

---

# To the Modern Church...

---

A Call from God.

---

[www.thewatcher.co.uk](http://www.thewatcher.co.uk)

---

# **Contents:**

## **Intro – The need for Direction**

### **1. The Call from God (Malachi)**

- 1.1 *To the Chosen ones.*
- 1.2 *To the Called out ones.*

### **2. The road to recovery**

### **3. Nine fundamental Studies**

- 3.1 *Who and what is the trinity of God.*
- 3.2 *Genesis and Creation, the origins of man.*
- 3.3 *The Fall of Man and the introduction of Sin.*
- 3.4 *The Reason for Jesus.*
- 3.5 *Living in 'the day of Grace' and what it means.*
- 3.6 *The Word, a guide to reading and understanding it.*
- 3.7 *End time teaching, the Rapture and Second Coming.*
- 3.8 *Eternity, dispelling the myths.*
- 3.9 *The Path to Salvation.*

### **4. Conclusion**

# INTRODUCTION

## **The need for direction.**

Never in history has the call been so strongly needed than now for Christians to come together under the truth of the Word. I don't mean all dominations and faiths getting together for a celebration to try to put their differences behind them, I mean true believers. I don't want to use the word Christian really as it conjures up all sorts of different ideas depending on your faith, culture and back ground. I am calling to the people out there who believe in the literal translation of the Authorised Version Bible, people, who are fast becoming a minority in this world.

No I am not saying the Authorised is the only Bible we should use, it isn't the best I know for study or reading, but compared to a lot of the modern versions at least it has all the verses. In this study I have used different versions when quoting scripture. What I am trying to illustrate is the definition of the word Bible and not any religious text which could be construed as a Bible. I do not refer to Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Satanism or any of the other 'ism's' out there masquerading as the words of Truth.

Different religions can not and never will work in harmony together for Christ, this is the path of the Anti-Christ to pull all religions together into a vague, wishy-washy belief of a supernatural force. If you think there is hope for all faiths to work together then you are deluded, there is only one God and one Faith and one hope which is in Christ. The Anti-Christ with the leading of Satan will bring about a global religion in the end times and all who fall for the lie will die.

## **Why now?**

Jude warns the modern Church of what will happen if it doesn't put its own house in order. Jude may be a small book which is often overlooked but it is just as relevant as when it was written. John's letters too, warn of sticking to the truth, to the original and unadulterated truth. Something which we are finding all too common in the Church today is preachers and teachers alike talking about THEIR 'version' or 'interpretation' of what the Bible says on a subject, and not simply 'The Bible says..'. .

When people don't understand parts of the Bible they either ignore it or change the meaning, so it fits into their understanding. The problem with this is everyone has a different understanding and so we have thousands of interpretations out there all purporting to be the truth, but none just took the Word at face value.

If we can't understand a portion of scripture or find it doesn't sit well with the scientific or moral discoveries of the day then that is 'our' problem not God's. If we start from the premise that the Bible is true 100% from 'In the beginning..' to 'Amen' then can we look at the world and see more clearly the mysteries of creation and work or study to understand the Bible, without constantly second guessing or doubting. WE get things wrong God doesn't, and it is very arrogant of us to think we are right because we are now supposedly more enlightened and developed than we were 2000 years ago' another arrogant presumption.

We are fast approaching the end, that is the appearing of the Anti-Christ, don't let people scare you with tales of Armageddon and nuclear wars, apart from the Rapture which will be for the Church only, the next big event in Word history will be the advent of the Anti-Christ and his 7 year rule over the earth, Armageddon will be a welcome relief compared to the rule of the Anti-Christ.

To prepare we must look to the scripture, the only 'physical reference' we have, and through God's Spirit, which is the only 'spiritual key' which can unlock the truths and mysteries contained in the Bible to guide us through our short lives on earth.

Today, we need to make sure we all understand what we are talking about, that we are all singing off the same song sheet, Pastors and leaders should be teaching the truth simply and undiluted to their congregation for without proper leadership and training they will fail needlessly at the first sign of battle.

# 1. THE CALL FROM GOD (MALACHI)

## 1.1 To the Chosen Ones

### Historical overview to the book of Malachi.

It is widely held that the book was written around 475 to 450BC when Jerusalem was being governed by a Persian governor. Some years prior to this Israel had been led out of captivity and the temple had been rebuilt, sacrifices were being offered and Israel was looking forward to the prophecies promised in Hag 2:6-9, 20-23 and Zech 8:1-13. However as the years passed and the prophecies weren't forth coming an apathy and discouragement began to creep into the Israeli nation (3:6-12).

This feeling of abandonment they had which was eating into their belief and life was nothing more than impatience following a glorious intervention in their history, from God Himself. They expected God to keep doing everything for them to keep them on a high, when in actual fact God was letting them live their lives and enjoy the freedom He had given them back. To some extent it was a childish attitude but in another way they were in danger of becoming a proud nation. God had worked a miracle for Israel, they were a nation to be feared as they had GOD Himself on their side, but now they were disappearing into obscurity ruled by a foreign governor and, it would seem to them at least, abandoned by God.

The fact is they didn't cope with normal every day life and began to resent having to worship a God who they were beginning to believe didn't fulfil His promises. God's time scale was not theirs and it was apparent God didn't perform when they wanted Him to. This led to them to question the need to cross the T's and dot the I's in their religious lives, they started to cut corners and adopt a 'it will do' attitude in their spiritual life.

This attitude worked its way so much into their spiritual life that started to affect their moral life too. Like a cancer it spread throughout Israel in to all aspects of Jewish life and teaching. Israel started to fall back to its old ways which led to her first captivity. We see in Malachi the depths to which she was falling, Corrupt priests (1:6, 2:9), mixed marriages (2:11-15), divorce (2:16), social injustice (3:5) and neglecting tithes and offerings (3:8-10) all because God was letting them experience a bit or real life, the joys and heartaches that come with being human.

### The purpose of Malachi.

God saw how Israel was acting and it displeased him, so he sent a message to them warning them of the consequences of their actions a message which would reverberate throughout history and find relevance in today's society. Malachi is the last book in the Old Testament in our Bibles and for us it is perfectly placed Historically and spiritually, it precedes the 400 years of silence Israel suffered before John the Baptist came to prepare the way for Jesus who once again lead them from Captivity, but this time spiritually. God would use His Son to free them from the captivity of the Law.

There is some debate as to who is the author of the book, and whether it was a real prophet of the day or an angel sent by God, the word *Malachi* means 'my messenger'. It is also said *Malachi* could be an abbreviation of the word *Malachjah* which is 'messenger of Jehovah'. Either way we know it to be a Word from God and whether it was a person or angel the message is clear and the consequences for not complying are also very clear.

The main goals of the book are threefold;

1. Its appeal and encouragement to Israel to repent and serve a loving God with all of their lives.
2. To reveal the nature of God who will bless for obedience and chastise for disobedience.
3. To remind God's people of the future hope that is in serving God and promise of judgement for those who don't.

God had promised His people and would make true on that promise but if Israel was disobedient then the promise would be delayed not forgotten, and God would have to intercede to bring them back on track.

## **A break down of the book into its three teachings.**

1. The privilege of God's people (1:1-5)
2. The Sins of the Nation (1:6-3:5)
  - a. By the Priests (1:6-2:9)
    - i. Dishonouring to the Lord (1:6-14)
    - ii. Cursed by the Lord (2:1-9)
  - b. By the People (2:10-3:15)
    - i. Idolatry (2:10-13)
    - ii. Divorce (2:14-16)
    - iii. Judgment at His coming (2:17-3:5)
    - iv. Doubting God (3:13-15)
3. The promise to God's people (3:16-4:6)
  - a. The book of remembrance (3:16-18)
  - b. The coming of Christ (4:1-3)
  - c. The coming of Elijah (4:4-6)

Through out the book, Malachi exposes the evil nature of Israel as it questions God, who replies to each question in a statement beginning with 'You say' It truly shows the love God has for Israel after all He has done they then question His ability and word, only to be given another chance to repent .

You can look up the actual wording, depending on your version of course but here are the questions.

1. When and how have you loved us God? (1:2)
2. When and how have we despised your name? (1:6)
3. When and how have we profaned you? (1:7)
4. When have we been faithless and treacherous? (2:14)
5. When have we wearied you? (2:17)
6. How can we get right with you? (3:7)
7. When have we robbed and defrauded you? (3:8)
8. When have we spoken against you? (3:13)

Chapter 3 sees God asking His people to return to Him and he will shower them with blessings, they will by their actions fall under the protection and grace of God. Malachi also points out that the few who have held to God's words are blessed indeed and they have been recorded in a 'book of remembrance' and in that day they will be rewarded (3:17).

God is nothing but clear and fair, we see Him promise everything to the faithful and then in 4:1 we see the counter side the promise made to those who keep rejecting Him. Lets make it clear here that this isn't the unbeliever this is directed at the Jewish Nation a chosen and once Godly nation, so they know in their hearts and minds what God is capable of and they also know from their own history and fathers what God can and will do if you disobey Him.

This is truly a message which the nation of Israel needed to listen to, and not only that but act upon. When God says this is it! then you need to sit up and take note if you want to have any chance of surviving the certain judgement which always follows God's warnings against Sin.

## 1.2 To the Called out Ones

How then do we take our cautionary advice or warning from Malachi, well first you have to remember that the Church, or the Ecclesia (translated: the called out ones) are also God's chosen. The Jews, as a nation are a called race to be God's servants (Deut 7:6-8, Exd 19:5,6) a royal priesthood (1 Peter 2:9), they were the first called but unfortunately they failed under the Law and so they are in abeyance until their Kingdom and King comes again in the future (1 Peter 2:9).

The Church is an extension of that Race, grafted on when the Jews rejected Jesus, but such is the awesomeness of God he foresaw this and even before the world was made called out from amongst the nations another body of people. With this group the world might have hope (2Cor 5:16-21, 6:1,2 Rom 5:1,2).

The message contained in Malachi isn't a wishy-washy poke from God for every generation to pull their socks up. It 'was' and 'is' aimed at a specific people at a specific time. Its purpose then was to wake up the chosen, the called out ones prior to the appearance of God's Son. Who was the promised King with his Kingdom (Matt 3:12 , 4:17) with the message REPENT.

If we can get hold of this fact that God is calling to us today then we can read Malachi as the Jews should have heard it, a plea from God to repent, a shout if you like that a corner was fast approaching in the road and you need to act now. Malachi screams Church to us today, it is a modern and timely call for us to slow down take stock and amend our ways, turn from the impending bend in the road or suffer the consequences. This isn't a call to the unsaved, this is a call to people who **should** know better, who know the scriptures and have called to a work for God no matter how small or large.

Like the Jews the Church will have to repent for its back sliding for its apathy and rejection of God's word. The world is heading for a corner when Christians will be tested before the coming of Christ at the Rapture. The Word tells us of an Apostasy (2 Thess 2:3) when there will be a falling away or rejection of God from amongst the chosen.

The Jews were going through a quiet time, a time in which things were happening to them and they couldn't understand why. There was no God as far as they were concerned because He wasn't booming and throwing fire about on their behalf. They were being allowed to live under their own steam, to govern them selves. They had all the instructions, they just needed to implement them.

Today we have a similar experience as we near the end of the 'day of grace', a period where God has let us 'live' our lives. More than ever we are in a position to get the right teaching, to understand the scripture more and more. We have the intelligence to put into practice in a real way what God wants of us and through the leading of the Spirit make a real change in our and other peoples lives. We have so much written for us in Pauls Gospels and his letters (Rom 16:25, 2 Tim 1:11) yet we use so little of what God gives.

If we sit back all we will see is the gradual dismantling of the Christian faith, and without understanding or teaching we also will cry "where is God?" Doesn't He care any more? Why should we bother fighting for a lost cause, if God won't help us then what's it all about?

Like the Jews tradition and teaching at that time, the Christian faith is under attack now from within, from the very people who felt God's presence, who saw the reality of Him, to whom He opened the scriptures. It is they who now allow doubt and indifference to creep in, they allow the 'it will do' attitude to pervade the Church. We have like the Jews the instructions to carry on but we just can't be bothered, we want to be spoon fed and only with what we like. Unfortunately the leaders of the Church are just as bad and will feed their congregation sugar and spice, to keep them happy. They pander to the emotional and not the spiritual, to the quick fix and not the long term cure.

2 Corinthians 2:17 puts it best, where Paul tells us *we are not like the majority peddling the Word of God but we do it with sincerity and with the power of God knowing He is watching us.*

If you look down the list of Sins in Malachi you see a catalogue of sins ripe in the Church today.

## The leaders of the Church

God warned the leaders of their short falls (1:6 to 2:9). The priests had forgotten how to honour God, they disrespected Him and didn't give him due reverence, they deceive Him in their duties and half heartedly followed their traditions.

That could have been written for many of our Church leaders today, teaching is being left out of services because it upsets the congregation or just because they haven't learnt the scriptures themselves. They give to the people a washed out form of Christianity based on the secular rather than scriptural, on living a good life and not a Christ like life. They allow their congregation to get away with unchristian behaviour in and out of the Church and family of God. More and more now we hear of Churches on TV asking for money in return for God's blessings. This is blatant stealing from God, there is no other way of looking at it, and it is unscriptural and evil. In 1 Corinthians 2:4 we read;

4. And my message and my preaching were very plain. I did not use wise and persuasive speeches, but the Holy Spirit was powerful among you.

5. I did this so that you might trust the power of God rather than human wisdom.

God's message doesn't need 'mans touch' to get it across to the unbeliever or back slider. When we fiddle with it we take away the power that is in it and dilute it with mans wisdom. Later in Chapter 3 we see how it is God who does the work, we merely start the process for God to finish. 1 Corinthians 3:6,7 Paul is talking and explains;

6. My job was to plant the seed in your hearts, and Apollos watered it, but it was God, not we, who made it grow.

7. The ones who do the planting or watering aren't important, but God is important because he is the one who makes the seed grow.

More than anyone, the leaders of Churches need to be right with God, they need to feed daily on the scripture and ask God for understanding and insight. Their faith will strengthen the Church, and the blessings God bestows on them will affect the Church as a whole. Their failure will bring judgement on themselves as well as losing people their souls.

Read Ezekiel 34 for a stark warning to leaders or 'shepherds' as it is written in these verses;

1. Then this message came to me from the Lord:

2. "Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds, the leaders of Israel. Give them this message from the Sovereign Lord: Destruction is certain for you shepherds who feed yourselves instead of your flocks. Shouldn't shepherds feed their sheep?

3. You drink the milk, wear the wool, and butcher the best animals, but you let your flocks starve.

4. You have not taken care of the weak. You have not tended the sick or bound up the broken bones. You have not gone looking for those who have wandered away and are lost. Instead, you have ruled them with force and cruelty.

5. So my sheep have been scattered without a shepherd. They are easy prey for any wild animal.

6. They have wandered through the mountains and hills, across the face of the earth, yet no one has gone to search for them.

7. "Therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the Lord:

8. As surely as I live, says the Sovereign Lord, you abandoned my flock and left them to be attacked by every wild animal. Though you were my shepherds, you didn't search for my sheep when they were lost. You took care of yourselves and left the sheep to starve. 9. Therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the Lord.

10. This is what the Sovereign Lord says: I now consider these shepherds my enemies, and I will hold them responsible for what has happened to my flock. I will take away their right to feed the flock, along with their right to feed themselves. I will rescue my flock from their mouths; the sheep will no longer be their prey.

If a leader doesn't have the truth himself how can he instruct others, if he falls under pressure because he doesn't know the fundamentals, then how can he strengthen others, if he doesn't have the faith he should, then how can he impart faith to others.

It is quite clear how a leader should behave and act, the scripture tells us, just because God has given us some freedom doesn't mean it extends to changing the instructions, the Bible is true from cover to cover, it is unchangeable. Contrary to popular belief we don't need to change anything to make it more popular for today's society, we just need to tell it how it is, God's words will do the rest.

## The body of the Church

The people are not left out from the warning from God, although they may be being led astray by wayward leaders they still have a duty to themselves to find out what is right and wrong, to discover for themselves the scriptures and the hidden truths (Acts 17:10-12). The Word was given to everyone not just a select few, God wants all to be blessed and understand Him, He wants all to be reconciled to Him, His Son died for ALL, not just the religious leaders.

There shouldn't be any divisions in the Church, although we apparently see grey areas in scripture which we put our interpretation on, these are at best minor points which given correct teaching and study would no doubt be easily cleared up but simple and basic doctrine is not open for interpretation. Out of ignorance we start to fill in gaps when teaching fails which leads to divisions, then we start to fall in to the hands of the enemy.

10. Now, dear brothers and sisters, I appeal to you by the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ to stop arguing among yourselves. Let there be real harmony so there won't be divisions in the church. I plead with you to be of one mind, united in thought and purpose.

Pauls appeal in 1 Corinthians 1:10 was for unity in mind and thought, this can only be brought about by understanding, by seeking out God's word and through correct teaching.

What then of the Christian's, the body, how are they lacking and what can be done. We see from Malachi 2:10 to 3:15 that there is a big short fall. Even though we have the Bible we still insist in doing it our way, the modern way. Wake up people, Ephesians 4:1-6 tells us

1. Therefore I, a prisoner for serving the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of your calling, for you have been called by God.
2. Be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults because of your love.
3. Always keep yourselves united in the Holy Spirit, and bind yourselves together with peace.
4. We are all one body, we have the same Spirit, and we have all been called to the same glorious future.
5. There is only one Lord, one faith, one baptism,
6. and there is only one God and Father, who is over us all and in us all and living through us all.

To think that you can get away with Sin just because God said He would forgive is at best ignorant. All Sin will be punished unless it is covered by the Blood of the lamb.

Once saved, always saved is a mistake of stupid leaders who haven't understood what God was saying. Christianity, or 'to be Christ like' or be 'in Christ' (2 Cor 5:17, Gal3:28) is an on going journey of discovery and blessings where mistakes are forgiven and tolerated but should not be repeated. However if you choose to go away from God then God will let you go. We have the freedom of choice and it is this choice which will save or destroy you. Once saved always saved should be followed by; as long as you stay in Christ.

Let me put it in simple terms, if you pay for a service by direct debit then you will benefit from that service while ever the money is being out from your account. If for some reason then you wouldn't be surprised if the service stops, you would get a reminder and you would start payments again. Once you do then the service would resume.

Many people live their Christian lives like this, in and out of the protection of God, popping in and out of Christianity as their lives dictate. Well, what happens if you decide to pop out just before the rapture, what then. There won't be anyone to go to, to put it right, all the True Christians will be gone, the rapture will have already taken place. From that point on you will have to really work for your salvation, or more to the point die.

Look at the eight questions posed in Malachi from Israel, can you honestly go through those and come out smelling of Roses?

1. When and how have you loved us God? (1:2)
2. When and how have we despised your name? (1:6)
3. When and how have we profaned you? (1:7)
4. When have we been faithless and treacherous? (2:14)
5. When have we wearied you? (2:17)
6. How can we get right with you? (3:7)
7. When have we robbed and defrauded you? (3:8)
8. When have we spoken against you? (3:13)

God was and is calling for a people of devotion, single mindedness with an undivided heart. He asks for discipline in our lives and a faith which He can work with.  
A prayer we would do well to pray can be found in Col 1:9-15;

9. So we have continued praying for you ever since we first heard about you. We ask God to give you a complete understanding of what he wants to do in your lives, and we ask him to make you wise with spiritual wisdom.
10. Then the way you live will always honour and please the Lord, and you will continually do good, kind things for others. All the while, you will learn to know God better and better.
11. We also pray that you will be strengthened with his glorious power so that you will have all the patience and endurance you need. May you be filled with joy,
12. always thanking the Father, who has enabled you to share the inheritance that belongs to God's holy people, who live in the light.
13. For he has rescued us from the one who rules in the kingdom of darkness, and he has brought us into the Kingdom of his dear Son.
14. God has purchased our freedom with his blood\* and has forgiven all our sins.  
Christ Is Supreme
15. Christ is the visible image of the invisible God.

With these things in place we can be happy and secure in the knowledge that we will see the outcome of God's promise, an eternity with Him. Being a Christian doesn't exclude you from normal life, the ups and downs that humanity encounters. If anything understanding right from wrong, puts more emphasis on you to lead by example.

#### 1 Thessalonians 4

1. Finally, dear brothers and sisters, we urge you in the name of the Lord Jesus to live in a way that pleases God, as we have taught you. You are doing this already, and we encourage you to do so more and more.
2. For you remember what we taught you in the name of the Lord Jesus.
3. God wants you to be holy, so you should keep clear of all sexual sin.
4. Then each of you will control your body and live in holiness and honour
5. not in lustful passion as the pagans do, in their ignorance of God and his ways.
6. Never cheat a Christian brother in this matter by taking his wife, for the Lord avenges all such sins, as we have solemnly warned you before.
7. God has called us to be holy, not to live impure lives.
8. Anyone who refuses to live by these rules is not disobeying human rules but is rejecting God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you.

If only being a Christian was as simple as paying a monthly direct debit then we would all be happy, we would probably moan about the figure but in time we would forget it going out every month. Sorry, but its not like that and the sooner we come to terms with it and our purpose here on earth the quicker we can get on with God and enjoy the security of knowing we have a safe eternity.

That's what ultimately it's all about, where you will spend eternity, forget your 70-90 years of existence on the earth for now, where will you spend the rest of time. Isn't it worth giving your life to someone who knows what's best, even if it means you won't be popular or trendy, or have fame or fortune, wouldn't the price be worth paying?

The Jews weren't happy they decided to cut corners to get some happiness but it didn't work, let's learn from their mistakes, from their warning and make the right decisions based on God's call and the scripture.

Finally in 1 Corinthians 10:11,12 we hear the words of God;

- 11 All these events happened to them as examples for us. They were written down to warn us, who live at the time when this age is drawing to a close.
- 12 If you think you are standing strong, be careful, for you, too, may fall into the same sin.

## **2. THE ROAD TO RECOVERY**

### **Basic truths we must cling to.**

There are basic truths which as a believer you MUST cling to and believe without doubt no matter how hard it may be to understand. Once you realise this God can then start revealing to you the areas you are struggling with as you study to mature as a believer. Now let me make this clear, the concept of God is not hard to understand, it is when you dig deeper and mature in Christ that you have the problems because you are going into His mind.

The basic truths are simple, the Gospel is simple, it was designed for man so had to be!!

- 1. The Bible is the inspired Word of God and as such is true from start to finish. The Basics do not need interpretation they are Black and White.*
- 2. God created everything from nothing as laid out in Genesis, and man was made he didn't evolve. Evolution has no place in the Bible it is a lie from Satan.*
- 3. Because of the actions of Adam we are now living in a corrupt and Sinful world, in which entry to heaven and God's presence is not automatic.*
- 4. Because of the actions of Jesus, God's ONLY Son we can be accepted back into God's presence if we accept, believe and live as instructed by the Word and the guiding of the Holy Spirit.*
- 5. We will die physically one day and enter eternity, a lost eternity if you die having rejected the truth or an eternity with God if you die a true believer.*

I have done other studies on what a Church should teach, but I can't get over especially in these days how important it is to have a firm foundation of Faith based in the Word so you can stand firm against the winds of doubt. This is nothing to do with intelligence, it is simple faith based on God's Word.

### **Fundamental teachings which should be repeated .**

1. Who and what is the trinity of God.
2. Genesis and creation, the origins of man.
3. The Fall of man and the introduction of Sin.
4. The reason for Jesus.
5. Living in the 'day of Grace' and what it means.
6. The Word and a guide to reading, understanding and using it.
7. End time teachings, the Rapture and Second Coming.
8. Eternity, dispelling the myths.
9. The path to Salvation.

For a believer to live a productive and useful life for God, he/she must know what they are talking about and be able to stand up to criticism, doubt and attack. This doesn't mean they have to win every battle or argument, all they need to do is give an account of what and why they believe. It is about having and being able to use the correct weapons against the right enemy whether scripture against a spiritual attack, common sense and a visible faith against the unbeliever.

I have purposely not filled this section up with scripture to show you the first step to being a useful believer or 'Christian' isn't having a degree in theology or a knowledge of every verse in the Bible. It is first down to accepting and being taught, however basic, the 8 points above, from there God can use that simple faith to promote and feed a love for the Word, for understanding and so a growth in Faith. It is our duty as believers to mature in Christ.

The leaders of the Church today need to get everyone pointing in the same direction, for the sake of their own eternity and that of the people they are leading. Having said that it will not be an excuse when facing God to say 'I didn't know', it is also the responsibility of each and everyone to look after their own soul, to grow in knowledge and faith.

## **A level head and an eye on the horizon.**

It would be nice to think the Church was full of people God had chosen, and they were all working towards one goal, but this isn't the case. The Church is filled with a diversity of mentally, spiritually and emotionally crippled people. Is this unique to the church, are they drawn to the church specifically, no, not by any stretch of the imagination.

The human makeup is such that it craves spiritual feeding it needs something more than the physical body can give, and the church along with many other 'religions' has the ability to give the casual seeker a momentary inner peace. Whether through meditation, prayer, tradition, repetition or emotionalism they find a fix and cling to it. This is not to say they haven't had a passing experience with God, a 'burning bush' encounter, but this sometimes just goes to fuel their own agenda, to give them a bigger buzz rather than open them up to the true meaning of where they are and why. 'They' graft themselves on to the church.

Underneath all this is the true Church the 'called out ones' who God has brought together, who now have to keep the ship of faith on the right course as it travels through the waters of time. Leaders trying to keep tight hold of the wheel to stop their faith, and the faith of their congregation, drifting this way and that as they get buffeted from the elements and from within.

The Church has always had its enemies and critics, this is not new and I can say with absolute certainty will not end for the remainder of earth's history. But what is growing from within now, is a cancer which is being left to spread because of apathy and a lack of teaching. Satan over the years has planted seeds which are now starting to grow in abundance. He placed people in Churches, he gave them the 'God bug' and encouraged them to get involved.

Why?

Because they were his choice, not God's, they were people who, cling to one part of the scripture at the cost of all other, or the safety of tradition or they are those who seek the emotional over the spiritual. They are the vain the proud, the glory seekers and the would be kings, the manipulators, the antagonists, the charismatic charmers, all working for Satan's future purpose;

- the destruction of the Church from within.

It was a brilliant plan, well executed and planned to perfection, and while a growing attack was being mounted from the media, science and the intellectuals decrying Christianity as a joke, Satan was able to inject his venom into the church as it closed ranks taking any and all solace it could find in the miss guided belief that all it needed was bums on seats and a leader who could keep them happy. For with numbers they would be able to counter the attack with figures and statistics.

The Church is nothing without its God head, without Christ, yet churches up and down the country have dropped Christ in favour of a more popular and less confrontational approach, they have given the church the ability to sin and live with it. The psychological concept of living a 'godly' life over living a life for God, the 'idea' of Good and evil over the reality of good and evil. The abandonment of a literal interpretation of the scriptures, for a more comfortable ideal. And lastly, the removal of a final judgement altogether.

Are these new ideas, is it my imagination or lack of willingness to allow change in the church as times change, no, Jude warned of this cancer, he warned the church to look within and act while it could. He warns how people will come into the church unawares (v4) and the terrible results if the Church doesn't listen to God's warnings. Christ Himself warned of Anti-Christ's the people who would talk in His name but not in His power. Malachi a warning to the Jews and a representation of the Church today also allures to the folly of not getting its own house in order, and paints a terrible picture if the answer is silence and apathy.

It is not a call to fight the good fight to put down the enemies of God in a nationwide celebration extravaganza or campaign, or to go round winning souls on the street corners, this is a personal plea from God to His people to get right with Him, to remember what its all about. To visit your own heart first and measure it up against the grade God has set which can be found in the scriptures.

## **Think of yourself**

It is time to be a selfish believer in the quiet of your own home, to put aside all thoughts of family and friends and square yourself with God. For only then can God truly work in you and allow you to make a difference in your home or work place or amongst your friends. From that reconfirmation of your position you will also be stronger in your local Church and can in the strength and wisdom of God discern the ungodly and un-spiritual, lead the weaker member and if need be remove the malignant.

Teachers and Leaders need to listen as they will be judged by God more than all for their actions and words. They need to be sure of their role and faith, grounded in the truth of the scriptures sticking only to what is true and leaving the wisdom of man to man. They need to go back to basics and rediscover the wonder and simplicity of God's message, rightly dividing the word of truth (2Tim 2:15) building up the faith of their flock to be a blessing to themselves, God and others. Open to the leading of the Holy Spirit, not putting constraints on God, creating your own agenda in a vain attempt to second guess Gods. Leaders need to remember who is pulling the strings, as does the people in the Church itself.

This is not our Church it is Christ's, He is the head and we should follow His lead with respect, honour and fear remembering He is the only way to salvation and an eternity with God. We need to listen to the Call from God in the scripture from Malachi, Jude, John and other scriptures which call for God's people, the Jew and the Church, to get back to the truth, to get right with God because time is not on our side.

## **Building blocks of Faith**

In the next pages are 8 fundamental studies as listed earlier but worth repeating. These are the corner stones of the Christian faith and will give all believers a firm foundation on which to build a strong Faith;

1. Who and what is the trinity of God.
2. Genesis and creation, the origins of man.
3. The Fall of man and the introduction of Sin.
4. The reason for Jesus.
5. Living in the 'day of Grace' and what it means.
6. The Word and a guide to reading, understanding and using it.
7. End time teachings, the Rapture and Second Coming.
8. Eternity, dispelling the myths.
9. The path to Salvation.

The studies are simple black and white beliefs, they are not open to interpretation but are proved by literal translation or reading of the scripture. If it says God did something then He did. When it says Christ rose from the dead, then He did. If you have problems with this form of belief then you seriously need to step back from actively taking part in the Church and sort yourself out. If you are responsible for people and by your actions lead someone astray then you will be answerable to God.

### 3. NINE FUNDAMENTAL STUDIES

#### 3.1 Who and what is the trinity of God

Before the heavenly systems of planets, stars and suns swept through infinity in mighty curves and in their uniform relations, there was Elohim: He, the Eternal without beginning or ending, He who is above the whole course of time, He who in harmony beyond explanation possesses unity and life, God, the only true God, the absolute Spirit. (John 4:24 and 17:3 and Matt 28:19)

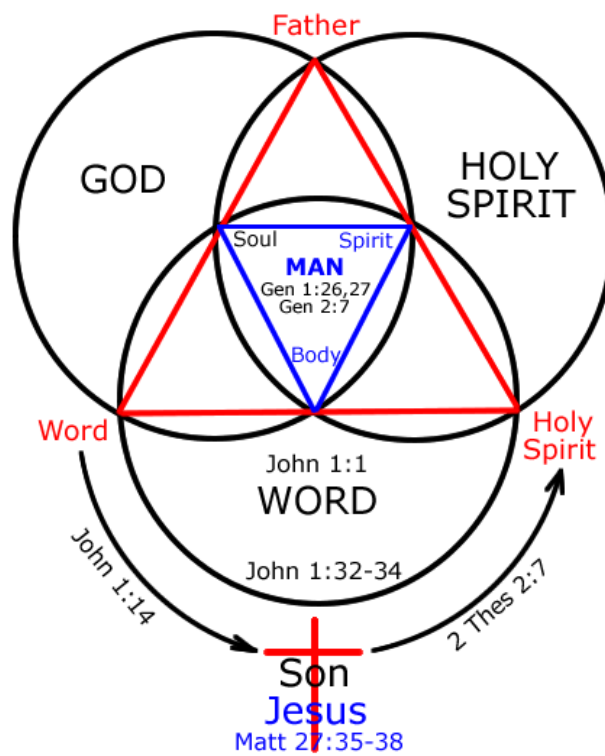
24 God is Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

3 And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God...

19 Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Three Divine Persons in essence, and yet one Supreme God, Elohim. At no time to be explained, yet the divine mystery of the trinity in unity allows itself to be represented to the human spiritual eye by a mathematical figure of the equilateral triangle.

#### THE DIVINE TRI-UNITY



- BLACK = God, Heavens.
- RED = Salvation.
- BLUE = Mankind.
- THE CIRCLE = No beginning and no ending. Completion.  
Colossians 2:10

The triangle is formed by three overlapping circles in a set form. For each point, the circumferences converge. The straight lines pass from each point through the centres of the three circles, thus forming the equilateral triangle.

Also each of the three circumferences pass into and through the centres of the other circles. The thought of man commenced in the heart of the Triune God for him to dwell in the centre of His love and will, "fashioned after our (plural) likeness". Genesis 1: 26.

26 And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness:

Thus was man formed and created, a tripartite being, God FORMED a body of the uncursed earth, then breathed a spirit INTO this body of flesh, "...and man BECAME (created) a living SOUL" Genesis 2:7. Therefore man is a SOUL WITH A SPIRIT (Job 32:8) IN a body (1 Thes 5:23) Two parts spiritual and one part physical.

8 But there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding.

23 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.

God is Love (1John4:8);

8 He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.

Love is the deepest element of God's being, the innermost fount out of which His nature eternally flows, the creative centre that begets all His working and ruling. Augustine once said, "If God is love, then there must be IN Him a Lover, a Beloved and a Spirit of Love: for no love is conceivable without a Lover, and a Beloved" The concept of love itself involves a trinity: because:-

**It always proceeds FROM the Lover**  
**It always moves TOWARD the Beloved and**  
**It always INTERTWINES the two together through the common Spirit of union.**

This Divine mystery is one revealed by stages in the sacred history of God's love toward His wayward creation, mankind.

First God revealed His UNITY, and this in express contrast to the polytheistic environment and inclination of His first call-out-ones, the people of Israel (Deut. 7:6-8)

6 For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God: the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth.

7 The Lord did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people:

8 but because the Lord loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the Lord brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

Also in Exodus 20:1-3 and Isaiah 45:5,6 we see God's choice of Israel for His love.

1 And God spake all these words, saying,

2 I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

3 Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

5 I am the Lord, and there is none else, there is no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me:

6 That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me. I am the Lord, and there is none else.

Only after a lapse of centuries, when faith in the unity of God could no longer be doubted in Israel, through their captivity in Babylon, God revealed in the Greek scriptures the PLURALITY in the unity (Heb 1:1,2)

1 God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,  
2 hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;

It is now revealed to us that the Word and God are one, but still two. The interpretation of the following verse from 1 John 1,2 is from the original where 'with' has been replaced correctly by 'towards'. The Word isn't just 'with' God but constantly 'towards God.

1 In the beginning was the WORD, and the WORD was toward theGod, and God was the Word.  
2 This was in the beginning toward the God.

which is confirmed in the Hebrew scriptures, in Isaiah 55:11:-

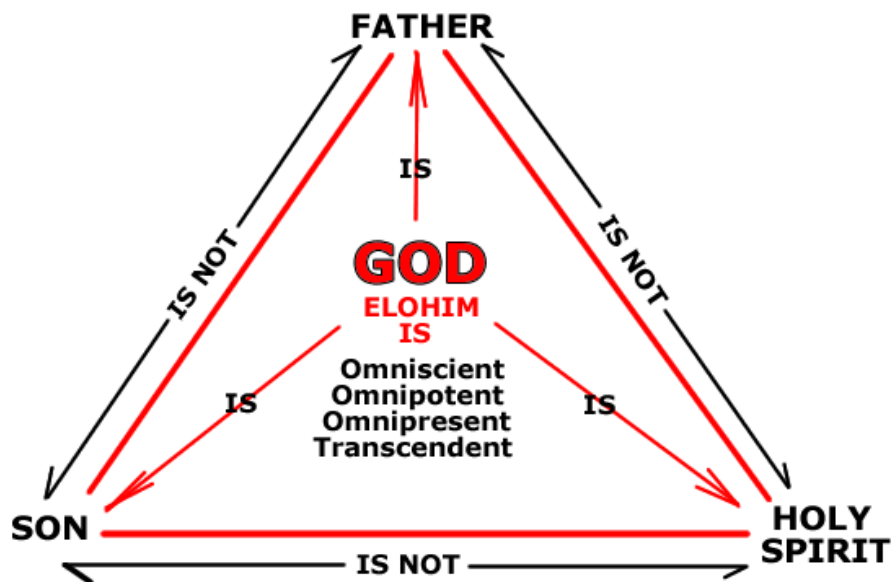
11 So shall My Word be that continually goeth forth OUT OF My mouth; it shall not RETURN unto Me void, but it shall accomplish THAT which I please , and it shall prosper whereto I sent it.

The Word that the first man disobeyed in the garden (Gen 3:11) and barred his return into God's presence after he was expelled (Genesis 3:24) now was sent (John1:14) to redeem fallen mankind and lead them back to the centre of God's presence, love and will. John 1:14;

14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt (*tabernacles*) among us (*Israel*), and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

Here a divine DUALITY reveals itself. On the day of Pentecost, a Hebrew festival, the Holy Spirit of God, not merely a force, but a divine Person revealed the PLURALITY of Elohim. A divine Tri-unity of Jehovah Elohim revealed to mankind and recorded through the Holy Spirit in the scriptures for later generations.

## THE THREE MANIFESTATIONS OF THE TRINITY



This diagram is really self explanatory. Elohim, that is God, His Word and his Holy Spirit in the form of the equilateral triangle. He has revealed Himself as a Father, through coming in a Son (Hebrews 1:2,) then ,coming in the Holy Spirit.

On the OUTSIDE of the triangle, through the dotted lines the Father is not the Son, neither the Son the Holy Spirit. etc: yet on the INSIDE - ( the essence) God IS the Word, God IS the Son, and God IS the Father.

**1. The God is Spirit. John 4:24.**

**2. The Word is Spirit. John 6:63**

**3. The Holy Spirit is the Eternal Spirit of God. Heb. 9:14.**

Spiritual realities count with a God who is Spirit, His thoughts, as conveyed to mankind by the Lord's declarations by the Holy Spirit, are the vital principles from which all life and happiness and blessings flow.

In these days of God's grace, the believer who is IN CHRIST (2 Cor. 5:17 ) is a new creation, who has been given the Hebrew and Greek scriptures, plus the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, who will, on request open up and reveal this written Word to all sincere Bible students to be able to know God "Whom to know is life everlasting"; Deut 8:3 and Matt 4:4

3 ..... that man does not live on bread only, but on every Word that proceeds out of the mouth of Jehovah does man continually live....

4 But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

In the Greek scriptures this tri-unity stands out for the first time at the baptism of Jesus spoken of in Matthew 3 :16,17;

16 And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him:

17 and lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

and then in the disciples commission and command to baptise in Matthew 28 :19.

19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

Also there are many "trinitarian" passages too. 1 Cor. 12 :4-6, 2 Cor. 13 : 14, Eph 2 : 18 -22, 2 Thess 2 : 13,14, Hebrews 9 :14 and 1 Peter 1 :2.

The word "trinity" is not in the scriptures, but there is evidence of this FACT on numerous occasions.

All the philosophical speculations concerning this problem of the Trinity, are to no purpose, and are mostly from an evil source, which has been going on for centuries.

Mankind is SAVED and REDEEMED by and through the WORD.

Is KEPT and MATURED by and through the Word.

And finally RETURNED to God by and through the Word, and through the Holy Spirit of God.

Thus fulfilling the delight and pleasure of the Triune God, in bringing His mankind (Ezek 18 :4 );

4 Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die.

back unto Himself in His new world. (Rev. 21 and 22).

1 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.

## 3.2 Genesis and Creation, the origins of man

It's more important than ever that the church get its act together as regards the origin of life. As we live in a scientific and proof orientated culture we must as Christians be able to say with confidence what we believe and why. 1 Peter 3:15 tells us quite clearly;

**15. But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:**

Many Christians believe in creation and the account in Genesis, up to a point. Then science rears its head and disputes the Bible and Christians back down, after all science must be right. What we end up with is a mixture of scientific and Biblical beliefs coming together and undermining the power of the Word and God's promise to us.

A belief in God will always be a matter of faith, this we can not change, but evolution hopes to use the natural to stop a belief in the supernatural, by discrediting the Bible's view on the origins of man. Science is not anti-God, only man's interpretation of scientific data is anti-God. If you look at the data without any preconceived ideas, then God's handy work shines through for all to see.

### WHAT WE SHOULD BELIEVE

Here are 2 truths the Bible teaches about the origins of man which the Christian MUST believe in if he/she professes to be a Christian.

- 1. God created everything in SIX literal days.**
- 2. God did not use evolution to bring about life.**

There is another but it is not really a necessity, that is that the earth is a young earth. If you use the Bible as an aid to date the earth you come up with a figure around 6000 years. This is obviously against all scientific evidence, and shouldn't be used as proof as to the age of the earth. It is very hard to assign days or years to chapters and then add them up at the end as though you were reading a diary. It is true that more and more scientists are coming up with figures between 6,000 and 30,000 years which is in line with Biblical young age teaching.

### A SIX DAY CREATION

Genesis teaches that God created the heaven and the earth in 6 days between Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 2:1, on the 7th day He rested. At the end of each 'day' we see that God clearly defines it as a literal day as can be seen in verse 5 where God explains the day had an evening and a morning.

**5 And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.**

The word day used in Genesis, (Hebrew yom) can have a variety of meanings, A solar day, daylight and an Indefinite period of time. However like most words when mixed with others it defines its meaning specifically. The word appears 2291 times in the Bible. 884 times in the plural form it refers to a literal day. 359 times it is accompanied by a number or added in historical context outside of Genesis 1 it also refers to a literal day. 38 times again, outside of Genesis 1 it is accompanied by evening and or morning, referring to a literal day. Now looking in Genesis 1 we see it is accompanied by evening and morning and also numeric values tightening the interpretation to a LITERAL DAY.

The only reason people try to extend the day to an unfixed period is to fit in the millions of years evolution says the earth has been in existence. Ignorance and a lack of faith in the Bible have caused and is causing a weak and broken church.

Why is it important to put creation within 6 days? Well for starters it is what the Bible says, which should be good enough for us. More than this we must see what God said at the end of each day after He had created something, He said that "**it was good**". Not all right but needs some work, not OK but we will leave it to mature or evolve. When God creates, He does a good job, He produces a working, finished creature, eco-system or world.

An interesting point is the 7 day week which we use. We do not see it in the stars or rotations of any planet. It has been handed down from generation to generation from God. If we truly evolved and religion came in much later than man then we would have adopted a week around the lunar month. Man would have chosen something it could see and measure. God created a working pattern for us, working and resting so that we would lead healthy and productive lives.

## **GOD DID NOT USE EVOLUTION**

It can be said of many instances in the Bible that God could have used natural phenomena to carry out supernatural events. The Flood has been explained away by a natural catastrophe, events in revelation and the out pouring of God's wrath have been explained by nuclear explosions and mans handy work. While it is true that God can use events to His purpose we must not take away or denigrate God's ability and try to explain everything in natural terms. If you do you will find yourself entering the domain of the evolutionist saying maybe and perhaps. If it says God did, then take it that He did and you won't go wrong.

Many Christians can not see the problem in believing evolution as a tool for the emergence of man, but what they don't realise is that by believing in evolution, all be it over looked by God, they have just done away with the need for the Bible and God as our way to eternal life.

Adam was created perfect, the first man, but in evolutionary terms he would have been a result of millions of years of trial and error, of mutation and death. There was no death on God's earth, and man was created in the image of God so where does that leave the evolutionists and the evolving single celled creature rolling out of the primeval soup. God as we said earlier does not make or create anything that needs perfecting or testing.

It was through mans fall that death was introduced into the world, not by Gods design or an evolutionary side effect. God who is perfect produces perfection. Evolution denies the existence of Satan and thus of Sin. It has no room for salvation as it denies the power and existence of God.

### 3.3 The Fall of Man

It's impossible to imagine what the world would be like now if Adam and Eve hadn't disobeyed God when they ate from the forbidden tree or what it would be like if Adam or Eve had asked God for forgiveness. Undoubtedly God would have forgiven them if they meant it but they didn't, their first impulse was to hide and then to blame someone else. With the introduction of Sin came an unwillingness to accept responsibility, overriding totally the honest response of admission and seeking forgiveness. Not only does Sin lead you into wrong doing it also leads you into wrong thinking.

I would hope we all know the story of Creation which is totally opposed to evolution (Gen 1:26,27 and 2:7) more than that I hope we believe whole heartedly that this event took place literally as the Bible depicts it. There is no room for deviation, no room for evolution which is a lie not to mention scientifically un-provable. Before man there was no death, there were no mistakes or genetic jumps culminating in the formation of mankind. God Himself created man, perfect and whole, as he did with everything. If He didn't, then there was no fall, there was no introduction of Sin and death, no need for Jesus, and no Salvation. Everything hangs on Genesis and your faith in this Book.

Genesis, Creation and the Fall is a very strong and important basis on which to start if you are to grow spiritually. What happened to this perfect world and perfect couple, how did we end up today in a dying world?

15 And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.  
16 And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat:  
17 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.

In Genesis 2:15-17 we see the only rule mankind had to live by, it wasn't a hard rule but it was a rule. To read it you would think this is something you would find no trouble in keeping. You live in a garden surrounded by fruit trees and seed bearing plants, all producing food and God says don't eat off one tree or you will die.

The problem came because they had been created with a free will. Adam and Eve hadn't used it yet, they were innocent and lived as God told them. They knew no different and had no doubt, accepting God's every command. They lived quite happily going about what God had asked them to do.

The problem came when someone introduced doubt into their otherwise spotless minds. Doubt is a little seed which if properly watered can bring down nations. This doubt originated in the mind of Satan and was manifest through the actions of a serpent (Gen 3:1).

\*\*Now, before I move on I would like to take this moment to explain one thing which I don't want to focus on too long as it will take up pages of thoughts and speculation. What I will say is this, the Serpent was not an animal, it was an angelic being, to be more precise it was Satan. He is referenced again in Revelation 12:9

9. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

existed and exists and was partially responsible for Eve's transgression. Also Satan was involved, Satan being the Devil, Lucifer, the once most favoured of all angels. Some people say Satan was in serpent form but this is not the case, I would say Satan possessed the serpent who was a willing participant in this act. WHY?

The judgement in Genesis 3:14-15 especially verse 15 talks of the enmity (Deep-seated, often mutual hatred) that will exist between Satan and Israel and between Jesus and Satan and his angels.

14 And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life:  
15 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.

The Hebrew word in Genesis which is translated as "serpent" is *Nachash* (from the root *Nachash*, to *shine*), and in Hebrew means *a shining one*.

Eve spoke with someone she felt comfortable with and who she obviously thought was in a position of authority. Would she have spoken in such a way with a snake and took its authority over Adam's?

Returning then to the Fall, Satan saw that Man was loved highly by God and no doubt with jealousy in his heart set about making man fall in the eyes of God, and in doing so try to get some control over the earth (we shall come to that later). He did this by making Eve doubt God, making her think that in some way God was treating them unfairly, that they were entitled to everything.

1. Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?
2. And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden:
3. But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.
4. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die:
5. For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.
6. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.

If we look we can see how Satan worked his way into Eve's minds. First he questioned what God had said. He then promises a benefit from disobeying God, as though it was God who was holding her back. The power in his argument was greater by the addition of truth. If you mix truth with a lie then it is easier to swallow. Satan wasn't actually lying in what he was saying. When God warned Adam they would surely die, God wasn't saying they would drop dead on the spot, God was talking spiritually, at that point spiritually they would die, Gen 2:17;

17 except fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If you eat of its fruit, you will surely die.

Satan had twisted God's words to make it seem like God was lying, no Eve wouldn't drop dead by eating the fruit. Satan goes on with his version of the truth by saying she 'would be like God knowing good and evil', again this is true, she would, but the difference being she or they would not be as Gods, they would have the knowledge as God does about good and evil. The payout was a fraction of what she thought she was going to get and if she had stopped and thought and questioned then she would probably have realised, but who is to say?

She saw the glitter (verse 6) and wanted it, she was blinded by the materialistic value and was hooked. From now on we aren't told exactly how it came to be but she gave some of the fruit to Adam or got him to eat from the tree. The point is that he listened to Eve rather than God (Gen 3:17) and Eve listened to Satan rather than Adam. Both were guilty of breaking God's command.

7 At that moment, their eyes were opened, and they suddenly felt shame at their nakedness. So they strung fig leaves together around their hips to cover themselves.

From that point they were truly like God, knowing good from evil. I suppose you could say conscience was born as disobedience entered their bodies. They knew what they had done was wrong and they felt guilt. They tried in a childlike manner to hide themselves from God, hoping they could get away with it.

From Gen 3:12 to the end of the chapter we see how the judgement of God was swift and precise. He first turns to Adam as the head who points the finger at Eve who in turn points the finger at the Serpent, who had no fingers and no excuse. God then works His way back up the sorry chain punishing the serpent then Eve and then lastly Adam.

The big question I have to ask is 'what if Adam had fell to his knees and asked for forgiveness? Would God have forgiven him? Personally, I would have to say yes. What that forgiveness would have resulted in I cant say, but Adam didn't choose that path, he tried to escape punishment rather than place himself at the mercy of God. It shows how Sin can change your outlook on life and basic thinking. How could he hope to hide from God, but he tried; how could he think he would get away with it, but he tried. They compounded an already bad situation into an even worse one, one which would have far reaching consequences for all of humanity.

## The consequence of their Sin

Because of their actions the whole earth groaned under the weight of Sin and a physical death entered into the life cycle of everything. Satan was right when he said they wouldn't die (straight away). Spiritually they did, that perfect connection to God was broken but physically they were on a count down, it would take hundreds of years but the clock was ticking. This would apply to every living thing.

God had to remove them from the garden because of the tree of life (Gen 2:9) as well as their sin. The tree of life as we see from Gen 3:22 and Rev 22:2 will sustain mankind indefinitely. In his state of sin this could not be tolerated, Adam could not be immortal and Sinful.

22 Then the Lord God said, "The people have become as we are, knowing everything, both good and evil. What if they eat the fruit of the tree of life? Then they will live forever!"

23 So the Lord God banished Adam and his wife from the Garden of Eden, and he sent Adam out to cultivate the ground from which he had been made.

24 After banishing them from the garden, the Lord God stationed mighty angelic beings to the east of Eden. And a flaming sword flashed back and forth, guarding the way to the tree of life.

## The effects of Sin

The effect of Sin entering Adam and Eve was genetically to alter mankind's life span for ever more. The rot of sin meant that everything would decay over time. When we were born we were born with a sinful nature, our default setting if you like was to tend towards 'bad'. We did not have a right to be in God's presence any more, through sacrifice we could acknowledge our sinful nature and for a time right the wrongs but it was a drop in the ocean, a bigger sacrifice would be needed to right all the wrongs.

Animals like humans were all plant eaters (Gen 1:29) but after the fall meat was added to the menu, even they suffered because of man's sin. In fact the first to suffer were the animals killed to provide clothing for Adam and Eve when they were cast out (Gen 3:21). This illustrates the basic Biblical principle of substitutionary atonement or 'covering' which required the shedding of innocent blood as a condition of forgiveness for the sinner.

## Loss of power

Mankind now had to work for a living and for his existence, no more would the earth produce for him, no more could he have the stature he once had where all things were under him (Gen 1:26 2:15)

26 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.

15 And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.

In addition to this, he lost his status as Prince of the earth, God is the owner and King but man was made a guardian and given certain rights over the earth, his position or Princeship if you like gave him power over a wide variety of things. This was now lost and went to Satan. This is why he seems to have quite a bit of authority over the sky and land and peoples. Don't be fooled into thinking he has absolute power though, God restrains him, and will keep doing so until the end is near.

How do we know that Satan has this authority? Well if we read from John 12:31, 14:30 and 16:11 we see how Satan has the title 'prince of this world'. Also in Matthew 4 concerning the temptation of Jesus we read see how Satan offered many things to Jesus.

8 Next the Devil took him to the peak of a very high mountain and showed him the nations of the world and all their glory.

9 "I will give it all to you," he said, "if you will only kneel down and worship me."

10 "Get out of here, Satan," Jesus told him. "For the Scriptures say, 'You must worship the Lord your God; serve only him.'"

11 Then the Devil went away, and angels came and cared for Jesus.

Here Satan offered Jesus the Princeship back. Jesus didn't rebuke him for lying, he rebuked him for tempting Him, the offer was real and Satan could actually give it. It was not until Jesus' death

that he earned the right to come and reclaim it because of his sacrifice which once and for all wiped away the sins of man.

A belief in the fall of man has its roots in Creation and stretches to the end of time as we know it, to the Second coming of Christ. This isn't a pretty story designed to give an excuse to mans behaviour, it is the reason we are here, the reason Jesus came and the reason Christ will return.

## 3.4 The Reason for Jesus

It is very easy in this section to go so deep as to the who and why that I will lose the reason for having this section at all. What I would say is if you have a need to look deeper then do so. You will see the wonder of God working throughout time to bring about salvation for all mankind. You will see the Omnipotence of God in the workings of sending Jesus to the earth.

I will break down the study into three sections;

- 1. Who was He before he came to the earth.**
- 2. Who was He when he walked the earth**
- 3. Who was He when he left the earth.**

Hopefully you will see in who He is and was, the reason we had to have Jesus come to earth and die on the cross.

### 1. WHO WAS HE BEFORE HE CAME TO THE EARTH.

Let's start straight away and probably upset some people out there by saying that 'Jesus' DID NOT exist before He lived on earth. Nowhere in the Bible can you find scripture which says JESUS lived in heaven prior to His birth.

Prior to taking this physical existence on earth He was known in the Bible as the WORD, part of the trinity of God. John 1:1-5 states;

- 1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
- 2 The same was in the beginning with God.
- 3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.
- 4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men.
- 5 And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

He created everything and everything owes its existence to Him. That is, the Word, not Jesus. Jesus was just a man, a special man I admit but all the same 100% man. The Word is eternal and is part of the Trinity of God. The Word IS God as much as the Father is or the Holy Spirit.

Isaiah 55:11:-

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

God sends the Word out to do a work, and from this verse we see that the Word is never useless; it never goes out from God without it returning having accomplished what it set out to do. The power of the Word is absolute and backed by God, because of this we can have absolute assurance that when God speaks His words are true and everlasting, His promises will be honoured and fulfilled. The world was formed by the Word, Satan is repelled by the Word and we are saved by the Word. The Word IS everything and everything IS because of the Word.

### 2. WHO WAS HE WHEN HE WALKED THE EARTH.

Lets introduce this section with a scripture which explains everything as to who Jesus was. John 1:14-15 shows us that the Word was sent to earth to become human, or to be more precise to take on a human form.

- 14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.
- 15 John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me.

This is the complicated part and one which we will never understand this side of eternity, how could He be 100% God and 100% man all at the same time. Hebrews 2:5-10 shows us a part of what happened.

- 5 And furthermore, the future world we are talking about will not be controlled by angels.
- 6 For somewhere in the Scriptures it says, "What is man that you should think of him, and the son of man that you should care for him?"
- 7 For a little while you made him lower than the angels, and you crowned him with glory and honour.

8 You gave him authority over all things.” Now when it says “all things,” it means nothing is left out. But we have not yet seen all of this happen.

9 What we do see is Jesus, who “for a little while was made lower than the angels” and now is “crowned with glory and honour” because he suffered death for us. Yes, by God’s grace, Jesus tasted death for everyone in all the world.

10 And it was only right that God—who made everything and for whom everything was made—should bring his many children into glory. Through the suffering of Jesus, God made him a perfect leader, one fit to bring them into their salvation.

We must be clear and realise that when the Word came to earth it was not a possession. God did not ‘borrow’ a body, this would have been pointless and wouldn’t have fulfilled any of the rules regarding the law of sacrifice which was to come. God ‘became’ or was ‘made’ flesh. When we are conceived our Soul is ‘born’ from God, we become a living entity. As a person we are a tri-part being, a Body, Soul and Spirit. The Body is formed from an earthly process within the woman, a carbon based miracle, the Spirit is Given by God (Eccl 12:7);

7 For then the dust will return to the earth, and the spirit will return to God who gave it.

And then there is the Soul, the part of us that is eternal, that is born out of heaven when we are conceived. I don’t want at this point to get into debates about when we become a person and all the trapping that go with that argument. I believe firmly there is no exception to the rule, when we are conceived (at what exact point I don’t know) we become as described in Genesis 2:7 a living person or as the KJV says a living Soul.

7 And the Lord God formed a man’s body from the dust of the ground and breathed into it the breath of life. And the man became a living person.

It was at this point that the Word was placed in the body, making it a living Soul. The Word became part of another Trinity, the Trinity of man. This made Him as real as you or me, as human as anyone, He was a Body Spirit and Soul.

To what end was the Word made flesh. Why did God come down to earth and make Himself lower than the Angels? The reason was simple to reconcile man to God. What does ‘reconcile’ mean?

**Ans: To re-establish a close relationship between.**

When the Bible talks about reconciliation it shows that there had to be something to reconcile, there was a broken relationship in the first place otherwise what was there to reconcile. This broken relationship was the one Adam and Eve created when they sinned against God in the Garden of Eden. They were thrown out of the garden, and the close relationship that they had as sinless people with God.

How can we be reconciled according to the Bible? What or who can sort out the broken relationship we have with God. Let’s look at the scriptures which relate to ‘reconciliation’ and how Jesus took those Sins on himself.

Romans 5:10,11

10 For since we were restored to friendship with God by the death of his Son while we were still his enemies, we will certainly be delivered from eternal punishment by his life.

11 So now we can rejoice in our wonderful new relationship with God—all because of what our Lord Jesus Christ has done for us in making us friends of God.

Ephesians 2:13

13 But now you belong to Christ Jesus. Though you once were far away from God, now you have been brought near to him because of the blood of Christ.

Colossians 1:20-21

20 and by him God reconciled everything to himself. He made peace with everything in heaven and on earth by means of his blood on the cross.

21 This includes you who were once so far away from God. You were his enemies, separated from him by your evil thoughts and actions,

Isaiah 53:5,6

5 But he was wounded and crushed for our sins. He was beaten that we might have peace. He was whipped, and we were healed!

6 All of us have strayed away like sheep. We have left God's paths to follow our own. Yet the Lord laid on him the guilt and sins of us all.

Colossians 2:14

14 He canceled the record that contained the charges against us. He took it and destroyed it by nailing it to Christ's cross.

Romans 5:1-2

1 Therefore, since we have been made right in God's sight by faith, we have peace with God because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has done for us.

2 Because of our faith, Christ has brought us into this place of highest privilege where we now stand, and we confidently and joyfully look forward to sharing God's glory.

2 Corinthians 5:18-21

18 All this newness of life is from God, who brought us back to himself through what Christ did. And God has given us the task of reconciling people to him.

19 For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people's sins against them. This is the wonderful message he has given us to tell others.

20 We are Christ's ambassadors, and God is using us to speak to you. We urge you, as though Christ himself were here pleading with you, "Be reconciled to God!"

21 For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ.

The overwhelming message we get is that Jesus died in order that we might be reconciled back to God. So when Jesus was born, was His death just a culmination in His life. Was the reason He came just to die? Definitely not.

His life was *Plan B* and His death *Plan A*. Without wanting to digress too much I need to clarify that the plan of the Word becoming Jesus was not supposed to be a death sentence. Jesus lived His life fulfilling God's Word, trying to bring about a promise which was spoken to Abram so many years before. Unfortunately the Jews missed out on *Plan B* and God had to move to *Plan A*, which meant Jesus had to die. God wasn't caught unawares, He didn't make a mistake, it was mankind who made the mistake and God was prepared.

I have purposely put A and B the wrong way round humanistically speaking as I didn't want to do God an injustice. When God sent His Son he knew He was sending Him to the cross, it wasn't an after thought, a quick fix to a bad situation. God saw the end before the beginning and factored both in to His plan.

Jesus spent His life giving us an example how to live, He explained many things about God to us through His conversations with his disciples and sermons. As we look through the scriptures today we can see His life was a constant fulfilling of prophecies. The greatest of these was when He, Jesus became a sacrifice for our sins.

Throughout time God has asked for a sacrifice from mankind to pay for the Sin we commit. Starting from Cain and Abel mankind has given God a sacrifice, and through Noah and subsequent Godly people this sacrifice continued. The sacrifice of animals only covered the sins for a short time, the sacrifice was of something from the cursed earth from a sinful nature and so wasn't ever perfect even though God asked for the best. The best would never be good enough.

The first sacrifice to cover guilt and shame was in Genesis 3:21

21 And the Lord God made clothing from animal skins for Adam and his wife.

Another sacrifice we read about is in Genesis 8:20 by Noah who realised the purpose and reason for sacrifice.

20 Then Noah built an altar to the Lord and sacrificed on it the animals and birds that had been approved for that purpose.

21 And the Lord was pleased with the sacrifice...

Again in Leviticus 10:17 we are told what the sacrifice was for.

17 "Why didn't you eat the sin offering in the sanctuary area?" he demanded. "It is a holy offering! It was given to you for removing the guilt of the community and for making atonement for the people before the Lord.

And in Leviticus 17:11 we have a greater insight into why.

11 for the life of any creature is in its blood. I have given you the blood so you can make atonement for your sins. It is the blood, representing life, that brings you atonement.

Hebrews 9:22

22 In fact, we can say that according to the law of Moses, nearly everything was purified by sprinkling with blood. Without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sins.

We have a clearly defined reason behind the Sacrifice and the plan of God to offer His Son, Jesus, as a sacrifice for our Sins. As someone who was perfect He could offer Himself once and for all. You don't have to be a Jewish historian or theologian to understand the concept of giving a life for a life, or in the case of Jesus a life for an entire race.

John 1:29

29 The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look! There is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"

Romans 3:25

25 For God sent Jesus to take the punishment for our sins and to satisfy God's anger against us. We are made right with God when we believe that Jesus shed his blood, sacrificing his life for us. God was being entirely fair and just when he did not punish those who sinned in former times.

1 Peter 2:24

24 He personally carried away our sins in his own body on the cross so we can be dead to sin and live for what is right. You have been healed by his wounds!

The Jews followed the Law of Moses and Jesus came to release them from this but they Crucified Him and missed out on this release. The Church does not follow the Law but they follow the head of the Church, Christ. Romans 8:3,4 brings this out and explains that we need no longer follow the Law, in fact it tells us that the Law can not save us.

3 The law of Moses could not save us, because of our sinful nature. But God put into effect a different plan to save us. He sent his own Son in a human body like ours, except that ours are sinful. God destroyed sin's control over us by giving his Son as a sacrifice for our sins.

4 He did this so that the requirement of the law would be fully accomplished for us who no longer follow our sinful nature but instead follow the Spirit.

The purpose of the physical life of Jesus can be found in John 3:16 which is probably one of the most widely known verses in the Bible. It was at its root a simple act of Love from God to man. Behind it lay universal Laws which spanned time itself but God was not going to let mankind be lost because of Sin. He set up a way of atonement, an escape route from Sin.

16 "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.

17 God did not send his Son into the world to condemn it, but to save it.

### **3. WHO WAS HE WHEN HE LEFT THE EARTH.**

Jesus died on the cross, the story is found in the gospels and is well known to everyone, so too is the physical resurrection of Jesus 3 days later. However, and this is a very important truth to get hold of, the actual physical resurrection of JESUS was for the benefit of the Jews only and will be fulfilled at the Second coming when they see HIM (Jesus) and cry out to him.

As the Church, we are not concerned with the PHYSICAL but the SPIRITUAL, Jesus the MAN died and the 'Risen Saviour' CHRIST Jesus rose, beating Death and Hell so He could return to His Father's side. He could not be kept in the realms of the dead because He was without Sin, He was pure.

We the CHURCH are not looking how to beat DEATH, how to come back to earth and live here physically for ever, we are looking for God and His presence, how to get in to eternity and bypass the Judgement and wrath of God. We do this through Christ who sits on the right hand of His father interceding for us as a priest and eternal sacrifice.

Hebrews states that Christ remains a "priest forever" and is "always able to save those who approach God through him, since he lives forever to make intercession for them" (Heb. 7:25,26).

24 But Jesus remains a priest forever; his priesthood will never end.

25 Therefore he is able, once and forever, to save everyone who comes to God through him. He lives forever to plead with God on their behalf.

Christ's role as high priest - as one who mediates between God and man by offering sacrifice - didn't end on the cross. He continues to offer Himself to the Father in heaven on our behalf. As Hebrews 9:11-12 tells us;

11 So Christ has now become the High Priest over all the good things that have come. He has entered that great, perfect sanctuary in heaven, not made by human hands and not part of this created world.

12 Once for all time he took blood into that Most Holy Place, but not the blood of goats and calves. He took his own blood, and with it he secured our salvation forever.

The following verses back this up, Jesus died that Christ Jesus might continue where Jesus the man couldn't go. Flesh and blood couldn't go to heaven (1 Corinthians 15:50)

50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.

It may sound like nit-picking, putting too much on a technicality, surely Jesus is Jesus. I can call Him what I want? John 14:6 states;

. . . Jesus told him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me."

Yes Jesus said this and meant it, but this doesn't distract from the fact that Jesus died, He rose and went to sit at the right hand of God. The Bible or the WORD shows how Jesus was glorified and Blessed by His father and entered the presence of God as a Victor, He was crowned with many crowns (Hebrews 2:9). Think of it this way, if you were called to see the Queen would you call her Elizabeth or 'Your Majesty'. It isn't about familiarity, it's about honouring who He is, what He did and is doing.

1 Timothy 2:5 and Acts 4:12 says;

5 For there is only one God and one Mediator who can reconcile God and people. He is the man Christ Jesus.

12 There is salvation in no one else! There is no other name in all of heaven for people to call on to save them."

Because Christ is the means by which forgiveness has been obtained, faith in God through Christ is the only means of salvation. To finish off let me remind you what it says in Colossians 1:20 to 23

20 and by him God reconciled everything to himself. He made peace with everything in heaven and on earth by means of his blood on the cross.

21 This includes you who were once so far away from God. You were his enemies, separated from him by your evil thoughts and actions,

22 yet now he has brought you back as his friends. He has done this through his death on the cross in his own human body. As a result, he has brought you into the very presence of God, and you are holy and blameless as you stand before him without a single fault.

23 But you must continue to believe this truth and stand in it firmly. Don't drift away from the assurance you received when you heard the Good News. The Good News has been preached all over the world, and I, Paul, have been appointed by God to proclaim it.

It may have been a once and forever sacrifice which has paid the debt for our sins but it is not the end of the matter, it is an ongoing process whereby we must continue to believe, to walk in the light of God, to learn about Him through the Word, to constantly check ourselves to make sure we are living worthy to be called Sons of God.

## 3.5 Living in 'the day of Grace' and what it means

Let me start with a bit of background in why we say we are living in the 'day of grace'. Some might not like the following section as it talks about dispensations or periods of time, which are specific to certain peoples, topics or works God is unfolding. Personally I don't find any problem with dispensations but if you do then please just put the word 'dispensation' to the back of you mind and use period, age, chapter, day or what ever you will to get the point of the message.

### Dispensational Ages

Time is divided into 'Dispensations' or ages. It is like Chapters of a book, each chapter deals with a certain topic or part of the story. In Godly terms, eternity can not be measured by time but by milestones or events in history. This is not to say time starts and stops, to us time marches on as a book page by page, the story slowly unfolding and only the author can see the beginning middle and end.

It is commonly held that there are **8 Dispensations** in which God is dealing with mankind and creation. There are various names for each dispensation, here are the most commonly used;

EDENIC -	Innocence	<b>(Adam &amp; Eve before the Fall)</b>
ANTE-DILUVIAN -	Conscience	<b>(Before the Flood)</b>
POST-DILUVIAN -	Self Government	<b>(After the Flood)</b>
PATRIARCHAL -	The Family	<b>(Abraham leads his people)</b>
LEGAL -	The Law	<b>(Moses receives God's Law)</b>
ECCLESIASTICAL -	Grace	<b>(The time of the Gentiles)</b>
MESSIANIC -	The Millennium	<b>(The 1000yr reign of Christ)</b>
FULLNESS OF TIMES -	Righteousness	<b>(All things are made anew)</b>

The first six relate to the days of the week (Sun to Fri) or the period in which the world was created. We are currently in the 6th Dispensation the day of Grace or the 'Time of the Gentiles'. The 7th day when God rested is represented by the Messianic dispensation or the Millennium reign of Christ, which is when the world will have the curse removed and the Devil will be bound in the pit for the duration of the 1000yrs. This is the 'rest day'.

The 8th dispensation is the 'new beginning', when all will be made a new, a new heaven and a new earth. Eight being the number of 'new beginnings', 'regeneration'. It will be the beginning of the 'ages of ages' or eternity.

### Why are there dispensations?

God is the God of order and not confusion, everything is done for a reason and although some reasons are beyond us, more often than not common sense plays a major part. If you look at the dispensations above you can see that each is characterised by a group of people differing from the next or previous. In each dispensation God is dealing with man in a different way. The dispensations do not cross over and God does not deal with man in a juggling fashion.

We are now in the 'Time of the Gentiles' or 'Period of grace' where God is calling out a church, at the close of which we will have the rapture and then God will turn once more back to the Jews and finish off the promise He made to them. This will usher in the next dispensation.

There is nothing magical about dispensations, they are merely chapters in the story of this earth. If you look in Revelation you will see another form of dispensationalism with the advent of trumpets and seals, the introduction of each denoting a new judgement or calamity on the earth. Many people do not hold with dispensations but I can not see why or how they detract from God in any way, and if you look at scripture the dispensations or grand chapters stand out for themselves.

Rather than restrict or departmentalise God they show the wonder and perfect planning of a God who knows the beginning from the end and who deals the salvation of man in deliberate and co-ordinated stages, in order to give man no room for doubt that God's ways are the best and man had every chance to right itself, but couldn't.

If you look at the dispensations you will see that each is a different age where man was given a certain path to attain salvation but failed. The last or 7th dispensation is where Christ himself will rule the earth with a rod of iron, but as we know from Revelation at the close of the millennial reign, when Satan is released, he manages to gather an army from the people of earth to make way against the Saints.

So the circle is concluded from God walking with man in Eden to His Son ruling on earth, man has and will reject God at every turn in favour of his own will. On the day when God will judge man for all he has done, no one will be able to say 'if only you had let us do it this way God' because He will be able to say 'I did, and you still turned away from me'.

## **What is Grace?**

Grace is undeserved favour. It is mercy when we don't expect it or deserve it. The Bible tells us how God has extended grace to us by offering us salvation (eternal life with him) for free! We don't have to do anything to earn it. In fact, we can't earn it or buy it. We simply accept it by believing that Jesus, God's Son, died for our sins so we wouldn't have to. God's ultimate act of grace is an example of how we are to extend grace to others. We are to be quick to forgive, hasty in extending kindness, generous in love-even when others don't deserve it.

## **WHERE DOES GRACE COME FROM? HOW DO WE RECEIVE IT?**

Psalm 84:11 . . . **He gives us grace and glory. No good thing will the Lord withhold from those who do what is right.**

Grace begins with God and is given freely by God. His graciousness to us is our example for extending grace and mercy to others. Grace cannot be earned. It is freely given.

Ephesians 2:8-9 . . . **God saved you by his special favor when you believed.**

It is by God's grace that he decided to offer us the gift of salvation. We simply receive it with faith and in thanks.

John 1:16-17 . . . **The law was given through Moses; God's unfailing love and faithfulness came through Jesus Christ.**

In Old Testament times, God gave a code of laws to show his people how to live for him until Jesus and the Holy Spirit came. Following these laws didn't earn salvation, but simply illustrated man's failings. With the coming of Jesus, we no longer have to slavishly follow these laws because, by God's grace, we have been transformed on the inside so that we want to live pure lives for him.

Hebrews 4:16 . . . **Let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it.**

When we arrive at God's very throne through prayer, we must linger to receive his grace.

## **WE ARE EXPECTED TO GROW IN GRACE, AND NOT MERELY ACCEPT IT AS A STAGNANT GIFT.**

Philippians 1:6 . . . **I am sure that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on that day when Christ Jesus returns.**

2 Corinthians 8:9 . . . **You know how full of love and kindness our Lord Jesus Christ was. Though he was very rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty he could make you rich.**

Grace involves self-sacrifice, giving something up in order to give it away.

Daniel 9:18 . . . **We do not ask because we deserve help, but because you are so merciful.**

Recognising and requesting God's grace takes humility, for we realise that we do not deserve it-which is exactly why we need it.

## **PROMISES FROM GOD:**

Psalm 103:8 . . .

**The Lord is merciful and gracious; he is slow to get angry and full of unfailing love.**

Philippians 1:6 . . .

**I am sure that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on that day when Christ Jesus comes back again.**

God never stops working in us to bring us to maturity.

## HOW DO WE LIVE IN THIS AGE OF GRACE?

We live in very fortunate times, we are not under the constraints of the Law of Moses. The Commandments which were given to show man's failings are done and finished with, fulfilled in Christ.

Do not cling to the commandments as a way of pleasing God or fulfilling your duty as a Christian, you will be doomed to failure. Don't listen to messages which tell you the Law is good or we should follow the commandments to the letter, we shouldn't. The Law which was nullified by Christ now lives in us in the form of the Holy Spirit. As Christ resides in us so we try to live a life as Christ, thinking as Him and wanting to help and do as He did. If you live as Christ then you automatically do the commandments without the fear of failure which having to follow the Law gave.

### The Transition from Law to Grace

Law to grace. **Eph. 2:8**

Works to faith. **Romans 3:28.**

Physical to Spiritual. **2 Cor 5: 16,17. Gal. 3:28**

Pardon and Atonement to Justification and Righteousness. **Romans 4:5**

Ceremonies to Freedom. **John 8:36**

The Kingdom of the Heavens on earth to the Body of Christ in the heavenlies . **Col. 1;18**

Israel to the Church. **Eph 5:23 - 27**

This apparent freedom from the Law would seem to be a license to Sin, and looking round the Church today we seem very lax in our approach to God. This is because people are taking grace for granted. We expect God to forgive us because He said He would, but as time goes on we then fall into the trap of not caring whether we sin or not, because, 'God will forgive us'..

Romans 6:15

**15 What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid.**

We must not get into the mind set of thinking God will just keep forgiving until we die, and then accept us into His wide open arms. There is a responsibility to change and to stop making the same mistakes. When God forgives we should make sure we fix what was wrong, what led us to Sin. God has given us a chance, and rather than ignore it we should make the effort to learn from it.

You make a mockery of God's grace by knowingly sinning and expecting God to forgive.

### PRAY TO WHO?

ACCESS TO GOD - BY WHOM, ROM 5:2 - BY FAITH, EPHESIANS 3.12

In this Dispensation of Grace both Jew and Gentile have the same access to God

**18 Now all of us, both Jews and Gentiles, may come to the Father through the same Holy Spirit because of what Christ has done for us.**

And being made right with God through our Faith we can share in what God has for us, Heb 5:1,2

**1 Therefore, since we have been made right in God's sight by faith, we have peace with God because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has done for us.**

**2 Because of our faith, Christ has brought us into this place of highest privilege where we now stand, and we confidently and joyfully look forward to sharing God's glory.**

Through the death and resurrection of Christ Jesus we can Boldly go before God without going through earthly leaders or Priests, Christ is now interceding for us at the right hand of God.

**19 And so, dear brothers and sisters, we can boldly enter heaven's Most Holy Place because of the blood of Jesus.**

**20 This is the new, life-giving way that Christ has opened up for us through the sacred curtain, by means of his death for us.**

God wants to help us and through our faith we have access to go before Him not in fear but in boldness and reverence knowing that He is faithful to answer our prayers. Hebrews 4:16

**16 So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it.**

God asks us to pray with thanks always on our mind. Phil 4:6,7

6 Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done.

7 If you do this, you will experience God's peace, which is far more wonderful than the human mind can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.

Jesus told His disciples that they would do greater works than He had done. All they needed to do was ask in the correct manner. It wasn't a blank cheque they were being handed and neither are we. God will allow us to do many things if we do them for Him and in His name. John 14:14.

13 You can ask for anything in my name, and I will do it, because the work of the Son brings glory to the Father.

14 Yes, ask anything in my name, and I will do it!

In this present age we have "Christ among us" Col 1:27 everything we do is in Spirit and by Faith for Christ is in us. Sometimes the Spirit helps us pray, Romans 8: 26,27.

26. And the Holy Spirit helps us in our distress. For we don't even know what we should pray for, nor how we should pray. But the Holy Spirit prays for us with groanings that cannot be expressed in words.

27. And the Father who knows all hearts knows what the Spirit is saying, for the Spirit pleads for us believers in harmony with God's own will.

Many times the Holy Spirit will speak through a person who is praying but in another language, as Paul says "For if I should be praying in a language, my spirit is praying, yet my mind is unfruitful ....."1 Cor. 14.14. This will be private prayer mainly, yet sometimes, not often, it may occur in the assembly, the Holy Spirit interceding through the person for something urgent. So we can *approach God* (who is on the throne) boldly, in boldness, by faith and make our approach known with thanksgiving IN AND THROUGH the Name of Jesus (Who is our Saviour) praying for understanding that our requests are in His will.

Sometimes the Holy Spirit will empower us and grant the knowledge of God's will and purpose in our prayers.

All must be done to glorify God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Phil 4:19

19 And this same God who takes care of me will supply all your needs from his glorious riches, which have been given to us in Christ Jesus.

We do not pray to Jesus, but to God, finishing with "in the name of the Lord Jesus."

For it is through the Lord's sacrificial death and resurrection that we have an entrance into God's presence by the Holy Spirit.

So we make our requests known to God with much thankfulness for His grace towards us, finishing with "In the name of Jesus" or "The Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour" for He is the Way, the Truth and the Life. We have all things of God in Christ Jesus.

## 3.6 The Word, a guide to reading and understanding it

The books written by Paul are for the present. All the rest of Scripture finds its INTERPRETATION and APPLICATION either before or after this present age we are now living in called the 'day of grace'. Paul alone gives the truth for the church, which is the body of Christ. This is found nowhere outside of his writings.

Israel and the 'nations' occupy all other parts of the scriptures, and when reading about them we must remember that what is true of them in other seasons and ages must not be mixed with the present truth, as it will lead to confusion and error. Israel had it's calling and rules to live by, and the Church has it's calling and rules, and they are not the same.

All scripture is profitable, as a revelation of God's ways, but it MUST NOT be applied outside its proper place.

**ROMANS.** It is THEE portion of God's Word, which is adapted to show all mankind God's present grace, in preparation to the unfolding of Ephesians. It is dominated by three doctrines:- Justification, Conciliation and Sovereignty.

**CORINTHIANS.** This is a divine commentary on the conduct frequently taught in the epistle of Romans. The secret of a life well pleasing to God lies in the crucifixion and resurrection of the flesh. (Romans 6. 6-11) Deportment and Conciliation.

**GALATIANS.** The divine commentary on the doctrine of justification as set forth in the first four chapters of Romans. In practice the law is powerless through the flesh, but grace, working through faith overfills the laws demand.

**THESSALONIANS.** The blessed EXPECTATION of our Lord's return for His body (church) before the day of His indignation is the subject of these, Paul's earliest writings. The doctrinal burden is based on this truth. The Rapture.

**EPHESIANS.** Begins by presenting a careful and comprehensive statement of the truth for the present secret economy, laying stress on these aspects, which concern the MEMBERS of Christ's body.

**COLOSSIANS,** is the counter part of this, dealing with the same doctrine but presenting them in their relation to the HEAD of the body. The secret, present administration of grace, hid in God, is the function of the first three chapters of Ephesians to explain it's three aspects for the believers and of Colossians to reveal the position, which it accords in Christ.

**PHILIPPIANS.** A divine commentary on the latter half of Ephesians, and, like it, is especially concerned with the deportment demanded by the transcendent doctrines developed in the first half of Ephesians.

**TIMOTHY AND TITUS.** Are concerned with conduct in service. Rules are laid down for the selection and service of supervisors and servants. Also for the various classes in the church. ie; The Constitution of the church.

**PHILEMON.** This, the only private personal letter from Paul, is a perfect specimen of its kind. GRACE. Not only a slave, but subject to torture and death through stealing from his master, Onesimus is first reconciled to God through Paul's PREACHING, then reconciled to his master by Paul's PLEADING. These epistles are to be read repeatedly, prayerfully and accepted as those of the Berean church, "...who received the Word with all eagerness, examining the scripture daily, if these things be so..." Acts 17:10-12.

These nine epistles of Paul seem to be the final teachings of God to mankind in this dispensation of grace.

Note:- Number nine is the last of the digits, this marks the END; and is significant of the CONCLUSION of the matter. The number of finality or Judgement.

It is akin to the number 6, this being the sum of it's factors.  $3+3=6$ , and  $3 \times 3=9$ , and is thus significant of the END of MAN, and the summation of all of man's WORKS.

## **GLOSSARY**

*GRACE* - (literally in Greek JOY) an act of producing happiness, a benefit bestowed on one who deserves the opposite - unmerited favour.

*JUSTIFICATION* - an act of justifying, Justify, constitute just, not forgive or pardon as if unjust, but pronounce not guilty, acquit, vindicate.

*CONCILIATION* - (Lit. Gk DOWN-CHANGE) an act of conciliating. *CONCILIATE*, to win over, make friends, to reconcile, not the sinner conciliating God by penance and prayers, but GOD conciliating (pleading with) the sinner.

*SOVEREIGNTY* - pre-eminence, supreme and independent power - of God.

*DOCTRINE* - teaching, a thing taught, a principle of thought.

*DEPORTMENT* - behaviour, bearing, manners.

## **RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE SCRIPTURES.**

2 Timothy 2:15

Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth.

The original Greek, because of the language can expand on this verse, and it says;

Endeavour to present yourself to God, qualified, an unashamed worker, correctly partitioning the Word of truth.

What does this verse mean to the Christian and how can he/she apply it to their lives. The word 'dividing' in the Greek is ORTHOTOMEIO, which literally means ERECT-CUT. It is used in the context; 'To cut the sacrificial victims so as to leave the organs intact', to leave each vital division of truth by itself and for its own function. Correctly partition is the better translation of the Greek word.

Back to the verse then we read that the Christian or Student of God must learn to study the Word. He does this with the help of the Holy Spirit, which was sent to earth for this purpose. John 16:5-15 tells us this especially in verse 13.

Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth..

The spirit filled Christian must endeavour to know how to correctly partition the scriptures, the Word of Truth, so as to be an unashamed worker for and to God. Learning to 'Pigeon hole' every part of the Scriptures.

Why would you want to do this though, surely the scriptures should be taken as a whole. Revelation 22:19 warns us not to take away or add to the Word. This is true but there is a big difference between partitioning and extracting. Partitioning is not a negative act. Ingredients before they are all mixed are laid out on a table separated or partitioned. But because they are ingredients are already one.

Each has its own part to play in the finished recipe and if viewed as ingredients you can see what each constituent part does, its role in the whole picture, how they all work together yet seemingly doing different things.

If you were to extract one of those ingredients, say salt, and put it aside it would be no good on its own; it would not achieve anything. The rest of the ingredients could still be used but the result would be less than what was expected. Although edible it would not reflect the true recipe and flavour the originator of the recipe had in mind.

While the Word of Truth is written for ALL classes of people, and for our learning, it is not ADDRESSED to all peoples in general. Part is addressed to the JEWS, part to the GENTILES and part to the CHURCH (these are the called-out-ones, the body of Christ.) These three constitute the three classes which humanity is divided into.

1 Corinthians 10:32.

Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God.

It follows then that while the whole Bible was written for the INSTRUCTION of the body of Christ, the church, it is not written about the church. The church is not even mentioned in the Old Testament. It was a hidden subject from the Old Testament prophets, and was a 'Mystery' only revealed to Paul and disclosed by him in Ephesians 1,2,3.

The main subject in the Greek scriptures is the Kingdom of Israel. It is the promised Messiahs task to lead the children of Israel back into the kingdom of the heavens, which would eventually become the kingdom of God. 1 Corinthians 15:24-28

24. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power.  
25. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet.  
26. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.  
27. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is expected, which did put all things under him.  
28. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.

Jesus, the promised Messiah, came to the Jews announcing the Kingdom of the heaven is at hand. He chose and told the apostles only to go to the 'lost of the house Israel', the Jews, to announce this message. Mathew 10:5-8

5. 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:  
6. But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.  
7. And as ye go, preach, saying, the Kingdom of Heaven is at Hand.  
8. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give.

Later Jesus sent seventy other hand picked people to proclaim this same message again to the house of Israel. Luke 10:1-9

After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come..

However, the Jews rejected this message, from John the Baptist, the forerunner to Jesus, Jesus himself and his disciples and the seventy. They rejected the message to the extent of crucifying the messenger, Jesus. When the Jews wanted to crucify Jesus, God used Pilate to compound their error by showing that an outsider, a non-Jew, understood better than they the importance of Jesus and in his ignorance seemed to know and accept who he was.

Mathew 27:22 'What then shall I do with Jesus which is called Christ?' and Mark 15:9 'Will ye that I release unto you the King of the Jews'. Also John 19:19-22 where Pilate wrote a title to go on the cross, written in the three main languages of the day saying 'Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews'. This was against the will of the priests who wanted to write that he said he was the king of the Jews. Pilate probably in his ignorance and with the help of God put a title above Jesus not a statement.

Truly it can be said as in John 1:11

He came unto his own and his own received him not.

The Kingdom to the Jews meant only one thing and it was something they have and are longing for even now. It was proclaimed by Jesus and his followers as being near or at hand, Mathew 4:17;

From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, repent: for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.

This did not and does not imply that it was to come soon. The nearness was only made provisionally. If the Jews had followed and accepted Jesus as the Son of God the kingdom would certainly have been set up in that day. In Acts 1:6-7 we see the eagerness which the Kingdom was longed for.

6. When they therefore were come together, they asked of him saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the Kingdom to Israel?

7. And he said unto them, it is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the father has put in his own power.

Jesus in the beatitudes and Sermon on the Mount give an insight into the kingdom which was addressed to the Jews and will find fulfilment in the future kingdom of heaven. Now we see the kingdom postponed, the Jews blew it, and as a result they, the Jewish people were shelved, for a time while God's direction was turned to the formation of the Church. Mathew 23:37-39 tells of the postponing.

37. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which art sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wing, and ye would not!

38. Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.

39. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

The following verse, Mathew 24:1 can be seen as a continuation of the other verses, containing the result of their actions against Jesus. It was a physical manifestation of the punishment or postponement.

And Jesus went out and departed from the temple:

Jesus departed from the Jews and also it says the temple the physical manifestation of God on earth for the Jews. He went out from them. The Jews were given another chance in Acts 13:46-47 but again they refused and so God turned to the Gentiles.

46. Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the Word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.

47. 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.

It was Gods purpose to bless the nations through Israel. But when this channel of blessing failed, or the people failed to become this channel, God moved on. His work had to be done in what ever way he could. God gives us all chances and opportunities to do his work but he will not wait forever. We either do it or not, and if not he passes the opportunity to another.

In Paul's epistles, the nations are blessed during Israel's defection. The sphere of blessing is changed from earth to heaven. Justification and reconciliation replace pardon and offering, grace replaces mercy. The scope of Paul's epistles, both in time and space, far transcends all the rest of revelation. He is not confined to the earth, but includes the whole universe in Gods grand climax of reconciliation. Colossians 1:20;

And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.

Paul's message was not confined to the years he lived, but reveals a purpose formed before they began, and not concluded until after their consummation. His time reaches a time long anterior, to the first of Genesis, to a period long past the final vision of Revelations. Paul's writings naturally fall into two divisions, his epistles to the Ecclesias, the Church (literally the call-out-ones) and his personal letters to Timothy, Titus and Phileman. Paul wrote nine epistles to seven Ecclesias. They arrange themselves into three groups.

The epistles in each group are very closely related. The first epistle in Romans, Ephesians and 1 Thessalonians, setting out the truth in a way to teach or instruct, while the other epistles of the same group are explanatory and corrective. The best commentaries on Romans are Corinthians and Galatians; on Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians; and 2 Thessalonians supplements the first epistle.

The Thessalonians group is called the PROMISE EPISTLES, because they deal with the expectation of our Lords return. The Romans group is called the PREPARATORY EPISTLES, because they deal with the transitional era which prepared the saints for the final revelation found in the Ephesians

group, which are called the PERFECTION EPISTLES. Each group is characterised by one of the abiding trinity of graces, FAITH, EXPECTATION (HOPE) and LOVE (CHARITY). 1 Corinthians 13:13.

God's plan and purpose for the children of Israel will continue after this parenthetic interval. This present period of Israel's temporary defection will end with the rapture of the saints. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.

13. But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.

14. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.

15. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.

16. For the Lord himself shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

17. Then we which are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

18. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

After this then will the Kingdom be reaffirmed and later realised. After the 'interval' in the circumcision writings from the book of Acts to the book of Hebrews, God will again call upon the children of Israel as Hebrews 8:8-13 says.

8. For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah.

It then goes on to explain the new covenant

9. Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord.

10. 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.

11. 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.

12. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.

13. 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.

The writings of Hebrews, James, Peter, John, Jude and Revelation or books regarding the unveiling of Jesus will come into realisation for the children of Israel.

In explaining the scriptures we are not to take something that belongs to the PAST and FUTURE dispensation and apply it to the PRESENT dispensation. The past and future dispensations have to do with the Kingdom, but the present has to do with the church. The Kingdom is an outward visible and earthly political organisation, and it has to be 'set up' on the earth. Daniel 2:44.

And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.

The church on the other hand is an invisible and heavenly 'Spiritual organism' that is to be 'caught out'. 1 Thessalonians 4:17

Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

The kingdom was prepared FROM the foundation of the world. Mathew 25:34

Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

But the church was CHOSEN in him BEFORE the foundation of the world. Eph 1:4

According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world.....

This then proves the church is not the kingdom and the residents or inheritors of each are totally separate and different.

Not rightly partitioning the scriptures causes much confusion. Take the so-called Lords prayer which so many churches quote. It asks that 'Thy kingdom come' not that thy church may increase and prosper. There is no petition for salvation from sin in it.

It also asks that 'God's will be done on earth as it is done in heaven'. It is a prayer for those who will be living in the TRIBULATION PERIOD who, in their persecutions, will long for the return of their king. And following the return, the kingdom may be set up and God's will be done (as it will be done then) on earth as it is done in heaven.

During this time of tribulation for which this prayer is given for the Beast (Anti-Christ) will be in power and no one will be able to buy or sell anything except those who have 'the mark of the beast' on them. This explains the petition in the prayer, 'Give us this day our daily bread' for unless food is miraculously supplied they will starve. This will be a time when people will need to be delivered, not from evil, but from the evil one, Satan.

The Sermon on the Mount was spoken to Israel by Jesus before his rejection, and was the constitution of the then offered kingdom. Now that the kingdom has been withdrawn the king is no longer a king. Luke 19:12

He said therefore, a certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return.

Here we see in the parable that Christ has left to find a kingdom and when he does 'he will return'. When Israel acknowledges who Christ is and calls on him, he will become their king once more.

The Beatitudes will find their fulfilment in the kingdom of the heavens, when the Messiah comes again and establishes his millennium reign. The merciful often do not receive mercy; the meek do not receive an 'allotment' in the land or earth. The kingdom will be in a special sense the display of God's goodness on earth; the church will be the highest exhibition of God's grace among the celestials. Ephesians 2:4-7

But God.....hath raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ (the resurrected Lord) Jesus: That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us (the invisible church, the out-called) through Christ Jesus.

Another confusion caused by not correctly partitioning the scriptures is the use of the, 'forgive us debts as we forgive our debtors '. Our forgiveness and salvation is not at all dependent on OUR extending this favour to others. It is as it says in Ephesians 2:8 a gift;

For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.

Our forgiveness or salvation does not depend on our works or a point system whereby if we are nice God will be nice to us or if we forgive God will forgive us. In this dispensation of grace the believer MUST forgive those who wrong them, there must be no revenge at all. God shows his grace to us so we show grace to others. There is coming a time when all true believers, the invisible church, the called out ones or the body of Christ will be 'snatched' out of the world and will be called before Christ as in 2 Corinthians 5:10 says

For we must all appear before the judgement seat of Christ: That every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

Also Romans 14:10 tells us of the judgement.

But why dost thou judge thy brother? Or why dost thou set at naught thy brother? For we shall all stand before the judgement seat of Christ.

This judgement is not as at the end of the world but rather an award giving. The dais or raised platform from which the Olympic games were judged and awards were given must not be confused with a judicial bench. The quality of our acts done whilst here on earth will determine the award we are given. I suppose award is really a bad description and lends itself to miss interpretation. It can be viewed more in line with the passage that speaks of 'laying up treasures in heaven'.

It is then a time when we will receive what we have invested, or banked. The question of condemnation is entirely foreign to such a tribunal. We are absolutely absolved from all condemnation, but we are eligible to an award for meritorious service. Such is the outstanding grace, mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ. The prayers for our emulation are found in Ephesians. The latter of the first chapter and the whole of the third chapter of that epistle will teach us what to pray for.

Some ministers quoting from Mathew 10:22 tell us that 'He that endureth to the end shall be saved' yet the scriptures tell us in Romans 10:9

**That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God had raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.**

Also in Romans 8:1

**There is therefore NOW no condemnation to them, which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit.**

The scriptures also tell us that 'Who shall separate us from the love of God'; 'No one shall pluck them out of my fathers hand'. According to their interpretation of God's Word we must CLING to the old rugged cross until one day we may make it. This way of thinking is absolute nonsense and opposite to the Word of God.

This ending is for the Jews who must cling to the Law and their faith through the time of tribulation, so that they will be found worthy and tested to inherit the kingdom and their returning king, Christ.

God sent his Word, which became flesh and prepared the way for sinful human nature to return to God. (Isaiah 55:11) 'His word shall not return unto him void.' We must fill our souls with the Word and He will take us back to God.

So with the help of the Holy Spirit we must read all of the scriptures and learn how to PARTITION the word of truth, and you will find no confusion and no contradictions at all. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 tells us of the scripture.

**16. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:  
17. That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished (perfected) unto all good works.**

## **WHICH VERSION OF THE BIBLE SHOULD I READ?**

There are many versions of the Bible available today, and each has been translated into every conceivable language. Each generation seems to latch onto a certain translation but there are those which are always in demand.

Many people like the King James Authorised Version which was translated in 1611, although the language is sometimes hard to follow it does offer a very close translation to the original. Today the English language has become very diluted and tainted by modern speaking. Words have multiple meanings and others just don't appear any more. The language of today is said to be less flowery and more direct. However with the advent of the computer the English language is quickly becoming a mix match of symbols and abbreviations, in other words lazy. This is why the Authorised Version (A.V) is unpopular with the younger generation.

People wanted a more up to date translation, or more to the point a translation which was EASY to read. Whilst there is nothing fundamentally wrong with this, you have to be very careful when translating because you can detract from the original meaning when you are trying to make a

sentence flow easier. Who ever is doing the translating must understand the original inside and out to be able to pass on the true word without misinterpreting its intentions.

The main popular versions of the Bible in use today are as follows. The dates given are taken from the Bible as the first published or written date, either in part or whole.

New International Version (N.I.V) - 1965.  
The Amplified Bible (AMP) - 1958.  
Authorised King James Version (A.V) - 1611.  
New Authorised King James Version (N.K.J) - 1979.  
The Good News Bible (G.N) - 1966.  
Revised Standard Version (R.S.V) - 1946.

There are many, many more versions and some even translated into dialects but these can not be considered as accurate representations of the Holy Word of God.

You would think that the translations should not differ from each other that much as they must all be translated from the same source. However this is not so, each different version used various sources all reputedly from the original. Many scholars spent years translating each of these versions and with all the best will in the world each has some of the translators own ideas, theories or views. However minuscule you can not get a true and totally accurate translation where mankind is involved. This is why when you look at each version you will find small to large variations of different verses, missing words and in some cases missing verses.

For example if you look at ACTS 8:37 in some of the above mentioned versions.

#### **Authorised King James.**

And Philip said If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest, And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

#### **New King James.**

Then Philip said, If you believe with all of your heart, you may. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

#### **Revised Standard.**

Misses verse out altogether.

#### **Amplified. (shows all verse in italics)**

*And Philip said, If you believe with all your heart (that is, if you have a conviction, full of joyful trust, that Jesus is the Messiah, and accept Him as the Author of your salvation in the kingdom of God, giving Him your obedience, then) you may. And he replied, I do believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.*

#### **New International Version.**

Misses verse out altogether, but sometimes in the margin.

#### **Good News Bible.**

Misses verse out altogether.

The main differences in this particular verse is the appearance or omission. Some Bibles choose to leave this verse out altogether while others include it but relegate it to Italics, signifying that it is not necessarily in the original.

Another example can be found in Mathew 20:16 where a well known phrase - *many are called, but few are chosen* - can be found.

**Authorised King James.**

So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many are called, but few chosen.

**New International Version.**

So the last will be first and the first will be last.

**The Amplified Bible.**

So those who (now) are last will be first (then), and those who (now) are first will be last (then).  
*For many are called, but few chosen.*

And yet another well known phrase - *Get thee behind me Satan* - from Luke 4:8.

**Authorised King James.**

And Jesus answered and said unto him, *Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, thou shalt worship the...*

**New International Version.**

Jesus answered, *It is written: Worship the...*

**The Amplified Bible.**

*And Jesus replied to him, Get behind me Satan, It is written, you shall do homage...*

If you look at the following list of verses in the A.V Bible and then the N.I.V, you will see many instances of omissions. Other versions will put the omissions in Italics to denote their controversial belonging, but they do include them and it does give the reader the opportunity to study for themselves the various original Greek and Hebrew texts and make their own mind up.

Eph 3:9, Col 1:2,14,28, 1Thes 1:1, 1Thes 3:11,13, 2Thes 1:8, 1Tim 4:1, 2Tim 4:22, Titus 1:4, Philemon 6, Heb 3:1.

In Mathew 11:23 the A.V uses the correct word HELL as translated from - Greek. *HADES* whilst the N.I.V uses DEPTHS, but in some margins does give the word Hades. Again in Mathew 9:13 the A.V uses the word REPENTANCE with respect to the calling of sinners, whilst the N.I.V does not include this word at all, neither does the Revised Standard Version.

A final example can be found in the Lord's prayer, in Mathew 6:13 where again words are omitted and yet we always say them.

**Authorised king James.**

*And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil, for thine is the Kingdom and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.*

**New International Version.**

*And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from the evil one.*

In the margin once again it tells the reader of the N.I.V that later manuscripts do put the other words in. And this is the problem, the age of the manuscripts which were used to translate the new versions. If all were translated from one original copy we would be able to check easily at the consistency of a translator, but in these cases the translators used different 'original manuscripts'.

What should you do then if all these versions do not entirely correspond to each other, if the Words of God have been diluted. The answer depends on why you are reading the scriptures. As long as you stick to the main line versions you can be sure of getting at least a version that has

been written by Christians for Christians. For the purposes of getting the Word of God in its basics into your head and heart any of the above versions will do admirably. BUT you must remember that to get secrets out of the scriptures you must go back to the original language.

It is a little like a car manual which comes with a car. In it are the basics of running and servicing your new car so it will not let you down and take you trouble free on many long journeys. But there comes a time when you need to look deeper, when problems can not be solved by the basic manual. Then you need to get a proper, more in depth manual, something the manufacturer would use, something which was written when the car was created. Only when you study the in depth manual can you see the intricacies of what you are dealing with and the secrets behind how each component works.

There are many INTERLINEAR Bibles in the shops which show a modern version next to the original Greek. But again look closely at the introduction and read the preface. You want a Bible which translates the original EXACTLY and does not do half the job for you. For example the Greek language to the English is like other modern day foreign languages in that sentences are reversed.

Instead of saying 'He went down the road', when you translate it, it could actually say ' The road, went he down'. Some Bibles will print the translation under the original Greek for you but put the sentence in the order which is easily read. This is very good of them but actually does not give you what you want. A Bible which prints the original language and any other version should be hard to read without the modern day version accompanying it. Below are 3 typical phrases in Greek in their literal translation with their printed final version.

On the same = together  
Because of this = therefore  
By way of excess = excessively

Another point to remember about original Greek and Hebrew is the complexity of the language compared to English. The word LOVE for example we would use in any circumstance but either add the word 'really' or 'a lot' to either end of love to denote the intensity of that love. We would also change the tone or volume of our voice to get over the same feeling. This is not the case in the Bible, Love has many different meanings but has been translated the same. The word in the original is not even the same but the English language can not accommodate these changes and so it is left to the individual to study and examine words as and when the need arises.

Words like love can also contain valuable information as to the correct translation. PHILANTHROPIA is the 'love for man', hence kindness towards one another, where as PHILARGURIA is the 'love of money' and PHILADELPHIA denotes 'brotherly love'.

Mathew 20:28 is another example of a word being translated, not wrongly but inaccurately.

Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his LIFE a ransom for many.

The word LIFE in this verse does not mean what we all take and perceive it too mean. There are two translations of the word LIFE and they are ZOE and PSUCHE. The one in the above example is PSUCHE and means Soul. Another example of PSUCHE can be found in Acts 20:10

And Paul went down and fell on him, and embracing him said, trouble not yourselves for his LIFE is still in him

An example of the word ZOE can be found in Romans 5:10 and refers to the actual life of a person the day to day living.

For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his LIFE.

Speaking generally PSUCHE is the individual life, the living being, the Soul, whereas ZOE is the life of that being.

In conclusion you can see that various translations all have their good and bad points but when ever you are studying you must not rely on versions which put over the Word of God in an easy to

digest way. You will find that the Words of God have probably been misinterpreted, unintentionally in most cases but with dire consequences. God can not get over a truth if the words you are reading do not contain that truth to start with. Remember well the words of Revelation 22:18-19

For I testify to every one who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.

## 3.7 End time teaching, the Rapture and Second Coming

The teaching of the end Times is without doubt a huge subject and has some very strong views attached to it. It could also be argued that it is irrelevant to the Church as it will be removed before most of the events unfold but without question the Christian needs to have an understanding in order to speak to non-Christians and explain the current events in the news today. Out of the 9 studies I would say this one alone does not need deep study for the previous reason and also because it is a deep subject and prone to interpretation, it is an area that has led to splits and disagreements within the Church.

The teachings which are relevant to today's Christians are in the following facts.

1. Jesus was Killed by the Jews, He rose from the dead and promised He would return.
2. Following the Jews rejection of Jesus, God called out a Church from the nations.
3. The Risen Christ will come to gather His Church from the earth.
4. The Anti-Christ will take power of the world for a period of 7 years.
4. The world will experience tribulation like never before while the Anti-Christ rules.
6. After 7 years, Christ will return to the earth to set up His Kingdom and judge the living nations.
7. The Anti-Christ and the Beast will be thrown into the Lake of Fire.
8. Christ will rule the earth for 1000 years whilst Satan is imprisoned for 1000 years.
9. Satan will be released and will try again to take control once again.
10. Satan and his followers will be judged, there will be an end to everything.
11. God's final Judgement on all peoples both dead and alive.
12. A new beginning, the beginning of Eternity.

I would like to touch on a couple of points that do cause some concern because they are not taught at all in the church today, that is the rapture and the Second coming. The two comings of Christ are often misrepresented mixed up and at worst just forgotten about because leaders and teachers today don't want to have to take a view which might upset their followers.

### THE SECOND COMINGS OF CHRIST (Rapture)

There is no fact in history more clearly established than the fact of the First Coming of Christ. But as this First Coming did not fulfil all the prophecies associated with His Coming, it is evident that there must be another coming to completely fulfil them. It was because the religious leaders of Christ's day failed to distinguish between the prophecies that related to His First Coming, and those that related to His Second Coming that they rejected Him.

Peter tells us (1 Peter 1:10-11) that the prophets themselves did not clearly perceive the difference between the Sufferings and Glory of Christ. That is, they did not see that there was a TIME SPACE between the Cross (Christ's crucifixion) and the Crown, (The Second Coming) and that the Cross would precede the Crown. But we have no such excuse. We live on this side of the Cross and we can readily pick out all the prophecies that were fulfilled at Christ's First Coming and apply the remainder to His Second Coming and the Rapture.

While the First and Second Comings of Christ are separated by this Dispensation of Grace, they are nevertheless not complete in themselves, the Second necessitated the First, and the First demands the Second. They are both necessary to complete the Plan of Salvation. The first to choose out a people from all nations to become the Body of Christ. 1 Corinthians 12:27 "Now you are the body of Christ, and members in particular". Ephesians 1:23 "Which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all". Ephesians 4:12 and Colossians 1:24-25 "his body's sake which is the church: whereof I am made a minister.."

The Second is for the salvation of the Hebrews. He will come with the clouds of heaven, Daniel 7:13, Revelation 1:7 with power and great glory, thus completing Gods plan of salvation.

### THE RAPTURE OF THE CHURCH

The word Rapture literally means '*a seizing and carrying away*' and in relation to the Church it is describing a time where Christ will call home to heaven the chosen from among the earth. It will happen in a 'tenth of a second' and will be silent.

People will wonder where a friend or loved one has gone and then they will hear screams and shouts as people up and down their street wake up to the news that tens of thousands have vanished all over the earth. This will be the Rapture.

### **THE MANNER OF HIS COMING**

In contrast to the Second Coming the rapture will be unnoticed and over with in a split second. 1 Corinthians 15:51-58

52. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

The Second Coming is visible to all, Christ will come in Glory and with His saints (Revelation 19:11-16). He will come in a physical sense and will touch the earth. The Rapture is significant as Christ calls His Church from the sky. The meeting is heavenly, not earthly as will be the Jewish gathering. 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17 tells us.

16. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

17. Then they, which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

It is quite evident that this description can not be the same one described in Revelation 19. This is the gathering of the Church for its reward whereas the Second Coming is for the Jewish nation and the judgement of the earth.

### **WHO WILL BE CALLED**

The Church, (ecclesia) or called-out-ones, who are called by God through the Lord Jesus Christ, were chosen before the foundation of the earth as mentioned in Ephesians 1:4

4. 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.

We are called to be the body of Christ, a group of people from all over having one faith and belief in Christ all working together for Him and to Him. 1 Corinthians 12:12,13,27,28;

12. For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ.

13. For by one spirit are we all baptised 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.

27. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.

28. And God hath set some in the Church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, and after that miracles, then gifts of healing, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

We are all called to do different things and for one reason: the 'building up' of the body of Christ (Ephesians 4:11-13). It is this Church that Christ calls out not the 'chosen race', the Jews. God's plans for the Jew changed when they crucified Christ and He turned to the Gentiles and gave us a chance to become part, NOT a replacement, of the 'Church' which would serve Him in eternity (Revelation 20:6, 1 Thessalonians 4:17).

### **THE TIME OF THE RAPTURE**

He will appear first into the region of our atmosphere, and the "dead in Christ," and the "living Saints" shall be "caught up" to meet Him "IN THE AIR."

Then after the risen and translated saints have been judged and rewarded for their works, and they, as the Bride of Christ, have been married to Him, He will come with them to the earth and land on the Mount of Olives, the place from where He ascended. Zechariah 14:4 says;

'And His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the

west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south.'

Some claim that the Church is to pass through the Tribulation, others that the Church is to be caught out before the Tribulation, while some claim that only the "Waiting" and "Watching" Saints shall be caught out before the Tribulation, and that the rest must pass through it. The latter base their claim on Hebrews 9:28 where it says;

Unto them that look for Him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

While this might apply to the living when He appears, it certainly cannot apply to the dead. There are millions who have "fell asleep in Jesus" (Christians who have died) who never heard of the Pre-millennial coming of the Lord, or never grasped its meaning and who therefore never "watched" and "waited" and "looked" for His Appearing.

They surely are "In Christ", and the "Dead in Christ" are to rise at the Rapture. Paul does not say in 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17, that it will be the "dead" who "watched" and "waited" and "looked," and those who are "alive" and "watch" and "wait" and "look" for His Appearing that shall be "caught out," but the dead "In Christ," and we who "Are Alive And Remain"

Then there is another fact that we must not forget, and that is the Unity of the Church. In 1 Corinthians 12:12-13 it tells us;

For as the Body Is One and hath many members, and **all** the members of that one body, being many, **are one body**; so also is Christ. For by One Spirit are we ALL baptised in to One Body.

All then who have been born again (John 3:3-7) are part of Christ's Body. We cannot conceive of Christ's Body being divided; part of it remaining "asleep" in the grave and part of it "raised in glory;" part of it left to pass through the Tribulation, and part of it "changed" and caught up in the air.

The Tribulation is not for the perfecting of the Saints. It has nothing to do with the Church. It is the time of Jacob's Trouble (Jeremiah 30:7), and is the Judgement of Israel ALSO THE WRATH OF God on man, and it is God's purpose to keep the Church out of it. Revelation 3:10. The Book of Revelations between chapter 4 and 19 is filled with appalling judgements that fall upon those that dwell on the earth.

The Church is not of the earth, but is supposed to sit together in Heavenly Places in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 2:6), she will not be among those who dwell on the earth in those days. These Chapters are primarily for the Jew.

The confusion is largely due to the fact that students of Prophetic Truth do not distinguish between Christ's coming FOR His Saints and WITH His Saints. The former is called the Rapture, the latter the Revelation or the Second Coming.

Numerous passages in scripture speak of Christ coming WITH His Saints (Zechariah 14: 5, Colossians 3: 4, 1 Thessalonians 3:13, 1 Thessalonians 4:14 & Jude 14), but it is evident that they could not come WITH Him, if they had not been previously caught out to Him. All such passages refer therefore to the Revelation and not the Rapture.

The typical teaching of the Scriptures demands that the Church be caught out before the Tribulation. Joseph was a type of Christ and he was espoused to and married Asenath, a Gentile bride during the time of his rejection by his brethren, and before the famine which typified the Tribulation, because it was the time of Judgement of his Brethren. This is the time of Christ's rejection by His Brethren the Jews, and to complete the type He must get His Bride the church, before the Tribulation.

Moses, who is also a type of Christ, got his bride and she a Gentile, after his rejection by his brethren, and before they passed through the Tribulation under Pharaoh. Exodus 2:23-25.

Enoch, a type of the Translation Saint, was caught out before the Flood, and the Flood is a type of the Tribulation, and Noah and his family of the Jewish Remnant and 144,000 sealed ones of Revelation 7:1-8, who will be preserved through the Tribulation.

It will certainly be a frightening day for those with the knowledge of Christ that are left behind, but a glorious day for those called out ones.

### **HOW DO WE KNOW WE ARE CALLED?**

It is Paul who has been commissioned to give God's revelation to the nations concerning His wondrous Grace. It can be found nowhere but in his writings (Ephesians 3:5). This present secret or mystery called the day of grace in which we now live cannot be found in the scriptures before the epistle of Ephesians and the message essentially consists of three separate items, all of which are marked by the prefix JOINT. Ephesians 3:6-8

6. That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs (JOINT-heirs), and of the same body (JOINT-body), and partakers (JOINT-partakers) of his promise in Christ by the gospel.
7. Wherefore I was made a minister, according to the gift of the Grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power.
8. Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.

It is of the utmost importance to note that only Paul, was given this stewardship and it is useless to seek it outside of his writings. It was concealed in God and the mystery of His Grace not in the scriptures. No trace of it can be found in the prophets or in the preceding books of the Greek scriptures.

Paul explained to the Corinthian Church of the resurrection, from among the dead. Then he said (original translation) of 1 Corinthians 15:51-58.

Lo, I am telling you a secret, we all indeed shall not be put to repose (death) yet we shall all be changed, in an instant, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump. For He will be trumpeting and the dead will be roused incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

The secret lies in the word CHANGED which has not been told before. The word changed means transformed, to make other than it is, and shows that the Church has another destiny than enduring to the end. It leads us one step closer to our celestial destiny revealed in the epistles to the Ephesians.

Where Israel was concerned with their bodies and occupying the earth, now this new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17, Galatians 6:15) has a different allotment. Our bodies at present are earthly, made from the soil of the earth (Genesis 2:7) and need to be radically changed before we can endure a celestial life. We will be transfigured to be conformed to this glorious body. Philippians 3:20-21.

20. For our conversation (citizenship) is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:
21. Who shall change (transfigure) our vile body, that it might be fashioned like unto his glorious body,

Paul encouraged the Thessalonian church to console one another with these words. We the Church the ecclesia are not going to inherit the earth, it was never promised us. Our hope and future is in God and an eternity with Christ (1 Thessalonians 4:17), it is the Jews who shall inherit the earth and a Kingdom ruled by the one true King, Christ Jesus.

### **CONCLUSION**

The crowning glory of this blessed expectation was made known to the Corinthian, Philippian and Thessalonian Church epistles, to all of Christ's spiritual body down through the ages.

The emphasis is on being called and acting on that calling, not as the Jew is a Jew because of his blood-line and adherence to the Law (1 Corinthians 1:26-31). So when you are called, invited, you must accept and give your life into the Lord's hands, accepting that he died in your place, for your sins (Romans 10:9).

The Church looks for the Rapture not the Second Coming

## **THE SECOND COMINGS OF CHRIST (2nd Coming)**

### **1. THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS HIMSELF.**

Matthew 16:27. "For the Son of Man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels, and then he shall reward every man according to his works."

Matthew 25:31-32 "When the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all the, holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the Throne of His Glory; and before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats."

John 14:2-3. "In my father's house are many mansions; if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

John 21:22. "If I will that he tarry till I come what is that to thee? Follow thou me."

### **2. THE TESTIMONY OF HEAVENLY BEINGS.**

Acts 1:10-11. "And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said. Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This SAME JESUS, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come IN LIKE MANNER as ye have seen him go into heaven."

This passage declares that the SAME JESUS shall return IN LIKE MANNER as He went, that is, that His return will be visible and personal. The two "men" that "stood by" were probably Moses and Elijah. They appeared with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration. They were doubtless the two men who testified to the women at the tomb that Jesus had risen (Luke 24:4-5), and they could be the "Two Witnesses" that shall testify during the Tribulation. Revelation 11:3-12.

### **3. THE TESTIMONY OF THE APOSTLES**

PAUL "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the Second Time without sin unto salvation." Hebrews 9:28.

JAMES "Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord." James 5:7.

PETER "For we have not followed cunningly devised fables when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty." 2 Peter 1:16. Peter here refers to the Transfiguration of Christ on the Mount (Matthew 17:1-5), which was a type of His Second Coming. Moses was a type of the "resurrection saints," and Elijah of those who shall be translated without dying

JUDE "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgement upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoke against him." Jude 14-15.

JOHN "And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming." 1 John 2:28. "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen." Revelation 1: 7.

### **4. THE TESTIMONY OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.**

"For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death TILL HE COME." 1 Corinthians 11:26.

The Lord's Supper is not a permanent ordinance. It will be discontinued when the Lord returns. It is a Memorial Feast. It looks back to the "Cross" and forward to the "Coming." An engagement ring is not intended to be permanent. It is simply a pledge of mutual love and loyalty, and gives place to the wedding ring. So the Lord's Table may be looked upon as a betrothal pledge left to the Church during the absence of her betrothed.

Paul in all his epistles refers but 13 times to Baptism, while he speaks of the Lord's return 50 times. One verse in every 30 in the New Testament refers to Christ's Second Coming. There are 20 times as many references in the Old Testament to Christ's Second Coming as to His First Coming

## **2. AS TO THE TIME**

We are not told the time of the Rapture but as to the Second coming we have clear guide lines as to the timing of Christ's return. Following the Rapture the world will start it's final stage toward judgement and it will be initialled by the rise to power of the Anti-Christ and what is called the 'abomination of desolation' (Daniel 9:27 & Mathew 13:14). This is when the Anti-Christ turns on the Jews. From the point when the Temple in Jerusalem is desolated the Second Coming can be calculated and will be by the Jews, who are waiting for their Messiah.

### **PRE-MILLENNIAL.**

By Pre-Millennial we mean before the Millennium. That is, before the period of a "Thousand Years" spoken of in Revelation 20:1-6 and not before the year 2000. This period is spoken of in other scriptures as "The Kingdom," and is described in glowing terms by the prophets as a time when the earth shall be blessed with a universal rule of righteousness. The passage in Revelation 20:1-6 simply tells us that the length of the period shall be 1000 years.

The very structure of the New Testament demands that Christ shall return before the Millennium. Here are a few reasons.

1. When Christ comes He will RAISE THE DEAD, but the Righteous dead are to be raised BEFORE the Millennium, that they may reign with Christ during the 1000 years, hence there can be no Millennium before Christ comes. Revelation 20:5.
2. When Christ comes He will SEPARATE THE "TARES" FROM THE "WHEAT." but as the Millennium is a period of UNIVERSAL RIGHTEOUSNESS the separation of the "Tares" and "Wheat" must take place BEFORE the Millennium, therefore there can be no Millennium before Christ comes. Matthew 13:40-43.
3. When Christ comes Satan SHALL BE BOUND, but as Satan is to be bound prior to the Millennium, there can be no Millennium until Christ comes. Revelation 20:1.3.
4. When Christ comes the Antichrist is to be DESTROYED, but as Antichrist is to be destroyed before the Millennium there can be no Millennium until Christ comes. 2 Thessalonians 2:8 & Revelation 19:20.
5. When Christ comes the Jews are to be TOTALLY RESTORED TO THEIR OWN LAND. As they are to be restored to their own land BEFORE the Millennium, there can be no Millennium before Christ comes, Ezekiel 36:24-28; Revelation 1:7; Zechariah 12:10.

## **3. AS TO THE MANNER**

He will return in the SAME MANNER as He went. Acts 1:11. He went up BODILY and VISIBLY and He shall come in like manner. He went in a cloud, and He will return in a cloud. "Behold, He cometh with the clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they which pierced Him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him." Revelation 1:7. The only difference will be that He went up alone, He will return as a King (Luke 19:12), followed by a retinue of the angelic hosts. "For the Son of Man shall come in the glory of His Father with his angels; and then He shall reward every man according to his works." Matthew 16:27.

## **THE IMMINENCY OF THE SECOND COMING**

One of the objections to the Doctrine of the "Second Coming of Christ" is the claim that He may come back at any time. Revelation 16:15. "But of the 'times' and the 'seasons,' brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the 'Day of the Lord' (the day of His Return), so cometh as a thief in the night, when they shall say, "Peace and Safety;" then sudden destruction cometh upon them as travail upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape." This refers to the Second Stage of Christ's Coming the "Revelation when He shall take vengeance upon His enemies. 2 Thessalonians 1: 7-10. But Paul adds "But ye brethren, are not in

darkness, that that day (the day of His Return) should overtake you as a thief." 1 Thessalonians 5:1-4.

It was clearly known to our Lord that certain events must come to pass before His Return, but to have disclosed that fact would have nullified the command to "Watch," therefore He in "mystery form" as in the seven parables of Matthew 13 hid the fact that His Return would be delayed. It would take time for the "Sowing of the Seed, the growth of the "Wheat" and "Tares," the growth of the "Mustard Tree," and the "Leavening of the Meal."

So rapid was the spread of the Gospel in the first century that the followers of Christ were warranted in looking for the speedy Return of the Lord, but it was true then, as in every century since, that we do not know what the extent of the "Harvest" is to be, and when it will be ripe, so the Lord can return. Matthew 13:30. Uncertainty as to the "time" of the Lord's return is necessary to promote the "watchful" spirit. If the early Church had known that the Lord's Return would have been delayed for 20 centuries, the incentive to watchfulness would have been wanting.

By "Immanency" we mean may happen at any time. For illustration you hurry to the train station to catch a train. The train has not arrived, though it is on the way, and it would not be safe for you to leave the station, for it may arrive any minute, but as a matter of fact, it does not come for half an hour. Now if you had known that it would not arrive for half an hour you would have used the time in some other way than "waiting" and "watching." So we see that "Immanency" does not necessarily, imply "IMMEDIATENESS," but does demand "Watchfulness."

I am in no doubt that there has been unnecessary delay in the Return of the Lord, caused by the failure of the Church to obey the "Divine Commission" to evangelise the world (Matthew 28:19-20), and it is past the time when He should have returned. The delay is to give time to the Jew to repent and to sort out the person who is willing to watch and wait, expectantly. Mathew 24:48 and Luke 12:45. 2 Peter 3:9 also tells us of the patience of God that he does not want people to perish just because of a timetable.

Of course, this was foreseen by God, and His foreknowledge has held back the development of the forces of "evil" etc. until the "Fullness of the Gentiles" should be gathered and the "Harvest" is ripe for the gathering. Revelation 14:14-20. At no time in the history of the Christian Church have the conditions necessary to provoke the Lord's Return been so completely fulfilled at the present time; therefore, His Coming is IMMINENT. And will not probably be long delayed. Let us be ready and, watching.

## **Conclusion**

The "Hope" of the Lord's Pre-Millennial Return fills the heart of those who believe it with joy. In Luke 24:52 we read that when Jesus was parted from His Disciples and ascended into, Heaven, "They returned to Jerusalem With GREAT JOY and were Continually in the Temple, PRAISING and BLESSING God." That seems strange conduct on their part, for naturally we would suppose that His Departure would have filled them with sadness. But when We recall that, when He Ascended, two men stood by in white apparel and told them that Jesus would come back again, we can understand their joyfulness Acts 1:11.

## 3.8 Eternity, dispelling the myths

The only thing we really know about heaven is what we read in the Bible. We have glimpses, statements made in general or in passing about the glory and state of heaven. I believe this is intentional, as humans we are very materialistic in our thinking and heaven is not going to be a new home we can decorate to our taste, it isn't a place we will change to match our cultural heritage or fad, heaven is God's and we have been invited to spend eternity with HIM not heaven.

Also we must remember that although the Bible gives us clues as to its design or look, we do not have a definitive answer as to the ultimate outcome of what we will be like or doing for eternity. The Bible takes us up to the end of Satan's reign but then we only know we will spend all eternity with God.

A misconception is that we do not know anything about the future heaven because of Revelation 21:1 and 2 Peter 3:13;

1. And I saw a new heaven and a new earth..

13. Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

People assume that this heaven is God's heaven, that He will start everything all over again, this is not true. The heaven He refers to in context is the earth's heaven, our atmosphere. Remember Genesis 1:1;

1. In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

He did not create His own home, He was creating ours. God's heaven does not need to be renewed, it is perfect and there is nothing corrupt in it, 1 Corinthians 15:50,53

50. What I am saying, dear brothers and sisters, is that flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God. These perishable bodies of ours are not able to live forever.

53. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

If you want a picture of what heaven looks like now the best place to look is in Revelation 4 where John was taken up to see the things that will take place in the end times. It paints a picture of a beautiful place but remember it is a description and not a photograph. John is describing something so different from what we know as humans that he uses earthly analogies to paint a picture we can comprehend.

That isn't to say he's wrong, and it isn't to take anything from his description but we must remember he is an earthly man trying to describe a spiritual realm. He does it very well and gets over the beauty and glory of God's presence, but how much more will it be when we see it for our selves.

### TWO ETERNITIES

If we partition the Word correctly we can see that there are 2 futures for mankind, one for the Church and one for the Jew, ultimately I believe they will probably align into one, but for the foreseeable future we have 2 futures unfolding in the Bible.

#### 1.The Church

The first future is the one of the Church, the called out ones who are a spiritual race destined to be with Christ serving Him and being with Him forever. 1 Thessalonians 4:17;

17. then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

A rapture verse for the Church describing our accent to be with Christ for ever (see what is the church for more info) <http://www.thewatcher.co.uk/church/whatis.htm> We are looking and hoping for a heavenly home with Christ, transformed from our mortal bodies into the immortal, from flesh

to spirit, that is 'spirit' in form and not 'a' spirit (a bodiless apparition or ghost). As we read earlier flesh and blood can not enter into heaven.1 Corinthians 15:35 onwards goes into our future bodies and is quite specific in that our bodies now are suited and were formed for our life on earth and will not work or be acceptable in heaven. Verses 51 to 53 sum it up quite clearly.

51. Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,  
52. in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.  
53. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

## **2.The Jew**

The second future is the one for the Jew, and all those who haven't learnt to partition the Word of God yet. The Jews are and always have been looking for a Kingdom on earth and a King to rule them. I don't want to go too deep in to the past and why but simply Jesus came down to set up the Kingdom on earth and with the help of the Jews (a chosen religious race) would bring blessing to the whole earth. Unfortunately they messed up and missed out. BUT a promise was made and a promise will be kept. Jesus will return and will set up His kingdom on earth and the 12 tribes of Israel will assist Him in the day to day running of the Temple in the 'New' Jerusalem.

Let's not get confused here, most of Revelation is for the Jew describing the end times during the period of Tribulation, culminating in a 1000 year reign of Christ, followed by a new heaven and a new earth and a new capital City, Jerusalem for the Jews. When has Jerusalem meant anything for the Church? Christ is the head of the Church not a City, not anything earth bound. We may worship in Churches but these are just buildings, the true Church is the body of Christ, the 'called out ones'.

The City will be real it will be physical and this is where the confusion comes in when people say I will have a mansion with golden carpets etc etc. They are mixing the futures. In the Gospels Jesus talks about preparing a place, rooms. John 14:2,3

2. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.  
3. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.

People are trying to put earthly familiars on a heavenly future, forgetting that Jerusalem is not heavenly, it will come down to earth, yes it is being prepared, possibly now in heaven, but its resting place will be a physical earth.

## **The vision**

There are two verses in Genesis which I believe give us the indication of the coming Church and its relationship to Israel, they can be found in Genesis 13:16 and 15:5 where God promises Abram concerning His descendants.

16. And I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth; so that if a man could number the dust of the earth, then your descendants also could be numbered.

4. And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be.

I believe not only is God showing Abram the innumerable number of his descendants but God is showing us the division between earthy Jews and the spiritual Church, both of whom will inherit the same promise.

## **SO WHAT IS HEAVEN**

I didn't want to be this study just a look at the pictures of heaven, you can read that for your selves in numerous places, catching glimpses of where angels live and the geography around the throne, or the mount of God. Heaven is just one part of our future which may or may not be our main residence, there will be a new heaven and a new earth, which will mirror Eden in its beauty and perfection.

In short it doesn't matter what it will be like because it will be better than we have now, it will be totally different, so different it will be indescribable. What really matters is that we will be spending it with God for all eternity.

## **WITH WHAT BODY?**

Something which I do want to touch on is the body we will have in heaven. There is much speculation and fantasy when Christians speak about going to heaven, how they will talk with some famous Bible character every day or a wife or husband who went on before them. It is very clear from scripture that in Heaven we will not have flesh and blood bodies, there is no 'physical' resurrection of the bodies we have now.

Gal 5:17

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.

Rom 7:18

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.

1 Cor 15:50

50. Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.

These 3 verses alone tell us that the flesh, the earthly body is something we need to get rid of. We look forward to the day when we get our new bodies, our heavenly bodies for a heavenly life. This said you will not be looking for your Gran or Husband or wife when you get to heaven you will be concentrating on God and God alone. The thought that you will go off to some corner and catch up with 'what's going on' is ludicrous.

One day, some Sadducees presented Jesus with the theoretical case of a woman who was successively the wife of seven brothers, asking him whose wife she would be after the resurrection. Jesus answered them in Mark 12:25

25. For when they shall rise from the dead, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage; but are as the angels which are in heaven.

Galatians 3:28 explains that if we are in Christ we are one, we are Spiritual not earthly, we are not divided by race, colour or gender but are all one in Christ. He will be our every thought and love, he will be the focus of all our attentions.

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

1 Corinthians 15:35-54 has a good look at this subject and begins with a denouncement against the foolish, the person not thinking and unwise.

35 But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?

36 Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die:

37 And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain:

38 But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body.

39 All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds.

40 There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another.

41 There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory.

42 So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption:

43 It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power:

44 It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.

45 And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.  
46 Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual.  
47 The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven.  
48 As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly.  
49 And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.  
50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.  
51 Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,  
52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.  
53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.  
54 So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

The ignorance on this subject is due to the lack of reading the Scriptures belonging to the Church, and listening to wrong teaching. Mathew 22:29.

29. Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God.

Through Paul's epistles come the revelation the Church needs to be able to talk on such subjects with wisdom and truth. Verse 37 tells us that what you plant or bury is not the body that shall be, but it is a seed: it may be of wheat, or some other sort, in other words it is just a vessel and does not signify what the body will be like.

Verse 39 and 40 explains that there are different types of body or flesh on earth and each has its glory in the eyes of God, so too do the celestial or spiritual bodies they too have their glory in the eyes of God.

It is God who gives the body and this isn't a natural progression like birth, it is a thoughtful process, where God gives as it pleases Him, verse 38. It then goes on to explain quite clearly through verses 39 to 41 that there are different types of bodies for different types of situations and some are brighter than others and some are designed for physical situations and some spiritual.

To bring this together and give it purpose it is clarified in verse 42 that this is true of the resurrection that we will go through, the body which is described as CURRUPT which is buried is raised INCORRUPTIBLE, verse 42.

To make things even clearer in verse 43 and 44 we are told the natural is turned into the spiritual. Verse 49 backs this up, **And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.**

Notice, the word **IT**, when reading verses 42-44. "**IT** is sown IN corruption; **IT** is roused IN incorruption

In these three verses the word IT is mentioned 8 times, in the study of numbers in God's Word, number **8** is specially associated with Resurrection and Regeneration, and the beginning of a new era or order.

**IT** disappears IN corruption, then, IT appears IN incorruption. According to the Bible, in the beginning God formed a body from the soil, breathed a spirit into it, and "man became a living soul". Genesis 2:7

"But there is a spirit in man; and the breath, inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding." Job 32:8,18.

Man is not A spirit ! He is a two part SPIRITUAL being, that is Spirit and Soul, and one part animal, natural flesh. In death, we read in Ecclesiastes 12:7

".. then shall the dust (body) return to the earth as it was; and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it".

...thus leaving the soul as NAKED. Now Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5:1-5.

1 For we know that if our earthly tabernacle (body) house be destroyed (die), we have a building (body) from God, a house (body) not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

2 For indeed in this we groan, ardently desiring to have put on our house which [is] from heaven; 3 if indeed being also clothed we shall not be found naked.

4 For indeed we who are in the tabernacle groan, being burdened; while yet we do not wish to be unclothed, but clothed, that [what is] mortal may be swallowed up by life.

5 Now he that has wrought us for this very thing [is] God, who also has given to us the earnest of the Spirit.

Therefore the **IT** is the **ego**, the person themselves, that is, the **soul**, which is a spiritual everlasting flame of desire! Which can only be satisfied with an unsatisfying satisfaction which is in and by God, the Creator of the soul.

## **THE NEW BODY**

The new body then will be conformed to the world we will inhabit, the spiritual, it will be like Christ's, Philippians 3:21;

21. who shall transform our body of humiliation into conformity to his body of glory, according to the working of [the] power which he has even to subdue all things to himself.

We will be changed SO THAT we can see Him

Philippians 3:20,21 points to the place we look for our hope, Salvation and new Body, and finally in 1 John 3:2 we know when we will get the new Body, it will be at the Rapture of the Church.

20 For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:

21 Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

## 3.9 The Path to salvation

What ever people say there is an incontrovertible truth which needs to be accepted about Salvation and that can be found in John 14:6.

6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, except through me.

Many Churches are teaching against this fundamental doctrine by telling people they can gain eternal life by various ways other than the one and only way, which is through Jesus Christ.

What is **The Way, the Truth and the Life?**

**Way** - A natural path, a course of conduct or a way of thinking. (*Greek - Hodos*)  
**Truth** - Not merely verbal, but sincerity and integrity of character. (*Greek - Aletheia*)  
**Life** - The life of the being, in this case, Divine, eternal, the life of God. (*Greek - Zoe*)

This scripture is more than just a statement of fact it is a blue print to eternal life, follow the 'way', keep to the 'truth' and inherit the 'life' to which only Christ can give you.

Why must we follow Him, well God sent His son to die for us to fulfil a requirement that through His sacrifice mankind would have its sins forgiven, and in doing so mankind would be reconnected or reconciled to God. In simple terms; Adam and Eve got us in debt and Jesus came to pay the debt and set us free. John 3:16 makes it clear that God has promised us everlasting life and though Jesus Christ we can take hold of this promise.

16 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.

**What is this Life?** This LIFE (Divine, eternal life-the life of God) resided in the sinless Jesus, manifested in His resurrection, and is made available to all who believe in Him. Human beings are born with the natural life-called *psuche* in Greek (translated "soul," "personality," or "life"); they do not possess the eternal life. This life can be received only by believing in the one who possesses the *zoe*-life, namely, Jesus Christ.

**What is the Truth?** It is the Word of God, or 'the Word', Jesus was the Word incarnate (John 1:14) so in Him is total truth, His life, His words, His thoughts and His actions. Everything about Jesus was truth. He sent the Holy Spirit when He returned to heaven (John 16:7), again the spirit is Truth. 2 Timothy 2:15 tells us that the Word is the Word of Truth.

15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

John 14:17 explains that the Spirit is the Spirit of Truth and lives in the heart of the believer. If you have the Spirit of Truth in you then this should be seen in all that you do and say.

17 even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

The TRUTH then is that He, Christ Jesus was the Word made flesh, that God sent into this world to redeem and bring back to Himself those who accept His invitation to conciliation. (2 Cor 5:18). As Isaiah states Gods word in Isaiah 55:11;

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

**What is the Way?** It is physical manifestation of the truth in you. When you have God's Spirit in you, when you turn over your life and Will to God then you will walk in the 'way' as Jesus did during His life on earth. While ever you honour God in your life, God will honour you and the Spirit or Truth that is in you will set you free.

The way we must live is one of faith and trust, God has our best well-being at heart and does not want to see us go without, but this isn't a passive 'way' it takes effort to be different from the norm to turn your back on the sinful nature, to live a life which honours God and doesn't displease

Him. 2 Timothy 2:19 reminds us that God is truth and if you want to be part of that then we must turn away from all untruth which is sinful and wicked.

19 But God's truth stands firm like a foundation stone with this inscription: "The Lord knows those who are his," and "Those who claim they belong to the Lord must turn away from all wickedness."

So what is the path to Salvation? It is to believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and in Him is the way, truth and Life. There are no works which will save you, no amount of money or promises, no traditions or ceremonies which can be repeated to bring you closer to God.

Salvation is a simple acceptance of God's invitation. If you want to inherit eternal life, to spend an eternity in God's love and light then you need to accept the message in John 14:6 which we started out with at the beginning of this study. Don't let any one tell you there is another way. But also don't think that saying 'yes' is a free 'get out of jail' card. You don't suddenly become immune to Sin, though there are similarities to taking drugs to cure an ailment.

You accept and believe the Doctors when they tell you what course of action is needed and you start to take the pills. Inside a struggle takes place between the antibiotics and the disease, and to keep the disease at bay you keep taking the antibiotics.

Unfortunately Sin can not be cured by a course of pills but it can be subdued and controlled by 'the way the truth and the life'. Our nature by default is Sinful and while ever there is breath in you body you will be at war with your Sinful nature. Accepting Christ as your Saviour is the start, we can then find help to win the day to day battle over our nature by reading the Word.

Here are some scriptures that relate to just this;

Romans 12:2

2. Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will know what God wants you to do, and you will know how good and pleasing and perfect his will really is.

Hebrew 1 28,29

28 Since we are receiving a Kingdom that cannot be destroyed, let us be thankful and please God by worshiping him with holy fear and awe.

29 For our God is a consuming fire.

1 peter 2: 16,17

16 You are not slaves; you are free. But your freedom is not an excuse to do evil. You are free to live as God's slaves.

17 Show respect for everyone. Love your Christian brothers and sisters. Fear God. Show respect for the king.

1 peter 3: 15,16

15 Instead, you must worship Christ as Lord of your life. And if you are asked about your Christian hope, always be ready to explain it.

16 But you must do this in a gentle and respectful way. Keep your conscience clear. Then if people speak evil against you, they will be ashamed when they see what a good life you live because you belong to Christ.

Living a Christian life is an on going walk, you could say it is a way of life based on an eternal truth. Again we are back to the way the truth and the life. It isn't hard to understand but it seems to be hard to believe in. If you do believe then isn't it worth working for, isn't it worth fighting for.

2 cor 7:1

1 Because we have these promises, dear friends, let us cleanse ourselves from everything that can defile our body or spirit. And let us work toward complete purity because we fear God.

## 4 Conclusion

Finally in 1 Corinthians 10:11,12 we hear the words of God;

11 All these events happened to them as examples for us. They were written down to warn us, who live at the time when this age is drawing to a close.

12 If you think you are standing strong, be careful, for you, too, may fall into the same sin.

God is not going to come down and poke His finger in the chest's of leaders demanding they get their act together. He will not boom from the mountains calling on the Church to repent. God has given us everything we need right now to live a decent and righteous life, pleasing to God. We choose not to.

We live in a privileged time, spiritually closer to God than any other generation. We have scriptures and history, hindsight and revelation. We have wisdom and understanding, dreams and visions, we are living in the last days spoken of in the Bible. And what do, we ignore all God has given us, all He could give us and wants to give because we think we know best.

Many Churches in the world today will be full the day after the Rapture, full with the same congregations it held the previous day, why? because they didn't understand.

2 Timothy 4:1-4 gives us a clear plea from God, PREACH THE WORD.

1. I CHARGE [you] in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, Who is to judge the living and the dead, and by (in the light of) His coming and His kingdom:
2. Herald and preach the Word! Keep your sense of urgency [stand by, be at hand and ready], whether the opportunity seems to be favorable or unfavorable. [Whether it is convenient or inconvenient, whether it is welcome or unwelcome, you as preacher of the Word are to show people in what way their lives are wrong.] And convince them, rebuking and correcting, warning and urging and encouraging them, being unflagging and inexhaustible in patience and teaching.
3. For the time is coming when [people] will not tolerate (endure) sound and wholesome instruction, but, having ears itching [for something pleasing and gratifying], they will gather to themselves one teacher after another to a considerable number, chosen to satisfy their own liking and to foster the errors they hold,
4. And will turn aside from hearing the truth and wander off into myths and man-made fictions.

He does not ask us to set up party nights to pander to the world, to compromise the Gospel in the hope of getting a few more people to come to Church. God will fill the Church only if there is something worth listening to, if you don't preach the Word then why should God fill your Church.

If you are resorting to gimmicks to get more people in to your Church, brining the attractions of world in to entice the ungodly, if you think entertainment is what people want and conviction will only scare them away then look to Acts 2:38-47 for the prospering Church.

38. Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.
39. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the LORD our God shall call.
40. And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.
41. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.
42. And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.
43. And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles.
44. And all that believed were together, and had all things common;
45. And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need.
46. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart,
47. Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

Verse 42 tells us they continued in what they believed, in their faith, in verse 44 they were in agreement in what they believed, verse 46 they taught and were taught about what they believed daily. The result was that in verse 47 **GOD** added to the Church those **HE** wanted saved.

If we could follow this simple template, which the scripture shows us works and God confirmed is what He wanted by the increase He gave, then surely we should be doing the same. We should obey the command in simple faith, believe God knows best and stop trying to do God's work for Him.

If we don't then we will only have our selves to blame when we stand before Him and have to answer to the charges, not only for losing our own soul but for those we didn't minister too. Hebrews 10: 26-31 is a clear reminder to those who have lost their way, who have forgotten to put God first. It is not just warning the back slider but to anyone who has received the light and has turned from it whether by choice or ignorance, whether by pride or arrogance.

26 If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left,  
27 but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God.

28 Anyone who rejected the law of Moses died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses.

29 How much more severely do you think a man deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God under foot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified him, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace?

30 For we know him who said, "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," and again, "The Lord will judge his people."

31 It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

You may show me your bank balance, your average congregational numbers, the people you send in to mission fields and the donations you make to various charities. All this is fine but means nothing in the eyes of God if you are not preaching the Word. God can do more with one man on the street than He can with a 3000 strong congregation if that one man has the Word of God burned in his heart and the Holy Spirit guiding him.

In 1 Corinthians 2:4 we read;

4. And my message and my preaching were very plain. I did not use wise and persuasive speeches, but the Holy Spirit was powerful among you.

5. I did this so that you might trust the power of God rather than human wisdom.

Amen.