenant administers the gospel of Christ and the holiness of God more directly than the Old Covenant. However, as with the Old Covenant, the New Covenant is provided with an



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earthly administrative “*house of God*” (Heb. 9:1 “*and...also*” 1 Tim. 3:15) with a qualified ministry (1 Tim. 3:1-13) and ordinances wherein the gospel is declared through preaching and teaching directly by its ministry and symbolically declared through its ordinances.

However, both the Old and New Covenants were temporal administrations that reflected the great “everlasting covenant” which is yet to find its complete fulfillment in the new heavens and earth. God is the author of all three covenants, and God is not the author of confusion. This everlasting covenant is spelled out clearly in such passages as Ephesians 1:4-13 and Romans 8:27-39 and both Old and New Covenant saints will ultimately be made “perfect” under the everlasting covenant in the new heaven and earth (Heb. 11:13-16, 39-40). So the New Covenant does not preach any other Gospel than what was preached under the Old Covenant or since the foundation of the world (Acts 10:43; 26:22-23; Heb. 4:2) but both preach “the blood of the everlasting covenant” from the foundation of the world (Rev. 13:8).

The Spirit came “*upon*” both lost and saved people in the Old Testament to empower them to serve in a particular office or function just as He does in the New Testament for power (“upon” – Mt. 3:16; 12:18; Lk. 1:35; 2:25,40; Acts 1:8; 2:17; 8:16; 19:6).

The baptism in the Spirit was only promised to already water baptized believers in Christ (Mt. 3:11) in a restricted location in Jerusalem (Acts 1:4-5) at a restricted time “*not many days hence.*”

It was only repeated one other time at the house of Cornelius, and only then because the Jews would not administer baptism to

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Gentiles and accept them into the institutional house of God without them being publicly accredited, as were the Jews. Significantly, the nearest reference point that Peter could point to for the baptism in the Spirit at the house of Cornelius was not with the thousands of individuals saved between Pentecost and the house of Cornelius, but the nearest reference point for this event was “at the beginning” or Pentecost (Acts 11:15).

This proves it was neither a post-salvation individual experience as claimed by Pentecostals or a salvational action concurrent with regeneration as claimed by Protestants.

Long after Pentecost and the house of Cornelius, Paul wrote the Ephesians church and said there was now only “one baptism” (Eph. 4:6) and that is the baptism administered in the Great Commission by men (“ye”) to other men (“them”) until the end of the world (Mt. 28:19-20).

For a more detailed and fuller explanation of the Baptism in the Spirit see my book entitled **The Baptism in the Spirit** published by Grace Printing Ministries, Florence, Kentucky.

Salvation has always been the same from the fall of man to the present day. Abraham is set forth as the pattern of salvation for “all who are of faith” as a believer in the gospel (Gal. 3:6-8) and justified by faith in remission of sins and imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ (Rom. 4:5-8) as promised by God “in Christ” (Gal. 3:17).

The baptism in the Spirit places no one “*in Christ*” or in spiritual union with Christ, as that is the work of regeneration by the Spirit.

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Indeed, the baptism in the Spirit is the immersion of the institutional house of God “in the Spirit” not “in Christ.”

Neither Romans 6:4-6 or 1 Corinthians 12:13 refer to the baptism in the Spirit.

## **Romans 6:4-6**

One passage that is applied by some to the baptism in the Spirit is Romans 6:4-6. In Romans 6 Paul addresses the objection that if justification is all of grace without works, and if grace more abounds where sin abounded (Rom. 5:22) then would not such a doctrine lead to a life of sin, as it would promote sin that grace may more abound?

His quick response is “*God forbid*”. His extended response takes up Romans 6-8. However, his immediate solution is to point them to their own water baptism that brings together both their legal relationship to sin by justification (legally “*dead to sin*”) and their relationship to sin by regeneration (“*raised to newness of life*”) both of which are clearly presented in the symbolic act of baptism, and both of which are the truth of the gospel.

In water baptism, they publicly identified with the whole truth of the gospel which involves both justification and regeneration. Therefore, there is no such person who is justified by grace without works, who is not regenerated by the Spirit. The truth of the gospel is that Christ took upon himself their sins and satisfied the legal penalty of sin by his own death of which they partook of by faith, becoming legally dead to sin. Moreover, Christ arose from the grave demonstrating all claims due to their sin had been satisfied or else he would have remained in the grave under the power of

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death and they would be without hope, and sin would still have dominion over them. However, the resurrected life of Christ is the power of the new birth that produces that very same faith whereby they were justified. This new life is not merely free from the power of sin, but it is totally antithetical to sin because it is created in “*righteousness and true holiness*” (Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10). Hence, the true believer is “*dead to sin*” both judicially by justification and regeneratively by new birth. Both truths are visualized and identified with in water baptism, as both aspects are inseparable from the truth of the gospel.

However, we are not comprehensively and absolutely “*dead to sin*” because our whole person has not been regenerated or glorified. Thus, after providing the illustration of baptism, Paul exhorts true believers to “*reckon*” themselves as dead to sin and not to “*yield*” to sin over your bodies:

*Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.* – Rom. 6:11-13

Unlike the unbeliever (Rom. 8:7-8) we have both a righteous desire and power within us to overcome the indwelling “*law of sin*” in our bodies (Rom. 6:12; 7:18-25). However, desire without dependency upon the indwelling power of the Spirit within us will lead to sin ruling in our bodies and over our lives (Rom. 7:14-25).

Romans 4:4-6 refers to the two basic truths of the gospel that water baptism provides a visible “*likeness*” of, and publicly

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identifies us with. Baptism puts on display the truth we have died to sin with Christ by faith – justification - and by that very same faith we have been “*raised to newness of life*” - regeneration.

## 1 Corinthians 12:13

Probably the most popular passage applied to the baptism in the Spirit is 1 Corinthians 12:13. Proper understanding of this text requires a broader context.

John 4:1 says that Jesus baptized more disciples than John. However, John explains that Jesus himself did not administer water baptism, but baptized through his disciples. The point is that the disciples baptized under his direction and authority, and therefore Jesus received the credit as the administrator of water baptism.

Jesus promised that “*another comforter*” would replace him (The Holy Spirit) and therefore if Christ is attributed as being the administrator of water baptism simply because his disciples administered it under his leadership and authority, then would not the same be attributed to “*another comforter*” that took His place over the same disciples? Long after Pentecost, the Corinthian congregation became divided over the human administrators of water baptism (1 Cor. 1:12-16). Paul resolves this issue by teaching that all human administrators work as “one” under the direction of the Holy Spirit:

*Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour. For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building. – 1 Cor. 3:8-*

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Therefore, just as Christ was accredited with administering water baptism by his disciples, so also, the Holy Spirit is accredited with administering water baptism through His ministers.

Therefore, the Holy Spirit is to receive the credit, not merely for their salvation (1 Cor. 1:17-2:14); but also for their **water** baptism (1 Cor. 3:5-7):

*Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.* – 1 Cor. 3:5-7

This is specifically applied to the particular congregational body of water baptized believers at Corinth (1 Cor. 3:10-16). Paul claims that the Holy Spirit used him as the “*master builder*” to lay the foundation of “*God’s building*” which is the “*temple of the Spirit*” at Corinth, but the actual builder is the Holy Spirit under whose leadership water baptism was administered. The Holy Spirit built that congregation through his servants, as the congregation was “*God’s husbandry, ye are God’s building....ye are the temple of the Holy Spirit....ye are the body of Christ and members in particular*” (1 Cor. 3:9, 16; 12:27).

This resolved the division over the various human instruments in bringing salvation, baptism and constitution of the congregation at Corinth.

Therefore, when dealing with the same problem of division, but in regard to differences in spiritual gifted members in the same congregational body at Corinth, he again applies this same principle. He states the general principle by saying:

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*For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. – 1*

Cor. 12:13

Remember, the historical context of Pauline epistles are churches of like faith and order constituted under his ministry. Thus, all of his readers (including himself “*we*”) share certain things in common in regard to water baptism and church membership.

Under the leadership of the Holy Spirit they had all been baptized in water into the membership of one body in number (the one where their membership resides) and one in kind (the same kind found at Ephesus as at Jerusalem (v. 27; Acts 2:40) regardless of the differences between them (Jews or Gentiles...bond or free). It was under the leadership of the same Holy Spirit each member was placed in the body (v. 18 and this included lost members - 1 Cor. 11:19) in order to fulfill different functions in that body with different gifts according to His will. It is this variation of placement (v. 18) and gifting by the Spirit (vv. 20-26) is what they were made to “*drink*” or partake of the Spirit when added by water baptism in regard to the constitutional work of the Spirit in the body of Christ at Corinth (v. 27). Hence, whether it is different spiritual gifts or different administrators of water baptism, there is no basis for division among them, as the same Holy Spirit is to be credited with both.

Therefore, the administrative order in the baptism in the Spirit should not be confused with the administrative order in water baptism. In the administrative order in water baptism, the Holy Spirit can be the administrator and the congregational “*body of Christ*” can be the element. Not so, with the baptism in the Spirit.

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## The New Dispensation of the Spirit

*And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.* – Lk. 24:49

The “*promise of my Father*” refers to the special dispensation of the Spirit that would be ushered in on the day of Pentecost (Acts 1:4-5).

However, the Holy Spirit had already been upon earth from the time He moved upon the face of the deep in Genesis 1:2. The Holy Spirit had been regenerating, indwelling, sanctifying, filling, sealing and saving mankind from sin since the fall of man in the garden.

However, the Holy Spirit was sent by the Father and by the Son to accomplish three new things upon earth:

1. The New Salvation Mission – Acts 1:8
2. The New Covenant Administrative House of God – Heb. 9:1
3. The New Prophetic Mission – Jn. 14:16

### A. The New Salvation Mission

The coming of the Holy Spirit in regard to a new salvation mission was not about **how** the Holy Spirit would save anyone, but rather about **who** the Holy Spirit would now begin to save.



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Prior to the day of Pentecost, the redemptive work of the Holy Spirit had primarily been restricted within the boundaries of Judaism. Even the ministry of Christ had been restricted within the boundaries of Judaism:

*These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: - Mt. 10:5*

However, the Old Testament Prophets had prophesied of a special dispensation of salvation that would occur among the Gentiles:

*Behold my servant, whom I have chosen; my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased: I will put my spirit upon him, and he shall shew judgment to the Gentiles..... And in his name shall the Gentiles trust. – Mt. 12:18, 21*

*For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth. – Acts 13:47*

This was something never before imagined by the Jewish people that God would empower the gospel among the Gentile nations:

*And the apostles and brethren that were in Judaea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God..... When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life. – Acts 11:1,18*

The very thought of the Holy Spirit working salvation among the Gentiles was so repugnant to the Jewish mind that it took divine

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intervention for the Jewish church at Jerusalem to even preach the gospel to gentiles (Acts 8-11). God had to move Peter to go to preach to the gentile house of Cornelius by repeating a vision three times (Acts 10:1-7). When Peter arrived at the house of the gentiles among his first words were these:

*And he said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean. –*

Acts 10:28

However, even the thrice repeated vision was still insufficient for the Jewish believers to receive these Gentiles into equal membership into the church at Jerusalem, as God had to repeat the baptism in the Spirit on the day of Pentecost upon the Gentiles thereby divinely accrediting them to be equal to Jewish believers:

*While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? – Acts 10:44-47*

When Peter returned to the congregation at Jerusalem, he was called to give an account for receiving them into the membership of the congregation through baptism:

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*And the apostles and brethren that were in Judaea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God. And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him, Saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them.*

– Acts 11:1-3

Peter started from the beginning with the vision he received from God at Joppa and the baptism in the Spirit performed upon the Gentiles:

*And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning. Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost. Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God? – Acts 11:15-17*

This new dispensation of the Spirit among the Gentiles was in lieu of the fact that Israel had rejected their Messiah and now God was going to temporarily turn His redemptive program from the nation of Israel unto the Gentile nations to call out a people unto himself and then return to save Israel (Rom. 11).

Hence, the Holy Spirit did not come to save anyone differently than before, but rather to save a different kind of people than before. Prior to Pentecost, salvation was limited to primarily one ethnic group of people – the Jews. After Pentecost, salvation was expanded to all nations, classes and genders or to the whole world. When the Jewish writers spoke of “*all men*” and “*the whole*

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*world*”, they were referring to all mankind without distinction of race, class or gender, rather than all mankind without exception.

## **B. The New Covenant Administrative House of God**

*Then verily the first covenant had **also** ordinances of divine service, **and** a worldly<sup>21</sup> sanctuary.* – Heb. 9:1

Take note of the words “*also....and*” in Hebrews 9:1. Paul’s point is that the New Covenant administration “*also*” has ordinances (baptism and the Lord’s Supper) “*and*” a “*worldly sanctuary*” or a designated “*house of God*” existing in this world (1 Tim. 3:15). In both covenants this institutional house of God was characterized by three specific attributes:

1. Qualified Ministry – 1 Tim. 3:1-13
2. Qualified ordinances – (Mt. 26:12-30; 28:19)
3. Qualified building pattern as the House of God – (Mt. 16:16-18; 18:15-20; 28:19-20; Acts 2:41-42).

Moreover, with each new house of God (Tabernacle, Temple, Congregation) there was a designated builder, a divine pattern for building and a day of divine accreditation or baptism in the shikinah glory (Ex. 40:35; 2 Chron. 7:3; Acts 2:1-3) where the Holy Spirit took up residence within this *institutional* house of God.

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<sup>21</sup> “worldly” in the sense it existed on earth in contrast to its antitype in heaven after which it was patterned.

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There was also a progressive change in the nature with each new house of God from the previous house. The first (tabernacle) was made of *skins*. The second (temple) was made of *stone*. The third (congregation) was made of baptized believers in their own *skin*, but assembled together as metaphorical spiritual *stones* as a “*building*” or “*house*” of God (1 Pet .2:5; 1 Tim. 3:15) which offered up “*acceptable*” sacrifices.

Significantly, the baptism in the Spirit was an **institutional** baptism and indwelling rather than an **individual** baptism and indwelling. The difference is distinguished by Paul in the letter to the Corinthians between the singular temple of the Holy Spirit consisting of all the members at Corinth in 1 Corinthians 3:16 in contrast to the individual member as a singular temple of the Holy Spirit in 1 Corinthians 6:19:

*Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? – 1 Cor. 3:16*

*What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? – 1 Cor. 6:19*

It is the **institutional** temple of God that was promised the indwelling Spirit as a singular body of plural water baptized believers:

*I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire: - Mt. 3:11*

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It was this singular congregational body of water baptized believers which habitually assembled with Christ from the baptism of John that Christ promised the baptism in the Spirit on the day of Pentecost:

*And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. **For John truly baptized with water**; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. – Acts 1:4-5*

*Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection. – Acts 1:21-22*

This is the same singular congregation of water baptized believers that continued to regularly assemble together at Jerusalem and was assembled and waiting in Acts 2:1

*And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. – Acts 2:1*

This is the same assembly that all 3,000 saved on Pentecost were “*added unto*” (Acts 2:41, 47).

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Gospel repentance and water baptism was the conditions set forth to partake of this promise of the Spirit (Acts 2:38-40)<sup>22</sup> manifested in supernatural gifts of the Spirit.

Moreover, this baptism in the Spirit was restricted in both time and geographic location by Christ in Acts 1:4-5. The time was restricted to “*not many days hence*” and the location was restricted to Jerusalem:

*And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be *baptized with the Holy Ghost* not many days hence. – Acts 1:4-5*

However, there were multitudes of baptized believers living everywhere prior to the ascension (1 Cor. 15:6). So this baptism in the Spirit was not universal among believers on the day of Pentecost, but restricted to merely 120 (Acts 1:12) in the in a specific location in Jerusalem. What occurred in this specific time and location was the one time public divine accreditation that

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<sup>22</sup> “*gift of the Holy Spirit*” – He is referring to what they had both seen and heard and enquired about (vv. 6-11). Peter had told them in response that what they had seen and heard was predicted by Joel to be sign gifts or what confirmed Jesus to be the Christ (v. 22) and which would be given to their sons and daughters (vv. 39-40). He is not referring to the Person of the Holy Spirit but to the “gift” or outpouring of sign gifts by the Holy Spirit.

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characterized all former houses of God after their completion (Ex. 40:35-36; 2 Chron. 7:1-3).<sup>23</sup>

It is repeated once in relationship to Gentile believers in Acts 10 because the Jews would not administer water baptism and receive them into the church institution (Acts 10:45-48). It was only this divine accreditation by God that silenced the Jewish church members at Jerusalem (Acts 11:1-17).

When Peter related to them the baptism in the Spirit that occurred at the house of Cornelius, the nearest reference point he could provide the church with for what happened there was “*with us at the beginning*” or on the day of Pentecost (Acts 11:15-16). However, thousands had been saved and added to the congregation at Jerusalem between Pentecost and the house of Cornelius, but Peter never said what happened at the house of Cornelius was what had been happening “*since the beginning*” but rather only “*at the beginning*” proving this was not an individual baptism being repeated since Pentecost, but a onetime historic baptism that had not occurred since Pentecost.

Therefore, this is an **institutional** indwelling and baptism in the Spirit and distinct and separate from the **individual** indwelling and water baptism of all believers (Rom. 8:8-9).<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> If this was the baptism of believers into a universal invisible body of Christ, then it would not have made any difference where they were and would have included all believers everywhere – but it did not. This shows it was an institutional baptism.

<sup>24</sup> 1 Corinthians 12:13 is a summarization of 1 Corinthians 3:5-16 in regard to their dissension over the differences of water baptismal administrators 1 Cor.



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## C. The Contrast between the Old and New Covenants

In Hebrews 8-9 Paul is contrasting the Old Covenant administration with the New Covenant administration. There are many differences.

However, one thing that is not different is that both covenants have earthly public houses of God, a qualified ministry and ordinances that declare the same “*everlasting covenant*” and neither administers it directly to the hearts of the elect.

The difference is that the “*old covenant*” was designed to challenge Israel to attempt self-administration in order to instruct them in their inability to do so (Deut. 5:29; 29:4; Jn. 7:19; Mt. 19:16-19; Lk. 10:25-28; Gal. 3:10-12), while declaring through the sacrificial and ceremonial laws the truth that only God could actually apply it to their hearts and thus lead them to faith in Christ. In contrast, the new covenant administration is more direct in declaring it cannot be self-administered, but only can be administered by the Triune God to the heart and life purely by grace without works. The Old was designed to demonstrate this truth through empirical evidence as a “*schoolmaster*” while the new covenant administration was to declare it plainly.

Moreover, the Old Covenant was primarily ethnic and national in character, whereas, the New Covenant is universal in ethnicity,

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1:13-14). All human administrators of water baptism serve together as “one” under the direct leadership of the Spirit in building the church at Corinth. The same is true in regard to differences as gifted members in the congregation. It is under the power and leadership of the same Spirit that members are led to be water baptized into the congregational body at Corinth (1 Cor. 12:27) as well as gifted for service in that body.

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gender and class. The “*middle wall of partition*” that separated Gentile believers from Jewish believers in the Old Covenant public “*house of God*” is abolished by Christ in the New Covenant public “*house of God*.” In the new public house of worship, the women are not separated from the men, neither are the ministry separated from other members in regard to public worship (Eph. 2:12-21). They all worship as one congregational body together in one place as “*an*” holy temple (Eph. 2:21) at Ephesus, or wherever the congregational body meets together for public worship.

Furthermore, the Old Covenant as a national and ethnic covenant served to provide an **external type** of the elect and their salvation under the “*everlasting covenant*.” The nation as a whole represented in type the totality of the elect of God in all ages. It typified their salvation from beginning to end by external types. For example, the Jew was to be circumcised on the eighth day of their life which typified the new birth of the elect. Without external circumcision no other aspect of the Old Covenant administration was available for them to partake, but they were cast out of the nation. The new covenant administration requires internal spiritual circumcision of the heart in order to partake of the public house of God and all of its ordinances and to be recognized as a true child of God.

All the sacrifices provided **external** types of the complete substitutionary redemptive work and person of Christ. The moral law applied to the civil and ceremonial laws provided an external type of the holiness of God and the progressive work of sanctification in the elect of God, and thus serve as “ensamples” or examples of the faith. So the “old” covenant served to provide the

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world and Israel with an external type of the truths of the true children of God under the “everlasting covenant.”

The “*old*” covenant was an administration that began with the outward ceremonial profession of the everlasting covenant designed to bring them into a spiritually reality of that truth. It was a covenant made with a chosen *ethnic* people in their *natural* condition in order to teach them the true nature of sin through the external application of the Law of God, and as a schoolmaster lead them to personal salvation through the gospel truths pictured in the external types, sacrifices and ceremonial ordinances designed to reveal truths of “*the everlasting covenant*.” There was a spiritual “elect” among the ethnic “elect” nation of Israel (Rom. 9:6) that embraced the truth of the gospel revealed in the Old Covenant ceremonial types (Heb. 11).

Both the “old” and “new” were earthly dispensational administrations of the truth of the everlasting covenant. The Old Covenant dispensation begins at Mount Sinai and ends at Mount Calvary. The New Covenant dispensation begins at Mount Calvary and ends with the return of Christ on Mount of Olives. The “*everlasting*” covenant begins in eternity past and never ends in eternity future. The “*everlasting covenant*” is based upon Christ being the “*same yesterday, today and forever*” (Heb. 13:8) as the lamb “*slain from the foundation of the world*” (Rev. 13:8) and “*the blood of the everlasting covenant*” is proclaimed in the “*everlasting gospel*” (Rev. 14:8) that was preached by “*all the prophets*” (Acts 10:43: Heb. 4:2) beginning with the first prophet Abel to the last prophet prophets on the face of the earth.

The everlasting covenant has been the one and only way of procuring salvation for all of God’s elect from Genesis to

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Revelation. It is the “everlasting covenant” promised in Genesis 3:15 in the “*seed of the woman*” and repeated to Abraham as the promised gospel “*seed*” (Gal. 3:8), and it was all the hope of salvation for David, Isaiah and saints in all ages:

*And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between **thy seed** and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.* – Gen. 3:15

*And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an **everlasting covenant**, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.* – Gen. 17:7

*And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, **preached** before **the gospel unto Abraham**, saying, **In thee** shall all nations be blessed..... Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to **thy seed, which is Christ**. And this I say, that **the covenant**, that was confirmed before of God **in Christ**, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.* – Gal. 3:8, 16-17

*Although my house be not so with God; yet he hath made with me an **everlasting covenant**, ordered in all things, and sure: for **this is all my salvation**, and all my desire, although he make it not to grow.* – 2 Sam. 23:5

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*Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an **everlasting covenant** with you, even **the sure mercies of David**.* – Isa. 55:3

*And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, I will give you **the sure mercies of David**.* – Acts 13:34

*To him give **all the prophets witness**, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.* – Acts 10:43

The gospel of salvation has always been the same from Genesis to Revelation, and so has the way of salvation and how the Holy Spirit regenerates, indwells, seals, sanctifies and saves the elect because it is “*the blood of the everlasting covenant*.”

Prior to the cross, all the elect looked forward by faith to the coming of Christ, and after the cross all the elect look back by faith to the completion of the cross.

In the “*everlasting covenant*” or the eternal purpose of redemption, the Second Person of the Godhead entered a covenant commitment with the Father and the Holy Spirit to satisfy the holiness of God against sin through the provision of a sinless life that fulfilled the righteous demands of God’s Law and that life is represented in the shedding of His blood.

Hence, the writer of Hebrews could rightly say that “*the gospel*” or “*the blood*” of the everlasting covenant was preached under the “*old*” covenant to them, as well as, under the “*new*” covenant to us:

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*For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it. – Heb. 4:2*

The “old” Covenant anticipated the cross in all of its sacrifices and ceremonial ordinances which were administered through the “*house of God.*” The “*new*” Covenant is based upon the completion of the cross and anticipates the second coming of Christ in all of its ordinances administered through the “*house of God.*”

However, the Old Covenant administration of the “*everlasting covenant*” was inferior to the New Covenant administration of the “*everlasting Covenant.*”

The “old” Covenant administration of the ordinances were designed to typify and anticipate the first coming of Christ, whereas the “*new*” Covenant administrative ordinances were designed to typify and anticipate the Second Coming of Christ. Hence, the fulfillment of the Old Testament types by the coming and redemptive work of Christ rendered it invalid as an administration.

In God’s sight, the coming of Christ climaxing in his death, burial and resurrection abolished the public and personal administration (Col. 2:16-18). In the sight of men its public and personal administration was abolished with the destruction of the temple in A.D. 70. The period between the resurrection of Christ and the destruction of the temple was a transition period from the Old to the New in regard to public administration. It was also the time of public testing of the nation of Israel to receive Jesus as their promised Christ.

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The “*new*” is “*better*” in every respect than the “*old*.” It has a better high Priest, a better sacrifice, a better Sabbath day observance, a better “*house of God*,” better ministry, and better ordinances, but the same gospel (Heb. 4:2) of “*the blood of the everlasting covenant*” of salvation (Heb. 13:20). Both have the same origin – God – and God is not the author of confusion.

## D. The New Prophetic Mission

*Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. – Jn. 16:13-14*

*Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; - Jn. 17:20*

The New Testament scriptures were written by the Apostles and prophets. The vast majority of the New Testament scriptures were written by apostles. The few remaining books were written by those under the ministry of an apostle. For example, Luke wrote under the ministry of Paul, while Mark wrote under the ministries of Peter and Paul.

The completing of the Biblical canon was predicted by Isaiah to be completed under the disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ:

*Bind up the testimony, seal the law **among my disciples**.  
And I will wait upon the LORD, that hideth his face from*

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*the house of Jacob, and I will look for him. Behold, I and the children whom the LORD hath given me **are for signs and for wonders in Israel from the LORD of hosts, which dwelleth in mount Zion.** – Isa. 8:16-18*

The apostolic office was established by Christ to be his authorized witnesses of his resurrection, but also they were given special sign gifts (2 Cor. 12:12) to impart to the churches by the laying on of their hands to provide temporal revelation until they completed the Biblical Canon with the New Testament scriptures.

## **1. Miracles, Signs and Wonders – 2 Cor. 12:12**

In some sense “miracles, signs and wonders” were unique to the apostolic office alone, or else such could not be definitive signs of a true apostle:

*Truly **the signs of an apostle** were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds. – 2 Cor. 12:12*

They were unique to the apostolic office because it was through the apostolic laying on of hands that miracles were communicated to others and that such gifts were imparted to others.

In Acts 2-6:5 the only ones performing miracles, signs and wonders were the apostles.

*And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were **done by the apostles.** – Acts 2:43*



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*And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all. – Acts 4:33*

*And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people; (and they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch. – Acts 5:12*

When the apostles laid hands upon the seven in Acts 6, then we read of these seven performing miracles signs and wonders (Steven and Philip in particular – Acts 6:6-8:13).

Simon the Sorcerer wanted to purchase this apostolic ability to convey spiritual gifts through the laying on of their hands:

*(For as yet he was **fallen upon** none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost. And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost.*  
– Acts 8:16-19

These were already baptized believers in Christ. This is not referring to the indwelling presence of the Spirit, but the outward manifest sign gifts of the Spirit (“*fallen upon*”). The effects of apostolic laying on of hands was something Simon could visible see (“*when Simon saw*”).

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The same outward manifestations of the Spirit can be clearly seen as the evidence of Paul laying his hands upon baptized believers to impart such manifest sign gifts:

*And when Paul had **laid his hands** upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.* – Acts 19:6

*Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up **the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands.*** – 2 Tim. 1:6

In Romans 12 there are no sign gifts listed. Paul writes to them as the apostle to the Gentiles, wishing to see them so that he might impart spiritual sign gifts to them through the laying on of his hands:

*For I long to see you, that **I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established;*** - Rom. 1:11

The apostles were given the ability not merely to lay their hands upon people and heal them, but the unique ability to lay their hands upon baptized believers in order to impart to them spiritual gifts. This unique ability set their office apart and provided miraculous confirmation of their special calling to establish the churches in the truth and provide for the churches a Biblical foundation of New Testament scriptures, thus completing the Biblical canon of scriptures as predicted in the Old Testament and by Christ.

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## 2. Realization of their Prophetic Mission:

Did the Apostles realize they were furnishing and completing the Scriptures? Did they understand that the Holy Spirit was using them to write inspired scriptures with the ultimate aim of binding it up and sealing it among themselves?

Peter certainly viewed the writings of Paul as inspired scriptures as he explicitly compared Paul's writings to "*other scriptures.*"

*And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation, even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also **other scriptures** unto their own destruction - 2 Pet. 3:15-16*

Paul certainly understood he was writing inspired scriptures as he told the church at Thessalonica:

*For this cause also thank we God with ceasing, because, when ye **received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of man, but as it is in truth the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.** - 1 Thes. 2:13*

In the conference at the Jerusalem church in which all the apostles participated, James said,

*For it seemed good **to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things** - Acts 15:28*

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The Apostle John when speaking of all of the apostles who personally saw Jesus Christ (1 Jn. 1:1-3) said:

*We are of God, he that knoweth God heareth us, he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.* - 1 Jn. 4; 6

John as the last living apostle fully realized their predicted responsibility of finalizing a written testimony of Jesus Christ and sealing it:

*Who bare record of the Word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw.* - Rev. 1:2

He then finished the last book of the scriptures with a seal (Rev. 22:18-19).

Twenty two of the twenty seven books of the New Testament were written by apostles. Three of the five not written by apostles were written by those directly under the direction of apostles (Mark, Luke, and Acts). The remaining two were written by the Lord's brothers (James, Jude). All were written by "*my disciples*" (Isa. 8:16) or those alive during the Lord's own earthly ministry.

The whole New Testament canon was completed by the "*apostles and prophets*" and their finished work is the "*foundation*" (Eph. 2:20) upon which the institutional church is built and why it is "*the pillar and the ground of the truth*" (1 Tim. 3:15).

When the apostles died, so did the ability to convey these special revelatory sign gifts and when the last baptized believers died upon whom apostolic hands were laid to convey such ability so did these

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unique apostolic gifts.

### 3. When that which is Perfect is come – 1 Cor. 13

1 Corinthians 13 is one of the most misunderstood scriptures in the New Testament. It cannot be properly interpreted and understood if it is not interpreted within its immediate and historical context.

This epistle was not written to compliment them on their spiritual maturity or their proper exercise of spiritual gifts. This letter was written to rebuke and correct them on many different matters including their understanding and use of spiritual gifts:

*And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? – 1 Cor. 3:1-3*

*Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant.- 1 Cor. 12:1*

Spiritual gifts do not indicate spiritual maturity. In the immediate context, the Corinthians were boasting in certain revelatory gifts as evidence of superior spirituality. Therefore, such gifts were given preeminence in the congregational service. The chief gift receiving this special attention was the gift of tongues.

Paul corrects their general understanding of spiritual gifts in chapter twelve. Spiritual gifts are dispensed according to the will

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of the Spirit rather than the choice or desire of the believer (1 Cor. 12:7-11). God equips each member in the congregational body with the gift that He believes serves the best for the edification of the whole institutional body (1 Cor. 12:12-27). The gift of tongues ranks last in importance within the order of importance within the institutional church (1 Cor. 12:28). In addition, it is not God's will that all gifts are available for every member (1 Cor. 12:29-30) as it is God alone who determines which member gets which gift.

The evidence of spiritual maturity is love (ch. 13). Love is also the superior way to seek and use spiritual gifts. Without love as the guiding principle in seeking and using spiritual gifts, no matter how great the gift may be it is worthless (1 Cor. 13:1-4). Paul then characterizes love as the essence of the "fruit" of the Spirit (1 Cor. 13:5-8a; Gal. 5:21-22) and therefore, the character of true spirituality.

*1 Cor. 13:8 ¶ Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.*

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

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

*11 When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.*

*12 For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.*

*13 And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.*

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## LOVE IS:

1. **ESSENTIAL** - 1 Cor. 13:1-3 because without it, **nothing** is of value.

2. **SPIRITUAL** - 1 Cor. 3:4-7 - The characteristics of love is the same characteristics given to describe the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23). The Corinthians had all the spiritual gifts but were **not spiritual** (1 Cor. 3:1-3).

3. **SUPERIOR** - 1 Cor. 3:8 - **Love never fails**, but in contrast to revelatory and sign gifts they do fail. Love is greater than either faith or hope because when that which is hoped for is realized, and what is received by faith is realized then there is no need for faith and hope but love **never** fails but continues on and on.

4. **ABIDING** - 1 Cor. 13:9-13 - Love, faith and hope **abideth now** but revelatory gifts and signs **abideth not now**, but are stopped in the now. Paul did not say "*now abideth Love, faith, hope, revelatory gifts and signs*" but only "*now abideth faith and hope and love*." The contrast is between what is **stopped** versus what **abideth** now. Because tongues cease of itself can only mean that this occurs during the "now" before the coming of Christ. Hence, "tongues" **abideth now** even in this present age. Revelatory gifts **cease now** (v. 10) as they are completed now (v. 10) and grow from immaturity to maturity now (v. 11) and replaced with superior revelation now (v. 12) and thus "*abideth*" not. The contrast is between what is **stopped** now versus what **abideth** now. Faith and hope are classified with love as those things that **abideth now**, but knowledge and prophecies are classified with tongues which are **stopped now** and **abideth not!**

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What causes sign gifts to cease now so they do not continue to abide is when what they signify is completed (1 or. 14:20-22; Isa. 28:11-17).

What causes revelatory gifts to be stopped now, is when what is designed by God to complete (v. 10) mature (v. 11) and replace with greater clarity (v. 12) arrives - the finished revealed written Word of God (Isa. 8:16; Rev. 1:3; 22:18-19).

## COMPLETE VERSUS INCOMPLETE

The contrast presented here is the complete and permanent abiding character of love in direct contrast to three particular things that will vanish away, cease to exist.

Paul selects “tongues....knowledge...and prophecies” to contrast with the abiding complete character of love.

The cessation of these things is indicated by the terms “fail.....cease...vanish away. The grammatical voice used in reference to these things indicates how they will cease. The middle voice is used with tongues and translated “they shall cease.” The middle voice tells us how they will cease. They will cease of themselves. Nothing outside of this gift will cause it to cease. In contrast both knowledge and prophecy and the terms for their cessation are found in the passive voice. The passive voice demands that something outside of themselves will cause their cessation. The point to make here is unlike these things, love will never cease.

In verse 9 tongues is dropped altogether and only knowledge and prophecies are continued. The inference is that tongues ceases of

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itself prior to either knowledge or prophecies being caused by something to cease. Both are described as “in part.” Anything “in part” is not yet completed or it would not be described as “in part.”

Verses 10-12 describe how and when these “in part” things will cease or be caused to vanish away. Significantly, Paul provides three axioms (self-evident truths) that describe when and what causes these “in part” things.

In verse 10 the first axiom is anything that is “in part” will cease to be “in part” when it is completed (perfect). The term “perfect” is to be understood as “complete” as that is the only possible alternative to anything described as “in part.” It is a self-evident truth that anything incomplete (“in part”) ceases to be incomplete when it is completed.

In verse 11 the second axiom is anything that is immature ceases to be immature when it is matured. This is a self-evident truth (axiom).

In verse 12 the third axiom is anything that is an imprecise means of revelation (mirror darkly) ceases to be imprecise when the revelation is “face to face.”

All three of these axioms also provide a developmental process of something “now” (at the time of writing) which must be brought from “in part” or incomplete or from an immature state to a complete, mature imprecise means of revelation.

What is it that accomplishes this process and brings these “in part” and immature and imprecise things to a state of complete, mature and precise means of revelation?

Some believe it is the coming of Christ. Others believe it is the perfect state. Still others believe it is mature love. Finally, many

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believe it is the completion of the Biblical Canon of Scripture as final revelation.

In order to provide a correct contextual answer there are three contextual facts that must be recognized.

- (1) Whatever it may be, it causes knowledge to cease.
- (2) Whatever it may be, it is a thing and not a person as the neuter gender is used to describe it (“perfect” Gr. neuter gender).
- (3) Whatever it may be, it is a developmental process of something presently “in part” immature and imprecise that is brought to completion, maturity and precise revelation.

For example, neither the coming of Christ, or the future perfect state or love causes knowledge to cease, if “knowledge” is understood as mere intake of intellectual data. Those things increase knowledge rather than causing it to vanish away or cease.

However, if “knowledge” is understood as supernatural direct revelation from God to men through such means as visions, dreams or part of the prophetic revelatory process then a finished completed written revelation will cause that to cease. If “prophecies” refer to the product of revelatory gifts then a completed finished written revelation will cause it to cease, as these are the very things that characterize the prophetic gift.

Moreover, neither the coming of Christ nor the future perfect state are present or in a developmental process. Indeed, this present earth is destroyed before the future state can occur. Verse 11 and the axiom of maturing is a developmental process. These “in part” revelatory things were present and in process when Paul wrote (“now”) and continued to be in process until the Biblical canon was completed, matured as a final precise written revelation.

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Finally, the third axiom demands that Paul is referring to the present imprecise means of revelation. The very term “mirror” is a means of revelation. The term “darkly” shows the present “in part” revelatory things did not provide a precise and complete revelation. Indeed, only select members had these revelatory gifts, which made other members dependent upon them. Furthermore, they had to be tested to make sure the revelation came from the Spirit of God (1 Jn. 4:1; 1 Cor. 14:29). Last, they provided only “in part” or partial revelations and could never give a clear and full revelation for church doctrine, policy and practice. However, the finished Old Testament Scriptures had predicted the completion of the New Testament or “testimony” of Jesus (Isa. 8:16-20). Such a completed clear and precise revelation would cause such “now” “in part” revelatory means to cease “then.”

However, that time was not “now.” Moreover, the super apostles and foes of Paul had challenged the authenticity of his apostolic office, (1 Cor. 4; 2 Cor. 12) and did so everywhere he went. Thus they challenged his prophetic office to speak and write authoritatively by inspiration from God. This is why Paul took the principle of love, which is complete in and of itself and expanded on its axiomatic characteristics in order to use it, as the basis to correct and instruct them in the proper use of spiritual gifts (14:1). In so doing, he established his prophetic office (1 Cor. 14:37-38) and at the same time advanced the completion of the Biblical canon of Scripture.

However, “*now*” in lieu of no clear direct written revelation concerning the proper use of spiritual gifts in the assembly, love provides a mature principle to guide them in this matter. Love is complete and is greater than faith or hope because it is inclusive of both (“*believeth all things*” “*hopeth all things*”). Hence, love provides a mature principle to define the proper use of spiritual

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gifts “*now*” (14:1) that none could dispute until “*in part*” revelatory gifts are done away by a more direct completed revelation – the finished word of God.

Near the end of his ministry when facing death, when most of the New Testament revelation had been written and confirmed by miracles, signs and wonders to be the prophetic word of God he anticipated the near completion of the Biblical canon and said:

*All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.* 2 Tim. 3:16-17

Isaiah anticipated the sealing up and binding of the Old (the law) and New (the testimony) Testament Scriptures and said in view of its completion:

*To the Law and to the Testimony, if they speak not according to THIS WORD, it is because there is no light in them.* – Isa. 8:20

Isaiah said this in direct response to those who would speak in unknown tongues and see visions and claim additional revelation (Isa. 8:19).

**"face to face"** - 1 Cor. 13:12

James 1:23 *For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass:*

*24 For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and*

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*straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.  
25 But whoso looketh into **the perfect** law of liberty, and  
continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a  
doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.*

People don't like God's word because when you look into it, it is like a glass where you behold your face exactly as it looks or "*face to face*" revelation. It is revelation that shows you exactly as God and others really see you. It reveals all your faults and all the dirt on your face. Indeed, nothing is hid from it:

*Heb. 4:12 For the word of God is quick, and powerful,  
and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to  
the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints  
and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and  
intents of the heart.*

Indeed, this is exactly the meaning of the phrase "*face to face*" in the Old Testament. It refers to a more direct and clearer revelation OF WORDS than received by prophets through visions and dreams which revelatory vehicles of expression are described as "*dark*" means of revelation ("*darkly*" 1 Cor. 13:12):

*Numb. 12:6 And he said, Hear now my words: If there be  
a prophet among you, I the LORD will make myself  
known unto him in a **VISION**, and will speak unto him in  
a **DREAM**.*

*7 My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine  
house.*

*8 With him will I speak mouth to mouth, **EVEN  
APPARENTLY**, and not in **DARK SPEECHES**; and the  
similitude of the LORD shall he behold: wherefore then  
were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?*

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Dreams and visions as vehicles of expressing revelation are called "*dark speeches*." Whereas, God spoke to Moses "*mouth to mouth*" and "*face to face*" although God never allowed Moses to literally look upon His face. "*Face to face*" meant that God's words were communicated more direct and apparent to Moses than to prophets through revelatory vehicles of expression. Likewise, in 1 Cor. 13:8-13 when the "*perfect*" or completed expression of God's word in written form occurs, then, revelatory vehicles and gifts for imparting revelation by the prophetic gift "*in part*" will no longer be needed, as we have something better, clearer and more enduring.

Why Does Paul select "*knowledge, tongues and prophecies*" in 1 Cor. 13:8? Because these three are representative of the rest of revelatory and sign gifts found in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10.

The "*sign*" gifts cease when what they signified occurred. The revelatory gifts are "in part" and cease when what they provide in "part" is finished, perfected, completed, and matured. What is "in part" versus "perfect" speaks of the same thing – **revelation**. The completed written revelation is **more direct** revelation to each child of God than the **indirect** revelatory gifts which is like a "glass **darkly**" in contrast to the more direct and completed/perfected/matured finished written revelation.

## "Abideth" versus "Faileth" - 1 Cor. 13:8-13

In 1 Cor. 13:8 Paul introduces another way that love is superior to all other things - it "*never faileth*" but is among those things that in this present age "*abideth*." Those things that abide the duration of this age are love, faith and hope, which are inclusive in the very nature of love (v. 7).

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However, in contrast to this ABIDING characteristic of love are revelatory and sign gifts (tongues, knowledge, prophecies). These are classified among those things that fail, cease and peter out BEFORE the end of the age.

The middle voice used to describe the cessation of tongues shows that it peters out or stops of itself WITHIN this present age and does not ABIDE to the end of this age as does love, hope and faith. The fact that tongues is dropped and not included in the discussion of "in part" things proves it has petered out prior to those things ceasing. Hence, when Paul lists the things that ABIDE until the end of the age, he does not include tongues, knowledge and prophecies (v. 13).

When Paul lists those things that are "in part" which need completion, he does not list any of the ABIDING things (love, hope or faith).

The point is that those things listed in the category of cessation, failing, stopping, and/or "in part" do not abide until the end of this age, but cease prior to this age being completed, as the middle voice used to describe tongues proves. However, in contrast, none of these failing things are included with those things that ABIDETH until the end of this age with love, faith and hope.

His point to the Corinthians was that they should pursue love above revelatory and sign gifts because they are going to stop **before** the coming of Christ and **during** their lifetime, but love is among those things that abide to the end of the age. Tongues would cease among them in less than 20 years when what it signified was fulfilled (Isa. 28:11-17; 1 Cor. 14:20-23). In 46 years the revelatory gifts would cease because this "*in part*" process would be completed, matured in a more accessible, clearer and more permanent prophetic product - the finished New Testament.

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## Summary

One aspect of the promise of the Spirit was to empower the apostles and prophets in order to confirm and complete the Biblical canon.

However, another aspect of this promise was to usher in a new dispensation of the Spirit's administration of the everlasting covenant. This "new" dispensation included a new institutional public "house of God" with a new qualified public ministry and new qualified public ordinances.

Furthermore, this new dispensation of the Spirit would not change how the elect were saved but a change in who the Spirit would save – the gentiles (Rom. 11). This temporal new administration of the "everlasting covenant" would be complete with the return of Christ from heaven when he would turn back to the nation of Israel and redeem the whole nation at His return (Rom. 11:25-28).

Therefore, salvation has always been according to "*the blood of the everlasting covenant*" directly applied to the elect by God through the preaching of the same gospel in all generations between Genesis and Revelation (Acts 10:43; Heb. 4:2). However, earthly administrative covenants between God and men have differed between Genesis and Revelation.



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## The New Birth and the Modern Invitational System

*For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but to us which are saved it is the power of God.* - Rom.1:16

Nowhere does the Bible state that the invitation or an invitation system is the power of God to salvation. Nowhere can we find the manipulative invitational methods being used in Scripture. No New Testament preacher of the gospel ever tells his audience, “now with every head bowed, and no one looking around.....” Nowhere can we find manipulative music being played softly in the background and repetitive lines of prolonged singing pressuring people to make a decision before you allow them to leave the building. All of this is designed for one thing, and that is to produce a psychological atmosphere to produce decisions. That very intent, usurps the power and position of the Holy Spirit.

Moreover, no sermon recorded in scripture ever gives an invitation at its close, but the whole sermon or the preaching of the gospel is the invitation. There are recorded sermons in Scripture and yet no “bow your heads, close your eyes” no soft music being played in the background, no repetitive and extended lines of music pressuring people to make a decision. That technique usurps the gospel, usurps the person and power of the Holy Spirit and is nothing but psychological manipulative evangelism.

Furthermore, every invitation found in scripture is addressed only to those who are already thirsty, hungry, and burdened with sin. Nowhere does scripture ever provide an invitation simply to make a decision for Christ. No invitation or invitation system is ever

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used to persuade anyone to come to Christ for salvation as it is not the invitation or invitational technique that is the power of God to salvation, but it is the preaching of the gospel.

The modern invitational system is nothing less than psychological manipulation to produce decisions. It is filling churches with unregenerate people who simply were talked into making a decision, or to walk an isle or to repeat magical words.

What is even more tragic, and even damning is that it is taking advantage of innocent children which can be easily manipulated into making professions because they either want to please the adults or feel accepted. The vast majority of these professions are manifested to be false professions as they grow into their teens when actual moral decisions are being made that demonstrate they are still unregenerate. Children evangelism is for the most part simply another form of sacramental paedo-baptism and confirmation. Of course God can save young children and does save many, but the evidence of a transformed person is not seen until usually their early teenage years when they are actually confronted with moral decisions that demonstrate obedience to God and parents (authorities).

However, it is the church growth techniques that dominate American churches in this age. Preachers are being taught that preachers like Noah are failures as evangelists, are ignorant and untaught in proper church growth techniques or else he would have had converts after preaching the gospel for over 100 years. Hence, numerical growth is the new definition of a church's spirituality and obedience to the gospel.

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God is able to save without your pressure tactics, psychological manipulative tactics and personality power over the audience. It is the “*preaching of the cross*” that God uses to save not your unbiblical invitational system. If God has not used the gospel to save them, your invitational system will only produce false professions.

Is it scriptural to call sinners to repentance and faith? Yes! However, it is unbiblical to use psychological manipulative techniques to achieve that end as you are actively usurping the both the power and office of the Holy Spirit. What you are producing is decisions instead of salvation and tragically making them a “twofold child of hell” because you have convinced them they are saved when they are not.

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## Appendix I What is the Image of God?

Man did not come from God's hands in a ruined condition, but was created in "*the image of God*" who is the source of light, life and goodness. When God finished with all of His creation, including the creation of man, he looked upon all the work of his hands and pronounced it "*very good*" – Gen. 1:31. God did not create a world with sin, misery, sickness, war and dying. God did not create man as evil, but created him morally "*upright*" (Eccl. 12:7) and in his own moral likeness and image.

*So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. – Gen. 1:27*

*In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him; Male and female created he them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created. - Gen. 5:1,2*

God has no *physical* image or likeness because God is "*a spirit*" (Jn. 4:24) and "*a spirit hath not flesh and bones*" (Lk. ). Paul says that Jesus was in the "*image of the invisible God*" (Col. 1:15). Indeed, the sin of idolatry was the attempt to make a *physical* material likeness of the "*invisible God*" especially in the material **physical** likeness of man:

*For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things*

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*that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:....Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And **changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man**, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.* – Rom. 1:20, 22-23

Note that Paul says the visible creation provides evidence of the “**invisible things of God**” and that idolatry was changing this glory of God into *visible* images that made God look like a man or animals. Paul is saying that the “*image*” of God is not a *visible* image that looks like *visible* man, but is an “*invisible*” image or likeness of God or a spiritual image or likeness of God.

Furthermore, all animal life received physical bodies and some bear a *physical likeness* or resemblance to man, but only man is said to be made in the “*image*” of God which again shows the likeness is not *physical*, but must be *spiritual*.

Even today, the term “*image*” often refers to something other than a *physical* or material likeness. There are companies that exist for the very purpose to improve your public “*image*.” They are not trying to improve your *physical* looks, but trying to restore the public perception of your moral and business image.

It is this moral and *spiritual* image that the new birth restores to man:

*And have put on the new man, which is renewed in **knowledge after the image of him that created him**: -*  
Col. 3:10

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*And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.* – Eph. 4:24

According to these verses, there is a “*new man*” within the child of God which is after the image of God “*created in righteousness and true holiness.*” The fact that it is created within man again shows that the “*image of God*” is spiritual instead of materialistic in form.

## *1. A Spiritual Moral Image*

Paul this inward new man is created and “*renewed in knowledge after the image*” of God.

*And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:* - Col. 3:10

What does Paul mean to be “*renewed in knowledge after*” the image of God. The Greek term translated “*after*” is the term *kata* which means “according to” or “in keeping with” or in harmony with something. This “*knowledge*” is a creative act of God within man that is *according to* or *in keeping with* or *in harmony with* the “*image of God.*”

The Greek term translated “*knowledge*” is *epiginosko* and means *intimate experiential knowledge* or knowledge gained through *intimate experience* with someone or something. Therefore, this is not knowledge gained through book reading or

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obtained in connection with “*flesh and blood*.” This is *revelatory* knowledge obtained by a direct experience with God.

For example, how did Peter come to know Jesus Christ and who He really is? Jesus explains that Peter’s knowledge of Christ as presented in his profession did not come by “*flesh and blood*” means:

*He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. – Mt. 16:15-17*

Jesus is saying that Peter’s confession of faith was directly due to divine revelation from the Father or revelatory knowledge that is direct, intimate and personal.

Paul says the very same thing about his own obtained knowledge of Christ:

*But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ....But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother’s womb, and called me by his grace, To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: - Gal. 1:11-12,15-16*

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Notice that the phrase “*not after man*” is synonymous with “*not with flesh and blood.*” Paul is asserting that he was not only taught the gospel by divine revelation, but that his initial knowledge of Jesus Christ was by divine revelation. Indeed, he claims that God revealed His Son “*in me*” prior to being called to preach the gospel.

More importantly, he compares his physical birth whereby he was revealed into the physical world from his mother’s womb to his spiritual birth whereby Christ was revealed within him – both equally acts of God – “*But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother’s womb, and called me by his grace to reveal his Son in me.*” His point is that this revelation of Christ “*in*” him was on the same order as God effectually calling him forth from his mother’s womb, thus revealing him to the world. Likewise, God effectually called into existence **within** Paul this intimate personal experiential revelatory knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Paul likens this internal revelation of Christ in the heart of man at regeneration to be a creative act of God by an effectual call:

*For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. – 2 Cor. 4:6*

With the former verse (Gal. 1:12-16) the analogy was with human birth where God effectually revealed Christ in Paul, just as God effectually revealed Paul in his mother’s womb. However, in this text (2 Cor. 4:6) the analogy is with the creation of light out of darkness in Genesis 1:2-3 where by God effectually called light



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into existence. This creation of light by an effectual call is the cause for the metaphorical “*light of the knowledge of God*” to shine “*in our hearts*.” Again the Greek term *epiginosko* is used to translate “*knowledge*” in this text. This intimate experiential **revelatory** knowledge of God was due to a creative act by an effectual call. The words “let there be light” did not come in **word only** but “*in power, and in the Holy Spirit*” effectually creating light out of darkness. The content of the effectual call that creates this intimate experiential knowledge of God in the heart of the unregenerate man is the gospel (2 Cor. 4:5). In other words, God empowers the gospel so that it comes to his elect as a creative word of command that effectually creates this internal revelatory knowledge of Christ in the heart.

*Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God. For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake. And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost: 1 Thes. 1:4-6*

Paul informs the Thessalonians’ that they can know their election of God (v. 4). How is that so? Paul tells them that the gospel does not come to God’s elect in “*word only*” or just external audible syllables. Rather it comes as an internal transforming creative revelatory word in “*power*” and “*in the Holy Ghost and in much assurance*.” It comes with internal transforming power that turns them into the same “*manner of men*” who delivered the gospel to them so that they “*became followers*” of them.

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The preacher brings the gospel to the external ear of people, but it is God that transform it into a creative word of power “*in our hearts*” (2 Cor. 4:6) that transforms them.

Paul describes this joint work of the preacher and the Holy Spirit in this revelatory transforming power:

*Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men: Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart. And such trust have we through Christ to God-ward:*

*Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God; Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.* 2 Cor. 3:2-6

Paul uses the analogy of inspiration behind the production of scriptures to show the transforming power of the effectual call. The idea of “*inspiration*” is God breathed words. The Bible is so much the Word of God that it is like God directly breathed it out on the pages as though no instrumental use of men were present. This is the analogy behind preaching the gospel to the elect. God writes the moral law upon the heart of men giving spiritual life, as though there is no instrumental use of men.

Take special note that this ministry makes a moral transformation in the heart of man. What was written formerly on

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stones (Ten Commandments) is now written in “*fleshly tables of the heart*.” That is a metaphorical way of saying that God gives a “new heart” which has a moral taste bud for the things of God.

Paul’s words in 2 Corinthians 4:6 also infer that such a new moral nature is implanted by this effectual call that creates this metaphorical “*light of knowledge*” within the heart. This is intimate experiential knowledge gained by direct creative revelation of “*the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ*.” Remember, that sin is defined as “*coming short of the glory of God*” (Rom. 6:23). The opposite of sin is righteousness, and righteousness is God’s glory. That righteousness necessary to be justified before God is revealed in Christ or “*the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ*.” In other words, what is created within the heart of the unregenerated man is an intimate experiential revelatory knowledge of “*the righteousness and true holiness of God*” (Eph. 4:24) in the person and works of Jesus Christ as declared in the gospel. It is God that reveals the truth of the gospel within the human heart by an intimate personal experiential revelation of the gospel that effectually calls man out of spiritual darkness into the moral light and spiritual life of God. This is why Jesus says this kind of revealed knowledge “*is eternal life*.”

*And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. –*

Jn. 17:3

Again, it is the Greek word *epiginosko* translated “*know*” in John 17:3. Therefore, this experiential intimate sense of knowing God is eternal life and that is what is meant when Paul says that man is

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“*renewed in the knowledge after the image of him that created him.*” It is God revealing His glory (righteousness and true holiness) by personal revelation of Jesus Christ as declared in the gospel within your heart transforming you into a new creation after the image of God.

The unregenerated man is void of this intimate personal revelatory knowledge of God and incapable of understanding it:

*Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: - Eph. 4:18*

Even the saved man, operating apart from the new supernatural inward man, but under the control of indwelling sin, just like the “*natural man*” or lost man (Rom. 7:18-25) cannot receive the things of God.

*But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. - 1 Cor. 2:14*

The saved man **can** operate under the law of sin, and when he does it is the “*carnal mind*” set controlling his life which is enmity against God. But the saved man does not have to operate that way because he has another option because of a new inward man whom he can “put on.” However, the lost man has no such new inward man but always **does** operate under the law of sin by nature and is “*in the flesh*” and never can “*please God.*”

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*Because **the carnal mind is enmity against God**: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. – Rom. 8:7*

Therefore, being renewed in the knowledge after the “*image*” of God is a condition created by God within His elect that effectually reveals Christ in their heart, giving them seeing eyes, hearing ears and a believing heart.

On the very day and at the very time God gave the Ten Commandments to Israel, he said the following words:

*O that there were such a heart **in them**, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!*  
– Deut. 29:4

These are the same people the writer of Hebrews said that erred “*in their heart*” where the gospel was not mixed with faith “*in them*” that heard it:

*Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do **alway err in their heart**; and they have not known my ways. So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.) Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you **an evil heart of unbelief**, in departing from the living God.....For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, **not being mixed with faith in them** that heard it – Heb. 3:10-12; 4:1*

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What God stated on that day he gave them the Ten Commandments at the beginning of the book of Deuteronomy was reaffirmed at the close of the book of Deuteronomy:

*Yet the LORD hath not given you an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day.* – Deut. 29:4

Remember, the book of Deuteronomy covers a period of thirty-eight years and nine months. Hence, at the beginning God says they do not have such a heart in them, and at the close Moses claims that God had not yet given such a heart so they would be able “*to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear*”.

In other words, they had not yet had a heart transforming revelation of God’s glory (righteousness and holiness) or brought into spiritual union with God’s light, life or righteousness “*in the face of Jesus Christ*.” When you look into “*the face*” of someone you are getting a personal close up look at them. It is the creative act of new birth that reveals Christ in the hearts of God’s elect so they are seeing him as declared in the gospel. Seeing him as declared in the gospel is saving faith. This is the creation of saving faith within the heart by God. This is the moral transformation of the heart from the heart “of flesh” to a righteous heart by God (2 Cor. 3:3) bringing the elect into union with God as light, life and righteousness.

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## 2. A Ruling Image

In addition to this *moral likeness* with God, man shared another likeness with God:

*And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. – Gen. 1:26*

Part of God's "*image*" is that he is a King who rules over things. Man was not only made in God's *moral image* but in a *ruling image*. However, in the fall into sin, man became ruled over by the dominion of sin through which he yielded his rule over this world voluntarily unto Satan who is now the "*god*" and ruler over this world. This demonic rule over man and this world is a system of rebellion against God. Indeed, even the term "*world*" is used in scripture to describe a system of thought, values and principles that are in opposition to God's revealed will as expressed in Scripture. Thus, born again persons are instructed by Biblical writes not to love the world, and although we are in the world we are not of the world or of that system of rebellion.

Moreover, the position of rule among human beings is given to the male instead of the female as Paul says concerning the male:

*For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man. For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. – 1 Cor. 11:7-8*

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Paul has been referring to the position of authority or chain of authority established by God (1 Cor. 11:3). In this chain of authority Christ is the “*image of the invisible God*” and under the authority of the Father, while man is also made in the “*image of God*” and the woman is under the authority of the man. Therefore, the term “*image*” refers to the position of authority.<sup>25</sup>

### 3. A Triune Image

Finally, man was created in the image of a *Triune* God. Man is a triune being of spirit, soul and body (1 Thes. 5:23; Heb. 4:12). The fall into sin corrupted the whole man, spirit, soul and body and brought the whole man under the dominion of sin. The new birth is the first step in restoring the “*spirit*” of man to its original spiritual image. Once the spirit of man is restored to the image of righteousness and true holiness, then that moral image is to be embraced by the soul “put on” in the external life by the power of the indwelling, thus progressively setting apart the whole spirit, soul and man unto righteousness. The glorification of the body at the resurrection is the final restoration of man from the effects of the fall into the sinless image of God.

When man is completely restored to the sinless image of God, in spirit, soul and body, so he will be restored to the positional image

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<sup>25</sup> This position of authority is not designed by God to be male chauvinism but a loving caring protecting leading position that establishes order in the home in keeping with the Christ’s leadership over the church.



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of God as heirs and joint heirs with Christ in ruling over a new world (Rom. 8:22-25; Rev. 22:1-2).

## *4. Immaterial Spiritual Image*

The immaterial essence of God is described by both terms “*soul*” and “*spirit*” which are attributed to God who exists without a physical or material body.

*God is spirit*...- John 4:24

*The Spirit of God* –

*My soul* – Lev. 26:11, 30; Isa. 1:14; 42:1; Jer. 5:9, 29, etc.

This is illustrated in the case of God the Son, who previously existed outside of a physical body prior to the incarnation (Jn. 1:1-3, 14). His spiritual substance can exist outside and independent from a physical body.

This is not true of animal life or common biological life. When an animal physically dies it ceases to exist. However, when a human being physically dies he does not cease to exist, but his immaterial nature (spirit and soul) is made in the “*image of God*” so that he can exist without a physical body.

*And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.  
Believest thou this?* – Jn. 11:26

The physical body does die and every human body that has ever lived has physically died as the grave yards testify. However, the

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immaterial nature of man that is alive (“*what is born of Spirit is spirit*”) and believes (the soul) in Christ “*shall never die.*”

Paul explicitly states that at the death of his physical body that he departs that body and goes to be present with the Lord and the Lord is not in the grave but in heaven:

*For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot not. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you. – Philip. 1:21-24*

The choice Paul is considering is remaining “*in the flesh...abide in the flesh*” or departing the physical body and being with Christ “*to depart, and to be with Christ.*”

Jesus denies that killing the body can kill the “*soul*” of man (Mt. 10:28). Hence, the term *soul* cannot be understood to mean physical “*life*” or “*blood*” as physical death destroys both. Neither can it be destroyed until **after** the Great White Judgement throne in the lake of Fire, so it continues to exist between physical death and the Lake of fire. In addition the term “*destroy*” never means *annihilate into nothing* as the very same term is translated “*lost*” twice in the very same chapter (Mt. 10:6, 40) in addition to “*destroy*” (Mt. 10:28). The term literally is composed of two words that mean “*to loose [Gr. luo] away from [Gr. apo]*” or to *separate*. It is used to convey the idea of destroying the serviceable purpose of something. For example, in Matthew 28:6 the “*lost [apollumi] sheep of the house of Israel*” in their present

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unregenerate condition their serviceable purpose for the glory of God is destroyed. For example, the life must be “*lost*” in Matthew 28:40 in order for it to be saved. That is, in order for your life to be saved for the glory of God, all self-service must be destroyed, and that requires dying to self. The same Greek term is translated “*perish*” in Matthew 9:17 to describe what occurs to a wine bottle that rips under the pressure of fermentation. The wine bottle is not annihilated into nothing, but the rip destroys its serviceable purpose.

In regard to **biological life**, the terms *ruwach* (Hebrew) and *pneuma* (Greek) can mean “*breath*” and the terms *nephesh* (Hebrew) and *psueche* (Greek) can mean “*life*” or “*blood*” as the “*life*” of the flesh is “*in the blood*” or the blood serves to provide all the nutriments for the physical life of the flesh.

However, in regard to **spiritual life** the terms *ruwach* (Hebrew) *pneuma* (Greek) refer to the spiritual immaterial substance of man or “*spirit*” and the terms *nephesh* (Hebrew) and *psueche* (Greek) or “*soul*” are both applied to God who has neither “*breath*” or “*blood*” or a physical “*life*.” Man is made in God’s image and has an immaterial “*spirit*” and “*soul*” that continues to exist apart from any kind of physical body. However, animals cease to exist when their physical biological life ceases. In regard to man’s immaterial “*spirit*” and “*soul*” death is not cessation of existence, but rather two different forms of immaterial existence. The immaterial nature of man continues to exist after physical death of the body either in a state of spiritual separation from God (death) or in a state of spiritual union with God (life).

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Some quote Ecclesiastes 9:5 and similar passages that seem to appear to mean that man ceases to exist at physical death. However, that interpretation is a failure to understand the overall context of Ecclesiastes who is viewing life from “*under the sun*” and from a human point of observation. The physical body serves as the vehicle of expression for the soul “*under the sun*”, for expressing its anger, love, sorrow, memories and etc. When the physical body is removed from out from “*under the sun*” and placed under the sod, it no longer serves as a vehicle of the soul to express these things in this life. However, the same writer declares that at physical death the physical body of man returns to dust but the spirit of man returns to God:

*Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.* – Eccles. 12:7

In direct contrast to animals, the spirit of animals goes downward with their physical body to dust but the spirit of man goes upward to God:

*Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?* – Eccl. 3:21

Therefore, the “*image*” of God in which man was created was a *rational, moral, positional, triune, and immaterial* image, rather than any kind of physical material image.

However, in this book we are dealing only with the restoration of the human *spirit* of man to God’s moral image by new birth. The work of restoring the moral image of God to the *soul* of man is

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called progressive sanctification. Progressive sanctification is the progressive action of the soul (intellect, affections and will) putting on the moral nature of the regenerated *spirit* in the life (words, actions of the body) of man and will not be finished until man leaves the physical body for heaven.

The transformation of the human *body* to the moral image of God is called glorification. Glorification is when God removes the indwelling law/principle of sin/corruption from the human body and unites it with the spirit and soul of man already completely transformed into the moral image of God. At that point, the whole man, spirit, soul and body is completely sanctified or transformed into the moral image of God. Complete sanctification of the spirit, soul and body is the ultimate goal of salvation:

*And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. – 1*

Thes. 5:23

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## Conclusion

Due to the fall of man, all humans, regardless when they live or where they live, are either in the kingdom of darkness or the kingdom of light. The very nature of the fall is separation from God as light, life and righteousness. The only possible solution for spiritual separation from light, life and righteousness is union with light, life and righteousness and that is the elementary truth of regeneration.

There is no third class of humans who are neither in the kingdom of darkness or in the kingdom of light but in a twilight zone. There is no third class of humans who are neither children of Satan nor children of God but are something neutral between both. There is no third class of humans who are neither unregenerate nor regenerate, but semi-generate. There is no third class of humans who are neither lost nor saved, but temporarily misplaced.

There is no salvation provided by God for anyone at anytime that is outside of Christ. There is no other gospel than the gospel preached from the Garden of Eden to the end of Revelation. Man's problem has been the same from the fall of man to the end of time, and therefore, the solution is the same. The problem is spiritual separation from God, as light, life and righteousness, and the only solution is union with God as light, life and righteousness.

There is no such thing as spiritual union without Spiritual indwelling, as the union occurs inside of man and therefore if there is spiritual union inside of man then that is only possible by the

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Spirit remaining inside of man or else the union between the human spirit and the Spirit of God ceases to be.

There is no such thing as a regenerate unbeliever or a unregenerate believer, any more than there is such a thing as a repentant unbeliever or an unrepentant believer. These are inseparable graces, so where one is, so is the other, and where one is not, so is not the other.

Abraham a pre-Mosaic man, a pre-Pentecost man is the pattern for “all who are of faith” regardless when they lived, and he was “in Christ” by faith (Gal. 3:8, 17). His sins were remitted and the righteousness of Christ was the object of his faith (Rom. 3:25-26; 4:22-25), and it is that kind of faith for which righteousness is imputed to him.

There is no such thing as sacramental grace for salvation, as Abraham was justified, with full remission of sins and full imputation of Christ’s righteousness, and already in Christ, prior to observing any divine ordinance, while still in “uncircumcision” (Rom. 4:6-11).

There is no such thing as justification of the godly by progressive justification, as Abraham was justified by faith without works as “the ungodly” (Rom. 4:5).

The same way of salvation (Jn. 14:6) before Pentecost is the same way after Pentecost (Acts 4:12), just as the same gospel before Pentecost (Acts 10:43) is the same gospel after Pentecost (Acts 26:22-23; Heb. 4:2). The same Savior before Pentecost (Jn. 14:6) is the same Savior after Pentecost (Acts 4:12). The same

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justification by faith, or remission of sins, and imputation of righteousness, before Pentecost (Rom. 4:5-11), is the same after Pentecost.

So likewise, the same regeneration of man prior to Pentecost is the same after Pentecost (Gal. 4:28-29; Ezek. 44:7, Col. 1:11).