

Lessons in Systematic Theology

an orderly, rational, and coherent account
of the doctrines of the Christian faith



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Lessons in Systematic Theology

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Lessons in Systematic Theology

Theism

Definition of theism

: belief in the existence of God; *specifically* : belief in the existence of one God viewed as the creative source of the human race and the world who transcends yet is immanent in the world



IN WHAT WAY DOES GOD REVEAL HIMSELF TO US?



Throughout history...



Some have questioned God's existence



While many others have confidently asserted that He does indeed exist.



It never seemed to occur to any of the writers of the Old or New Testaments to attempt to prove or argue for the existence of God.



Genesis 1:1 - simply states it as a fact !

➔ In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.



Exodus: 3:14 - He is the self-existent One.

➔ God replied to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM. Say this to the people of Israel: I AM has sent me to you."



John 5:26 - He is the Source of all life.

➔ The Father has life in Himself, and He has granted that same life-giving power to His Son.



The Bible also points out that...



Mankind not only knows of God's existence



They have a pretty good idea as to who & what He is.



Romans 1:18-20

¹⁸ But God shows His anger from heaven against all sinful, wicked people who suppress the truth by their wickedness. ¹⁹ They know the truth about God because He has made it obvious to them. ²⁰ For ever since the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky. Through everything God made, they can clearly see His invisible qualities—His eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuse for not knowing God.



The Psalmist says in **Psalms 14:1**

Only fools say in their hearts, "There is no God."

Theistic Arguments:

Theistic arguments argue for the existence of a monotheistic God without appealing to the Scriptures for their proof.



Theistic arguments come in two forms:

Empirical Arguments:

These arguments depend on verifiable evidence in the world as a basis from which to infer God's existence.

A Priori Arguments:

These arguments rely on what is rationally known apart from the empirical/ verifiable world.



The Cosmological Argument:

- The cosmological argument is a theory that all things in the world were caused to exist by something.
- The universe exists, so there must be something that caused the universe. We believe the first cause to be God.



The Teleological Argument:

- Also known as the Intelligent design argument for the existence of an intelligent creator, i.e. God.
- The argument is based on perceived evidence of deliberate design in the natural or physical world.
- Voltaire put it in rather simplistic terms:

"If a watch proves the existence of a watchmaker
but the universe does not prove the existence of a
great Architect, then I consent to be called a fool."



The Ontological Argument:

- The ontological argument is an argument based on reason alone.



The Moral Argument:

- The Moral Argument is an argument based on the fact that all people recognize some moral code.
- Right & wrong imply a higher standard or law, and law requires a lawgiver.
- Because the Moral Law transcends humanity, this universal law requires a universal lawgiver. This, it is argued, is God.

The Argument from Congruity:

- Belief in a self-existent, personal God is in harmony with all the facts of our mental and moral nature, as well as with all the phenomena of the natural world.
 - For example:
 - If we have a key which fits all the wards of the lock, we know that it is the right key. If we have a theory which fits all the facts in the case, we know then that we have the right theory.
-



God has revealed Himself on two levels:

- General Revelation &
- Special Revelation

General Revelation:

This is revelation that is available to all of mankind and it comes in three forms:

#1 God is revealed in nature

Psalm 19:1-4

¹ The heavens proclaim the glory of God. The skies display His craftsmanship. ² Day after day they continue to speak; night after night they make Him known. ³ They speak without a sound or word; their voice is never heard. ⁴ Yet their message has gone throughout the earth, and their words to all the world. God has made a home in the heavens for the sun.

Romans 1:18-19

- The revelation of God in nature reveals that there is a God. But there are limitations of the revelation of God in nature.
- Although God's revelation in nature leaves man without excuse, this revelation is insufficient for salvation.
- It is intended to incite man to search for a fuller revelation of God and His plan for salvation, and it is God's will for man to turn to Him.

#2 God is revealed in history

Acts 17:26-27

²⁶ From one man He created all the nations throughout the whole earth. He decided beforehand when they should rise and fall, and He determined their boundaries. ²⁷ "His purpose was for the nations to seek after God and perhaps feel their way toward Him—though He is not far from any one of us.

- ➡ We see here in Paul's statement that history is a revelation of God's power and providence.

Daniel 4:34-35

³⁴"After this time had passed, I, Nebuchadnezzar, looked up to heaven. My sanity returned, and I praised and worshiped the Most High and honored the One who lives forever. His rule is everlasting, and His kingdom is eternal. ³⁵ All the people of the earth are nothing compared to Him. He does as He pleases among the angels of heaven and among the people of the earth. No one can stop Him or say to Him, 'What do you mean by doing these things?'

- ➡ Nebuchadnezzar, the most powerful ruler of his time, acknowledges God & His power.

Deuteronomy 28:10

Then all the nations of the world will see that you are a people claimed by the LORD, and they will stand in awe of you.

- ➡ We also see that God revealed Himself in Israel's history for the world to see.
- ➡ Although Israel was small, lived in an obscure little country, and had little commerce with the rest of the world, it was a massive spectacle to the whole world.

#3 God is revealed in conscience

Romans 2:14-15

¹⁴ Even Gentiles, who do not have God's written law, show that they know His law when they instinctively obey it, even without having heard it. ¹⁵ They demonstrate that God's law is written in their hearts, for their own conscience and thoughts either accuse them or tell them they are doing right.

- ➡ Conscience is not something man can create in and of himself. He is created with it.
- ➡ Conscience is an inherent sense of right & wrong.
- ➡ Conscience is an inherent basic knowledge of God's existence.
- ➡ For example:

Just like the smooth surface of a lake will reflect the sun and reveal not only its existence but to some extent its nature, so to does man's conscience reveal God's existence and to a certain extent God's nature.

Special Revelation:

This is where God, at special times, actively makes Himself and His truth known to specific people. Although special revelation is given at special times and to specific peoples, the revelation is not necessarily intended just for that time and people only. As a matter of fact, special revelation is a treasure, that God asks to be proclaimed to all the peoples of the earth.

Psalm 105:1

Give thanks to the LORD and proclaim His greatness. Let the whole world know what He has done.

Acts 1:8

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be My witnesses, telling people about Me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Special revelation has been given to mankind in various ways:

#1 God has revealed Himself through His miracles

A miracle is an unusual event, that accomplishes a useful work, and reveals the presence and power of God.

John 5:36

But I have a greater witness than John—My teachings and My miracles. The Father gave Me these works to accomplish, and they prove that He sent Me.

Acts 2:22

"People of Israel, listen! God publicly endorsed Jesus the Nazarene by doing powerful miracles, wonders, and signs through Him, as you well know.

#2 God has revealed Himself through prophecy

Prophecy here means the foretelling of events. It is not referring to mere human insight, but through direct communication from God.

For example...

-  Prophecies concerning the Jesus Christ, the Messiah was to be born of a virgin:

 Isaiah 7:14 + Matthew 1:23

-  Christ was to be born of the seed of Abraham

 Genesis 12:3 + Galatians 3:8

-  Christ was to be born of the tribe of Judah

 Genesis 49:10 + Hebrews 7:14

Lesson #1 - In what way does God reveal Himself to us?

- i Christ was to be born in the line of David
 Psalm 110:1 + Romans 1:3
- i Christ was to be born in Bethlehem
 Micah 5:2 + Matthew 2:6
- i Christ was to be anointed of the Spirit
 Isaiah 61:1 + Luke 4:18
- i Christ was to be ride into Jerusalem on a donkey
 Zechariah 9:9 + Matthew 21:5
- i Christ was to be betrayed by a friend
 Psalm 41:9 + Jon 13:18
- i Christ was to be sold for 30 pieces of silver
 Zechariah 11:12 + Matthew 26:15, 27:9
- i Christ was to be forsaken by His disciples
 Zechariah 13:7 + Matthew 26:31,56
- i Christ was to be pierced in His hands & feet, but not have a bone broken
 Psalms 22:16; 34:20 + John 19:36; 20:20,25
- i Christ was to be given gall & vinegar to drink
 Psalm 69:21 + Matthew 27:34
- i Christ garments were to be gambled for
 Psalm 22:18 + Matthew 27:35
- i Christ was to be forsaken by God the Father
 Psalm 22:1 + Matthew 27:46
- i Christ was to be buried with the rich
 Isaiah 53:9 + Matthew 27:57-60
- i Christ was to raised from the dead
 Psalm 16:8-11 + Mark 16:5-7
- i Christ was to ascend on high
 Psalm 68:18 + Ephesians 4:8
- i Christ was to sit at the Father's right hand
 Psalm 110:1 + Matthew 22:43-45

#3 God has revealed Himself through His Son, Jesus Christ

-  In spite of the general revelation of God in nature, history and conscience, the Gentile world turned to mythology, polytheism, & idolatry.
- ➔ Romans 1:25 tells us that they, “worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator.”
- ➔ A fuller revelation of God was greatly needed and came in the person of Jesus Christ.

John 14:9

Jesus replied, "Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and yet you still don't know who I am? Anyone who has seen Me has seen the Father! So why are you asking Me to show Him to you?"

Hebrews 1:1-3

¹ Long ago God spoke many times and in many ways to our ancestors through the prophets. ² And now in these final days, He has spoken to us through His Son. God promised everything to the Son as an inheritance, and through the Son He created the universe. ³ The Son radiates God's own glory and expresses the very character of God, and He sustains everything by the mighty power of His command. When He had cleansed us from our sins, He sat down in the place of honor at the right hand of the majestic God in heaven.

#4 God has revealed Himself through His Word

- ➔ Sin has limited mankind's ability to properly interpret the general revelation of God.
- ➔ Therefore it is necessary that God reveals Himself in a more direct and discernible way.
- ➔ Thus, the Old and New Testaments were given to us where God discloses Himself to mankind in a clear and understandable way leaving no doubt about who He is, and what His character is, and what His will is.
- ➔ The Bible does not attempt to prove the existence of God. Rather, the Bible asserts, assumes and declares Him.

Genesis 1:1

John 1:1-4

¹ In the beginning the Word already existed. The Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He existed in the beginning with God. ³ God created everything through Him, and nothing was created except through Him. ⁴ The Word gave life to everything that was created, and His life brought light to everyone.

Questions for discussion

- ? Define the word "revelation".
- ? Today God reveals Himself through
 - ✓ General Revelation. Explain.
 - ✓ Special Revelation. Explain.
- ? How does order and design in nature reveal the reality of God?
- ? How does God react to those who reject and pervert the knowledge revealed to them in creation? See **Romans 1:18**
- ? What is it that has obscured God's general revelation?
- ? How does the Old Testament reveal the Son of God?
- ? How does the New Testament reveal the Son of God?
- ? Give one important lesson you learned from this study.

Lessons in Systematic Theology

Bibliology

Definition of bibliology

: refers to the study of the nature of the Bible as revelation. It often includes such topics as revelation, inspiration, inerrancy, canonicity, illumination, and interpretation.



HOW DID GOD GIVE US THE BIBLE?



"Bible" is the name commonly used to designate...

- ➔ The 39 books of the Old Testament &
- ➔ The 27 books of the New Testament.
- ➔ These 66 books make up one book - The Bible!



Interesting Facts about the Bible:



The Bible is the most unique compiled text in the world because it was written over a span of 1500-2000 years.



Another unique point of the Bible is that nearly 40 people wrote the Bible
(Unlike a lot of Books, like the Muslim Koran or the Mormon Book of Mormon).



The Bible was written by men living on 3 different continents (Asia, Africa, & Europe).



The earliest Bibles have no chapter and verse distinctions.

- ➔ Stephen Langton, a professor at the University of Paris, divided the Bible into chapters in 1227 A.D.
- ➔ Later, Robert Stephanus, a Paris printer, added verses in 1551 A.D. & 1555 A.D.



The English word "Bible" came originally from the name of the byblos reed used extensively in antiquity for making scrolls & books.

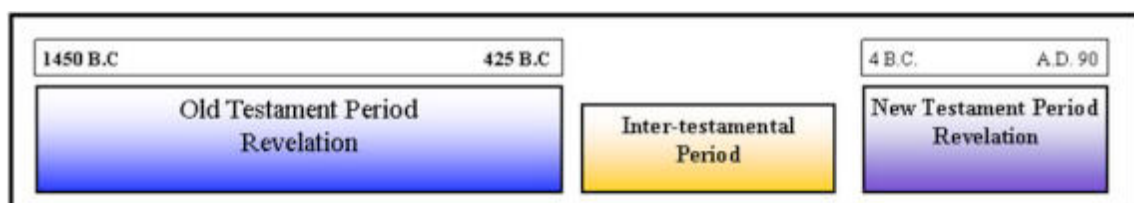


Greek Christians around 200 A.D. called their sacred Scriptures *ta Biblia* "the books"



The Bible is one book but it is divided into two parts called Testaments

- ➔ The term "Testament" ("berith" in Hebrew & "diatheke" in Greek)...
...means "covenant"
- ➔ The Old Testament was written & preserved by the Jewish Community before the time of Christ, and it was written in Hebrew.
- ➔ The New Testament was composed by the followers of Christ during the first century A.D., and it was written in Greek.



Time Period of Bible

The time span for the writing of the Bible covers approximately fifteen-hundred years.

Old Testament (1445—400 B.C.)

Genesis (1445)
Exodus (1445)
Leviticus (1445)
Numbers (1405)
Deuteronomy (1405)

Joshua (1405—1385)
Judges (1043)
Ruth (1000)
1 and 2 Samuel (1000—900)
1 and 2 Kings (561—538)
1 and 2 Chronicles (450—430)
Ezra (457—444)
Nehemiah (425)
Esther (475)

Job (lived in patriarchal times)
Psalms (1450—500)
Proverbs (950)
Ecclesiastes (931)
Song of Solomon (960)

Isaiah (740)
Jeremiah (561)
Lamentations (586)
Ezekiel (570)
Daniel (536)
Hosea (750)
Joel (830)
Amos (760)
Obadiah (845)
Jonah (780)
Micah (735)
Nahum (661—612)
Habakkuk (609)
Zephaniah (635)
Haggai (520)
Zechariah (520—518)
Malachi (430)

New Testament (A.D. 50—100)

Matthew (50)
Mark (50)
Luke (60-61)
John (80-90)

Acts (63)

Romans (56)
1 Corinthians (54-55)
2 Corinthians (55-56)
Galatians (48)
Ephesians (61)
Philippians (62)
Colossians (61)
1 Thessalonians (51)
2 Thessalonians (51)
1 Timothy (62)
2 Timothy (64)
Titus (63)
Philemon (61)

Hebrews (65)
James (45)
1 Peter (65)
2 Peter (67)
1 John (85)
2 John (90)
3 John (90)
Jude (70)

Revelation (95)



It's important that we remember when we're talking about the Bible...



That we remember it is God's words

Not the words of man.

For example:

Matthew didn't just sit down and write an account of the life and teachings of Jesus on his own. God, through the Holy Spirit, guided the process. That is one of the reasons why, for example, that even though he probably never even met Luke, their accounts are so similar.



What do you think “inspired” means?



The word used for “inspired”...

- ➔ In **2nd Timothy 3:16**
- ➔ In the Greek = “*theopneustos*”
 - It is the only occurrence of it in the Bible.
 - It is a compound word:
 - ➔ God + breathed = “inspired.”



What are the results of “inspiration”?



An Inerrant Bible:

- ➔ If God is true (**Rom. 3:4**) and the Bible comes from God (**2 Tim. 3:16**), then the Bible must be true in all its parts.
- ➔ That is why the Bible is said to be inerrant.



A Bible Inspired In All Its Parts (Plenary):

- ➔ All parts of the Bible are equally inspired.



An Unbreakable Word of God:

- ➔ The Bible is unbreakable or infallible.
- ➔ Jesus said in **John 10:35**... “the Scripture cannot be broken.”



The Authoritative Standard:

- ➔ Jesus and the Apostles used the Scriptures as the final authority in all matters (**Matt. 4:4, 7, 10; Acts 17:2**).



Verbal Inspiration

- ➔ The Biblical authors were not simply inspired in their general ideas, but in the very words they used.



Plenary Inspiration

- ➔ Inspiration extends to the whole Bible, not merely to certain parts.

Questions for discussion

- ? Define the word “inspiration”
- ? How many individuals did it take to write the Bible?
- ? How many years did it take to write the Bible?
- ? What language was the Old Testament originally written in?
- ? What language was the New Testament originally written in?



HOW DO WE KNOW WHICH OT BOOKS BELONG IN THE BIBLE?



The English word "canon"...

- ➔ Comes, via Latin, from the Greek word "kanon"
- ➔ Means a "rule" or "standard".



The "Canon of Scripture" refers to...

- ➔ The list of Biblical writings used by Believers
- ➔ The standard by which we evaluate our beliefs.



- 👍 God determines whether a book is inspired and thus canonical
- 👎 Churches & councils do not.
- 👎 A book is not inspired because men made it canonical
- 👍 A book is canonical because God inspired it.
- 👍 Thus, canonicity is determined by inspiration.
- 👍 God gives the books of the Bible their divine authority.
- 👍 God's people recognized this authority...
...but they did not determine its authority.



Factors contributing to the recognition of Old Testament books as being canonical...

#1 Tradition

- ➔ The well-established tradition that many of the books came from Moses or one of the other acknowledged prophets.

#2 Spiritual authority of the books themselves

- ➔ As they were used in public or private reading & in exposition.

#3 Recognition by those who served in the Temple as sacred

#4 Jesus & the Apostles

- ➔ For Believers in Christ, there is the additional consideration that Jesus Himself & his apostles, in the pages of the New Testament, often refer to the Scriptures in general, & to books as having the authority of God



The OT canon starts with Genesis and is closed with Malachi.

Josephus

- ➔ According to the Jewish historian, Josephus (A.D. 37-95), the Hebrew OT was complete and no more canonical writings were composed after the reign of Artaxerxes (464—424 B.C.) (The time of Malachi.)

The Talmud

- ➔ The Jewish Talmud states, "After the latter prophets Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, the Holy Spirit departed from Israel."

New Testament

- ➔ The New Testament never quotes any OT book as authoritative after the time of Malachi.



How were EXACT hand-written copies of the Bible made?

(Masorete method)



The Jews developed elaborate & meticulous RULES for transcribing...

- ➔ They decreed that when a person was making a new text, he had to copy the original page with such exactness that the number of words on a page could not be changed.
For example:
If the original page had 288 words, then the page being copied had to have the same 288 words.
- ➔ Each line on a new page had to be the exact same as the line on the old page. If the first line on the original page had nine words, the first line on the copy page had to have nine words.
- ➔ After a page was copied, the number of letters on that page was counted and compared with the original.
- ➔ After a page was copied, each letter was counted and compared with the original. After a page was copied, someone would check to see what the middle letter was on the copy and the original.
- ➔ The scribes were not allowed to copy sentence for sentence or even word for word. They had to copy LETTER for LETTER.
- ➔ After a page was copied and checked by another, still a third person would check to see what the middle word was on the page. Then, when the whole book was finished, another would count the phrases.

- ➔ They recorded the number of times the several letters occur in the various books of the Bible; the number of words, and the middle word; the number of verses, and the middle verse; the number of expressions and combinations of words, etc...



All this for the set purpose of safeguarding the Sacred Text, and preventing the loss or misplacement of a single letter or word.

- ➔ These men had no worry whatsoever that there might have been an error. For that reason, they felt no more need to keep their older copies.

The Scripture "must be written on the skins of clean animals, the length of each column must not extend less than 48 or more than 80 lines; the breadth must consist of 30 letters. No word or letter, not even a yod, must be written from memory... Between every consonant the space of a hair or thread must intervene, between every book three lines. Besides this the copyist must sit in full Jewish dress, and wash his whole body"

(The Hebrew Text of the Old Testament - Davidson).



By the time Jesus was born, the Scribes had become so obsessed with counting the jots and tittles that they forgot the very messages that were in the sentences they were transcribing!

- ➔ Their obsession with detail caused Christ to say in **Matthew 23:23...**



"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone. "

- ➔ Even after the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. the Scribes continued their work.
- ➔ Jack Finegan, a noted Bible scholar said, "It has been ...estimated that there are ...variations in hardly more than a 1000th part, of the text."



This means the Old Testament is at least 99.9% true to the original!



Where were copies of the Bible preserved?



The Israelites kept a copy of the Scriptures in Jerusalem's first temple.

- ➔ This copy became known as "The Temple Scriptures."
- ➔ Even though the first temple was destroyed and the Jews were taken to Babylon, the Scriptures were preserved.
- ➔ In the Babylonian captivity a group of Levites who became known as the Scribes painstakingly copied and disseminated the Scriptures to other Jews.



One of the most pivotal historical figures during this time was Ezra.

- ➔ According to the Jewish historian Josephus & [2 Maccabees 2:12-15](#) it was Ezra the priest, assisted by the priests and Levites of the Great Assembly or Synagogue, that completed the final editing & canonization of the Old Testament Scriptures in the late fifth century B.C.
- ➔ No works written after the time of Ezra, including the Apocrypha, were reckoned as being inspired by God since no one with the prophetic spirit had come after the days of Ezra.
- ★ It was the universal testimony of Jews and later Christians that Ezra and Nehemiah in the fifth century B.C. were the ones commissioned to complete the Hebrew canon.



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The Greek Old Testament (The Septuagint (LXX/70):

- 🔧 The name derives from the tradition that it was translated from the Hebrew Scriptures by seventy (or seventy-two) Jewish scholars at Alexandria, Egypt during the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus (285-247 B.C.).
- 🔧 It arranged the Old Testament according to *subject* matter and became the basis for our modern classification of the Old Testament...
 - 1) Five books of Law
 - 2) Twelve books of History,
 - 3) Five books of Poetry
 - 4) Seventeen books of Prophecy
- 🔧 Has a total of 39 books
- 🔧 It is quoted in the New Testament.
- 🔧 It is also quoted by the Apostolic Fathers
(Lived and wrote in the second half of the 1st Century & the first half of the 2nd Century)
- 🔧 It is also quoted later by the Greek Church Fathers.
- 🔧 Serves as the Eastern Orthodox Church's Old Testament
- 💡 The Hebrew Bible (Old Testament) and the Greek Old Testament consists of the same writings, they are simply included in a different order.
- 💡 The Hebrew Old Testament totals 24 books
- 💡 The Greek Old Testament totals 39.

? How can this be?

- ➡ The Jews enumerated the Old Testament books differently.
- ➡ The twelve minor prophets were considered one book.
- ➡ 1 & 2 Samuel were considered one book.
- ➡ The same holds true for 1 & 2 Kings, 1 & 2 Chronicles & Ezra-Nehemiah.
- ➡ Though the classifications are different between the Hebrew and Greek Old Testaments, the same books are in both forms.

Masoretic Text

- 🔧 The Masoretes were rabbis who made it their special work to correct the faults that had crept into the text of the Old Testament during the Babylonian captivity, and to prevent, for the future, its being corrupted by any alteration.
- 🔧 The MT was primarily copied, edited and distributed by the Masoretes between the 7th & 10th centuries.
- 🔧 The Masoretic Text is widely used as the basis for translations of the Old Testament in most Protestant Bibles.

Questions for discussion

- ? What does the word "canon" mean?
- ? What do we mean when we speak of "the Canon of Scripture?"
- ? What was necessary for a book to have a place in the Old Testament?



WHAT IS THE APOCRYPHA?

The Apocrypha



1st & 2nd Esdras

Tobit

Judith

Additions to Esther

The wisdom of Solomon

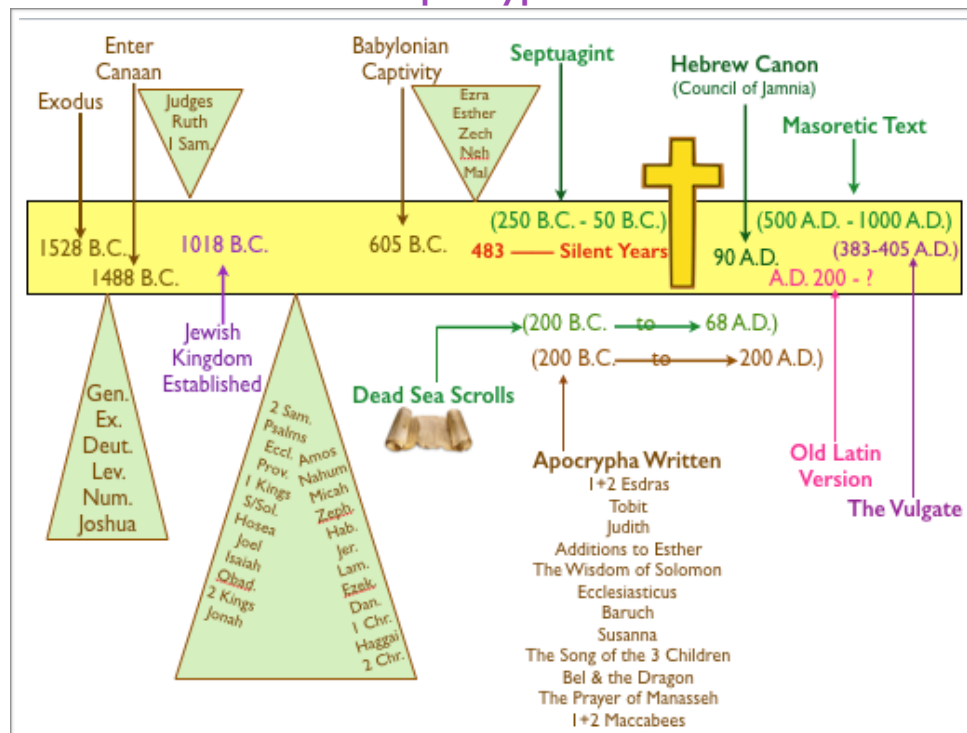
Ecclesiasticus
(aka The wisdom of Sirachi)

Baruch

The Prayer of Manasseh *Bel & the Dragon* *Susanna*

1 & 2 Maccabees *The Song of the Three Children*

When were the Apocryphal books written?



The Apocryphal Books:

🔑 These books derive their name from a Greek word, *apokruphos*...
...which means "hidden."

🔑 They are so called because they are...

- 📌 Hidden
- 📌 Of unknown authority
- 📌 Spurious (borderline nonsense)

⚠️ The Apocryphal books were not recognized as inspired books by the Jews.

🔑 The Jews regarded them as being a valuable history of their nation.

🔑 They were given a place by themselves between the Old & New Testaments.
→ But with the distinct statement that they were not to be regarded as of equal authority with the books of the canon

🔑 Divine authority is claimed by none of the Apocryphal writers, and by some actually state they are not inspired (2 Mac. 2:23; 15:38).

🔑 None of the Apocryphal books are written in Hebrew.

⚠️ Apocryphal books all originated after the cessation of prophecy

⚠️ The Apocryphal books are never cited by Christ or the apostles

⚠️ The Apocryphal books contain statements that don't match up with historic facts
(Baruch 1:2, compared with Jer. 43:6,7)

⚠️ The Apocryphal books are self-contradictory

⚠️ The Apocryphal books oppose the doctrines and precepts of Scripture.

⚠️ The Apocryphal books were not allowed a place among the sacred books, during the first four centuries of the Christian Church.

🔑 We find the Apocryphal books in some Bibles today...
...especially in Roman Catholic Bibles, since they are regarded by the Roman Catholic Church as inspired books.

🔑 The Roman Catholic Church did not officially canonize the Apocrypha until the Council of Trent (1546 AD).

→ This was in part because the Apocrypha contained material **which supported** certain Catholic doctrines, such as purgatory, praying for the dead, and the treasury of merit.

1ST ESDRAS (about 150 A.D.)

-  Tells of the restoration of the Jews to Palestine after Babylonian Exile
-  Draws much from **Chronicles**, **Ezra** & **Nehemiah**
-  Much legendary material is added

2ND ESDRAS (about 100-200 A.D.)

-  Is a collection of 3 works containing 7 visions supposedly from Ezra
-  Martin Luther was so confused by these visions...
...that he is said to have thrown the book into the Elbe River

TOBIT (early 2nd century B.C.)

-  A short novel with a strong Pharisaic tone
-  It emphasizes...
 -  The law
 -  Clean foods
 -  Ceremonial washings
 -  Charity
 -  Fasting
 -  Prayer

 Teaches that almsgiving atones for sin !

JUDITH (late 2nd century B.C.)

-  A fictitious Pharisaical novel about a beautiful Jewish widow
-  When her city was besieged, she went out to the tent of the attacking Assyrian general. He was taken by her beauty and gave her a place in his tent. Fortunately he got drunk, and fell asleep. Judith took his sword and cut off his head. As a result the leaderless Assyrian army was defeated!

ADDITIONS TO ESTHER (about 100 B.C.)

-  **Esther** stands alone as the only book in the Old Testament that makes no mention of God.
-  To compensate for this lack Additions to Esther...
 -  Has long "prayers" that are attributed to Mordecai & Esther
 -  Several "letters" supposedly from Artaxerxes are also included

THE WISDOM OF SOLOMON (about 40 A.D.)

i Written to keep the Jews from falling into...

- Skepticism
- Materialism
- Idolatry

ECCLESIASTICUS (WISDOM OF SIRACH) (about 180 B.C.)

i Shows a high level of religious wisdom like Proverbs

i For example...

*“Speak concisely; say much in few words;
act like a man who knows more than he says”*

Ecclesiasticus 32:8

BARUCH (between 150 B.C. - 100 A.D.)

i Supposedly written by Baruch - the scribe of Jeremiah

i It apparently attempts to interpret the destruction of Jerusalem in either...

- 587/586 B.C. ?
- or
- 70 A.D. ?

i The book urges the Jews not to revolt against the emperor.

i Chapter 6 contains the so called Letter of Jeremiah with its strong warning against idolatry.

SUSANNA (around 100 B.C.)

i Supposedly a 13th chapter that was added to Daniel Susanna was the beautiful wife of a leading Jew in Babylon who was falsely accused of infidelity. Because of Daniel's wisdom she was rescued.

- Apparently, Daniel asked each of her accusers separately under which tree in the garden they found Susanna with a lover. When they gave different answers, they were put to death & Susanna was saved.

BEL & THE DRAGON (around 100 B.C.)

- i** Supposedly a 14th chapter that was added to **Daniel**
- i** Its main purpose was to show the folly of idolatry
- i** It contains two stories...
 - King Cyrus asked Daniel why he did not worship Bel, since Bel showed his greatness by consuming much flour & oil. Well, Daniel scattered ashes on the floor of the temple where the food had been placed that evening for Bel. In the morning, Daniel showed the king the footprints of the priests who had entered secretly and consumed the food. The priests were slain and the temple destroyed.
 - The story of the dragon is of the same legendary character and may be classified as Jewish fiction. It has of little religious value - obviously !

THE SONG OF THE 3 JEWISH CHILDREN

(it is impossible to fix the date definitely)

- i** Describes what supposedly happened to...
 - Shadrach
 - Meshach
 - Abednego

THE PRAYER OF MANASSEH (2nd century B.C.)

- i** Was composed in Maccabean times
- i** Was the supposed prayer of Manasseh, the wicked king of Judah.

1ST MACCABEES (1st century B.C.)

- i** Is probably the most valuable book in the Apocrypha
- i** Describes the exploits of 3 Maccabean brothers...
 - Judas
 - Jonathan &
 - Simon

...during the Jewish revolt
against the Seleucid Empire in 167-164 B.C.
- i** With Josephus, it is our most important source of information for this crucial & exciting period in Jewish history

2ND MACCABEES (1st century B.C.)

-  Is not a sequel to 1st Maccabees, but rather a parallel account.
-  Deals only with the victories of Judas Maccabeus.
-  It's considered to be more legendary than 1st Maccabees.

Questions about the Apocrypha & the Old Testament Canon



Did the Apostles use the Septuagint, that included the Apocrypha?

-  All the writers of the New Testament made use of the Septuagint.
- ➔ The claim that the Septuagint of apostolic times included the Apocrypha is not certain.
- ➔ The earliest manuscripts we have of the entire Septuagint are from the 4th century.
- ➔ If Jesus used the Septuagint, it may or may not have included the extra books.
- ! Also remember that although the 4th century copies do include the Apocryphal books, none include the same list of books.



Did the writers of the New Testament refer to the Apocryphal books?

-  The New Testament writers did allude to and refer to a few texts in the Apocrypha. However that alone does not give the Apocrypha Scriptural Status.
- ➔ The New Testament also quoted non-biblical works that are not in the Apocrypha, & no one claims that those other non-biblical works are inspired.
 - For example:
 - In **Acts 17:28** Paul quotes from the Cretan poet Epimenides.
 - In **Acts 17:29** Paul quotes line five from Aratus' Phaenomena
 - In **1st Corinthians 15:33** Paul quotes a proverb by the Greek poet Menander.
 - **Titus 1:12** Paul quotes Epimenides a 600 B.C. Greek Poet & native of Crete.



No one claims that these works are inspired.

- Of all the Apocryphal books that groups over the centuries have pushed for inclusion into canonicity, none have ever been quoted or referred to be Jesus or the Apostles.
- Jesus makes clear reference to all but four Old Testament books from the Hebrew canon, but He never directly refers to the Apocryphal books.



How do we know which NT books belong in the Bible?

2nd Timothy 3:16-17

¹⁶All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; ¹⁷so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

2nd Peter 1:20-21

²⁰But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a *matter* of one's own interpretation, ²¹for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

New Testament Contents:

1. Gospels (4 books)

- Matthew
- Mark
- Luke &
- John

2. History (1 letter)

- Acts

3. Epistles (21 letters)

a. Pauline (13 letters)

- | | |
|--|---|
| ➤ Romans | ➤ Colossians, |
| ➤ 1 st +2 nd Corinthians | ➤ 1 st + 2 nd Thessalonians |
| ➤ Galatians | ➤ 1 st + 2 nd Timothy |
| ➤ Ephesians | ➤ Titus |
| ➤ Philippians | ➤ Philemon |

b. General (8 letters)

- | | |
|---|--|
| ➤ Hebrews | ➤ 1 st + 2 nd + 3 rd John |
| ➤ James, | ➤ Jude |
| ➤ 1 st + 2 nd Peter | |



4. Prophecy (1 letter)

- Revelation



The New Testament...



Was not written by one man &



It was not written at one time.



At least eight different inspired men wrote various parts of the New Testament.



We do not have all the writings of these eight men!

For example:

Paul mentions in **1st Corinthians 5:9** that he had written an earlier epistle to the church at Corinth. That letter has not been preserved for us. It is likely that some other writings of Paul, as well as those of Peter, James, Matthew, etc., are not included in the New Testament and have been lost forever.



We know that the inspired writings of the first century were widely circulated among Christians of that time (see **Col. 4:16** and **1st Thess. 5:27**).



It is clear that those early Christians held the sacred writings in highest esteem and regarded them as the basis of their religious authority.



So how did the books that are in the New Testament get there?



Who decided that these should be included and others should be excluded?



Do we have all the books that we should have?



Within the first 50 years after the apostles there were several writers who made frequent appeal to the authority of what we now know as the New Testament books.

- ✓ Clement of Rome, in his Epistles to the Corinthians (A.D. 95) makes reference to **Matthew, Mark, Hebrews, Romans, 1st Timothy, Titus, 1st Peter** and **Ephesians**.
- ✓ Ignatius (A.D. 115) & Polycarp's (A.D. 130) letters refer to various New Testament books.
- ✓ Justin Martyr (A.D. 100-165) made extensive appeal to the **four Gospels** and mentions **Acts & Revelation**.



Writing in the period from A.D. 170 to A.D. 220...

- ✓ Clement of Alexandria, Irenaeus & Tertullian made many references to New Testament books.
For example: Irenaeus mentions Paul's epistles over 200 times.



Questions about the canon of Scripture were already settled long before the Council of Hippo (AD 393) and the Council of Carthage (AD 397) convened to discuss the matter.

- ✓ The "councils" only "confirmed"/ "affirmed" what was already known to be true.



How & why did the early church keep track of the inspired New Testament books/ letters...

1. Access to inspired books

- ➡ The early church was interested in collecting those books that were inspired and thus, prophetic. The works written by the apostles and prophets were considered valuable and worthy of preservation.

2. Guidelines for faith and practice

- ➡ The early church needed to know which books should be read in the churches as the Word of God and which books could be used to determine God's will for doctrine and living.

3. Heretical threats

- ➡ The early church needed to know exactly which books were canonical because certain heretics were coming up with their own canons.

BOO! Around A.D. 140, the heretic - Marcion

 Had his own "canon" where it only had...

! Part of Luke's Gospel &

! Ten of Paul's epistles

BOO! Montanists & Gnostic groups were also threats to the early church.

4. Persecutions

- ➡ Persecution motivated the church to sort through and settle on which books were really Scripture and which books were worth suffering for!



Phases of New Testament collection...

1st Phase (A.D. 50-95)

- ➡ Creation and Spread of the New Testament books
- ➡ In this period the various New Testament books were written & they also began to be copied and disseminated throughout the churches.
- ➡ In **Colossians 4:16** Paul encourages the churches to share his letters
- ➡ In **2nd Peter 3:16** we read of Paul's "letters," implying that they had begun to be collected together still in the first century.

2nd Phase (A.D. 96-150)

➡ Growing recognition & collection into groups of the New Testament books

➡ Within this period...

👍 All of the Gospels & all of Paul's letters were known & recognized in the churches.

👍 Some of the smaller letters took more time to be accepted as authoritative because of questions about authentic authorship. But as questions about authorship were answered, they, too, were universally accepted as Scripture

➡ By the middle of the 2nd Century every book of the New Testament was referred to, as authoritative (canonical).

➡ The writings of the early church fathers:

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------|
| ➤ Clement of Rome | |
| ➤ Ignatius | ➤ Tertullian |
| ➤ Polycarp | ➤ Origen |
| ➤ Papias | ➤ Eusebius |
| ➤ Justin Martyr | ➤ Jerome |
| ➤ Irenaeus | ➤ Augustine |

👍 Men who followed after the death of the apostles and led the early church, form a living bridge (witness) between the copied manuscripts and the original manuscripts.

👍 In the writings of Papias (about 115 A.D.), it is clear that there was already a set of books which were regularly being consulted concerning the teachings of Christ and the apostles.

➡ The early church fathers quoted repeatedly from the New Testament.

- Irenaeus (130-200 A.D.) quoted from the NT 1800 times in his writings.
- Tertullian (150-220 A.D.) quoted the NT 7200 times.

➡ Looking at all the writings of all the early church fathers...

👍 They collectively quoted from all but 11 verses of the New Testament that we have today!

👍 This means that we can trace the actual words of the New Testament to within a few years of the original manuscripts!

3rd Phase (A.D. 150-190)

- ➔ Compiling of the canon.
- ➔ Most books of the New Testament are clearly recognized as canon.
- ➔ Only a few need further scrutiny.

4th Phase (Third century A.D.)

- ➔ Formation of the canon continues
- ➔ Augustine (354-430 A.D.) believed that the New Testament canon came into existence in the time of the apostles:

"Distinguished from the books of later authors is the excellence of the canonical authority of the Old and New Testaments; which having been established in the time of the apostles, hath through the succession of overseers and propagators of churches been set as it were in a lofty tribunal, demanding the obedience of every faithful and pious understanding. (Contra Faustum Man. 11.5)

5th phase (Fourth century A.D.)

- ➔ Closing of the canon
 - Council of Hippo (A.D. 393) This was probably the first church council to lay down the limits of the canon of Scripture
 - Council of Carthage (A.D. 397) The findings of Hippo were reiterated at this council. CANON IS CLOSED



Criteria used by early church in discovering the New Testament Canon...

Inspiration

- ➔ As with the Old Testament, canonicity of New Testament writings was based on inspiration.
- ➔ Only those works that had been inspired by God were to be part of the canon.

Apostolic authority

- ➔ Every New Testament book has apostolic authority since they were written by apostles or close associates of the apostles or Jesus.
 1. **Matthew** - an apostle
 2. **Mark** - a close associate of the apostle Peter
 3. **Luke** - a close associate of Paul
 4. **John** - an apostle
 5. **Paul** - an apostle
 6. **Peter** - an apostle
 7. **James** - a half-brother to Jesus and leader of the church in Jerusalem.
 8. **Jude** - a half-brother to Jesus.

Apostolic era

- ➔ A writing must belong to the apostolic age.

Orthodoxy

- ➔ No works could be canon that contradicted the apostolic faith.

Universal Church Recognition

- ➔ A work which enjoyed only local recognition was not likely to be acknowledged as part of the canon of the catholic church.
- ➔ On the other hand, a work which was acknowledged by the greater part of the church would probably receive universal recognition sooner or later.



The title "New Testament" was apparently not used until near the end of the 2nd Century.



There is one very important point for us to remember...



We should never forget that God was guiding the process of preserving His Word.



Look at His promises about this:



Isaiah 40:8

"The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever."



Matthew 24:35

"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."



1st Peter 1:25

"But the word of the Lord endureth forever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you. "



So it is VERY important that we need to remember that...

- ➔ When the Council of Carthage (A.D. 397) listed the 27 books of the New Testament, it did not confer upon them any authority which the books did not already possess.
- ➔ All the counsel did was record their previously established canonicity.

In other words...



God, not the church decided the canon.



The Holy Spirit, controlled the writing of the individual books, and He also controlled their selection and collection, thus continuing to fulfill our Lord's promise that He would guide His disciples into all the truth.



It is clear that...



God was and is determined that His Word will not be destroyed.



Regardless of the actions that men may take, God's Word will stand.



We know that...



There were several attempts throughout history to obliterate God's Word.

For example:

- Diocletian, emperor of Rome, decreed in 305 A.D. that all Christian literature be destroyed throughout the world.
- His idea was that if the Scriptures could be destroyed, then the new faith would also vanish.
- He was probably right (remember that "faith cometh by hearing" the word of God - Romans 10:17).
- But God would not allow this to happen.



Think about it...



The most powerful and cruel of political forces could not remove God's Word.



When we pick up our New Testament and begin to read, we can be sure that we have the literal and infallible Word of God.

- Written by inspired men!
- Handed down by faithful Believers!
- Preserved by the mighty God!



It is the "engrafted word which is able to save your souls" **James 1:21**

Lessons in Systematic Theology

Theology

Definition of theology

: the word “theology” comes from two Greek words that combined mean “the study of God.” Christian theology is simply an attempt to understand God as He is revealed in the Bible.



WHAT IS GOD LIKE ?



Just like...



- The Bible doesn't attempt to prove the existence of God,
- The Bible also doesn't give a comprehensive definition of His person.



However...



We do have a significant description of God in the conversation between Moses and the Lord at the burning bush in the Sinai desert. ([Exodus 3:13-14](#))

- ➔ You might remember that Moses asked God what he should tell the children of Israel when they ask him who sent him on this mission. The Lord then instructs Moses to tell them that "I AM" had sent him.
- ➔ This description of God shows us that essentially a complete definition of God is fundamentally impossible.
- ➔ Just like a graven image of God cannot depict Him, so a definition of God cannot adequately explain/ define Him.



As God says in [Isaiah 55:8-9](#)...

⁸ For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways," declares the LORD. ⁹ "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways And My thoughts than your thoughts.



That being said...



God has made a true and adequate disclosure of Himself in His Word.



He has revealed Himself in such a way that we may truly know Him, even though we may not comprehend Him fully.



God's Essence



God is spirit .



John 4:24...

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

- ✓ God is a substance
- ✗ He is, however, not a material substance.
- ✓ God is a spiritual substance



If God is spirit, **He is then incorporeal.**



That means He has no physical body.



Jesus said in **Luke 24:39...**

"See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; touch Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have."



But what about the passages in the Bible that represent God as having bodily parts?



Hands (Isaiah 65:2 + Hebrews 1:10)



Feet (Genesis 3:8 + Psalm 8:6)



Eyes (1st Kings 8:29 + 2nd Chronicles 16:9)



Ears (Nehemiah 1:6 + Psalm 34:15)



Those are symbolic representations (Anthropomorphisms) which serve to...

- ✓ Make God more understandable to us &
- ✓ To express His various...
 - ➔ Interests
 - ➔ Activities &
 - ➔ Powers



God is invisible .



In **Colossians 1:15** Paul calls Him, "the invisible God".



John says in **John 1:18**, "No man has seen God at any time".



But what about the passages in the Bible that represent God as being visible?



In **Genesis 32:30** Jacob said...

"I have seen God face to face"



Deuteronomy 34:10 tells us the Lord knew Moses...

"face to face"



Jesus said in **John 14:9** that...

"He who has seen Me has seen the Father"



We know from the Scriptures that...



God's Spirit can be displayed in visible form.

(See: **John 1:32**)



God appeared in the form of the Angel of the Lord



The Angel of the Lord

- ◆ The Angel of the Lord...

- ✓ Speaks as God

- ✓ Identifies Himself with God, &

- ✓ Exercises the responsibilities of God

- 📖 (**Genesis 16:7-12; 21:17-18; 22:11-18; Exodus 3:2; Judges 2:1-4; 5:23; 6:11-24; 13:3-22; 2 Samuel 24:16; Zechariah 1:12; 3:1; 12:8**).

- ◆ In several of these appearances, those who saw the angel of the Lord feared for their lives because they had "seen the Lord."

- ◆ Therefore, it is clear that in at least some instances, the angel of the Lord is a **theophany**, an appearance of God in physical form.



One day when Believers have their glorified bodies they will see God in person.

(See: **1st Corinthians 15:42-53 + Revelation 22:3+4**)



God is living .

- ⚙️ At least 28 times in the Bible God is said to be “the living God.”
 - 📖 **Psalms 42:2** says, “My soul thirsts for God, for the living God”
 - 📖 **Matthew 16:16...**
“Simon Peter answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

- ⚙️ He is also the source & support of all life.

📖 **Colossians 1:16+17...**

¹⁶ For by Him all things were created, *both* in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him. ¹⁷ He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.



God is a person .



Personality exists where there is intelligence, mind, will, reason, individuality, self-consciousness, and self-determination.

- ⚙️ The Bible represents God as possessing the characteristics of:
 - ✓ Self-Consciousness - (Exodus 3:14 + 1st Corinthians 2:10)
 - ✓ Intellect - (Genesis 18:19 + Acts 15:18)
 - ✓ Volition - (Genesis 3:15 + John 6:38)

- ⚙️ The Bible describes God as possessing the attributes of personality:

- ✓ Speaking (Genesis 1:3)
- ✓ Seeing (Genesis 11:5)
- ✓ Hearing (Psalm 94:9)
- ✓ Grieving (Genesis 6:6)
- ✓ Being Angry (Deuteronomy 1:37)
- ✓ Being Jealous (Exodus 20:5)
- ✓ Being Compassionate (Psalm 111:4)

- ⚙️ The personality of God is also shown in the Bible by:

- ✓ His active interest & participation in all things in the universe.
(See Hebrews 1:3 + Colossians 1:15-17)
- ✓ His active interest & participation in the experience of mankind.
(See: Psalm 75:6-7 + Job 1:12 + Daniel 1:9 + Genesis 50:20 + John 3:16-17)
- ✓ His active interest & participation in the life of all His creatures.
(See: Matthew 6:26-30)

⚙️ The names given to God in the Bible also denote personality:

- ✓ Jehovah-Jireh: The Lord will provide (Genesis 22:13-14)
- ✓ Jehovah-Rapha: The Lord that heals (Exodus 15:26)
- ✓ Jehovah-Nissi: The Lord our Banner (Exodus 17:8-15)
- ✓ Jehovah-Shalom: The Lord our Peace (Judges 6:24)
- ✓ Jehovah-Ra-ah: The Lord my Shepherd (Psalm 23:1)
- ✓ Jehovah-Tsidkenu: The Lord our Righteousness (Jeremiah 23:6)
- ✓ Jehovah-Shammah: The Lord is Present (Ezekiel 48:35)



God is the immense, eternal, self-existing One.

📖 Acts 17:24-28

²⁴"The God who made the world & all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands; ²⁵ nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all people life & breath and all things; ²⁶ and He made from one *man* every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined *their* appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation, ²⁷ that they would seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him & find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; ^{28a} for in Him we live and move and exist"

⚙️ Like a circle...

- ✓ God has no beginning and no end!



Isaiah 40:28 says...

"Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth Does not become weary or tired. His understanding is inscrutable."

- ✓ God is not limited by time!

- He was, He is, and He will always be!



Psalms 90:2 says...

"Before the mountains were born Or You gave birth to the earth and the world, Even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God."

- ✓ God is not limited by space!

- Space is actually dependent on Him!

- He is above space!



1st Kings 8:27 says...

"But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain You, how much less this house which I have built!"

(See: Psalm 139:7-17)



God's Non-Moral Attributes



Omnipresence

- ⚙️ God is everywhere present in creation at the same time.
- ⚙️ Because God is spirit ([John 4:24](#)) and not constrained by a physical body...
 - ✓ He is unrestricted with respect to space.
 - ✓ No matter how far we may go in the universe, God will always be there! ([Psalms 139:7-10](#))



Omniscience

- ⚙️ God is all knowing. ([Isiah 46:9-10](#))
- ⚙️ Because He is all knowing, His wisdom & knowledge are infinite!
([Psalms 139:2-4](#) + [Psalm 147:5](#) + [1st John 3:20](#))
- ⚙️ He is aware of the very minute details of our lives.
([Matthew 6:8](#) + [Matthew 10:30](#))
- ⚙️ We cannot comprehend God's vast knowledge & understanding.
([Ecclesiastes 8:17](#))
- ⚙️ We can only stand in amazement of His matchless wisdom.
([Romans 11:33](#))



Omnipotence

- ⚙️ God is all-powerful and thus capable of doing whatever is consistent with His character ([Genesis 18:14](#)).
- ⚙️ There is nothing impossible with El Shaddai (God Almighty).



That being said, there are some things that God cannot do!

- 👎 He cannot sin.
- 👎 He thus cannot lie.
- 👎 He is immutable - He cannot change.
- 👎 He cannot be unfaithful.
- 👎 He cannot do something irrational
 - such as creating a rock bigger than He can lift.
- 👍 He is only capable of doing what is consistent with His own character.



God's Moral Attributes



Holy

- ⚙ Holiness is the attribute by which God wanted to be especially known by in the Old Testament (*Isaiah 40:25*).
- ⚙ The Lord is called "the Holy One" some thirty times in Isaiah alone!
- ⚙ In the New Testament, holiness is ascribed to God as well, as John declares in **1st John 1:5...**
"God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all."
(See also: John 17:11)

- ⚙ In **1st Peter 1:15-16** Believers are exhorted to be holy like our Lord is holy...
¹⁵ but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; ¹⁶ because it is written, "YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY."

- ⚙ We see in **Hebrews 12:9-11** that God actually disciplines His children so that they can become more Holy...
⁹ Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live? ¹⁰ For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, so that we may share His holiness. ¹¹ All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.



Some more important facts about God's Holiness:

- #1** There is a huge gulf between God and the sinner
(*Romans 3:23*)
- #2** Man can only approach God through Jesus Christ as it is He who has made access to God possible
(*Romans 5:1-2 + Ephesians 2:18 + Hebrews 10:19*)
- #3** We should approach God with reverence and awe
(*Hebrews 12:28*)



Righteous & Just



God is a moral being.



C. S. Lewis, in *Mere Christianity*, makes the case that, just as there exist observable laws of nature (gravity, entropy, etc.), there are also observable laws of morality. He writes, "First, that human beings, all over the earth, have this curious idea that they ought to behave in a certain way, and cannot really get rid of it. Secondly, that they do not in fact behave in that way. They know the Law of Nature; they break it. These two facts are the foundation of all clear thinking about ourselves and the universe we live in." Despite varied ideas about what constitutes right and wrong, there is a universal belief that right and wrong exist, and this is a reflection of the God who made us.

(Genesis 1:26 + Ecclesiastes 3:11)



The righteousness of God is revealed in...

- ✓ His just punishment of the wicked (Revelation 16:5-7)
- ✓ His forgiveness of sin (1st John 1:9)
- ✓ His rewarding of the faithful (Hebrews 6:10)



God's righteousness is an encouragement to the Believer in that the Believer knows that...

- ✓ God judges righteously (Acts 17:31)
- ✓ The Believer is secure in the righteousness of Christ
(John 17:24 + 1st Corinthians 1:30 + 2nd Corinthians 5:21)
- ✓ The righteous deeds of the Believer will not go unnoticed
(Hebrews 6:10 + Revelation 19:8)



Truth



God is truth.



God is the source of all truth.



God's knowledge, declarations & representations all eternally true.



Psalm 119:160 declares...

"The sum of Your word is truth, And every one of Your righteous ordinances is everlasting"



Jesus said in **John 14:6...**

"I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me."



John 1:14 says...

"the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth."



Love

- ⚙️ God is love (2nd Corinthians 13:11 + 1 John 4:8).
- ⚙️ It was in love that God sent His Son into the world (John 3:16).
- ⚙️ It was in love that Jesus died on the cross for sinners (Romans 5:8).
- ⚙️ It is in love that He still calls sinners to repentance to experience the grace of God and to be called the children of God (1st John 3:1).



Good

- ⚙️ God Himself is good.
- ⚙️ He is everything that God should be...
 - 👍 The ideal person
 - 👍 The sum total of all perfection.
 - 👎 There are no defects or contradictions in Him
 - 👎 Nothing can be added to His nature to make Him any better.
 - 👍 He is excellence to an infinite degree
 - 👍 He possesses every desirable quality
- ⚙️ Because God is Himself the highest & greatest good...
 - 👍 He is also the source & fountain of all other good.
 - 👍 He does good things.
 - 👍 He extends His goodness to others.
- ⚙️ Because God is good...
 - 👍 Every good thing we now enjoy or ever hope to enjoy flows from Him.
 - 👍 No good thing has ever existed or ever will exist that does not come from Him.

(See: Genesis 1:31 + Psalm 31:19 + Psalm 33:5 + Psalm 84:11
+ Psalm 106:1 + Psalm 135:3 + Psalm 145:9)



ARE THERE THREE GODS... ...or ONE GOD IN THREE PERSONS?



According to the Bible:

- There is only one true God.
- The Shema is: "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord"
(Deuteronomy 6:4)
- This is a strong declaration of the oneness & uniqueness of God.
- The Bible teaches a strict **monotheism**...

...and excludes every form of **dualism** & **polytheism**.

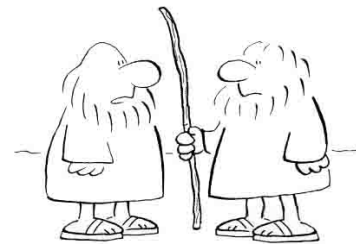
- The true God is not one among many or even the best among many.
 - ✓ He is absolutely unique.
 - ✓ The one & only God.



Monotheism teaches that...

- There is only one God.
- Monotheistic religions are...

- 👍 Christianity
- 👎 Judaism &
- 👎 Islam



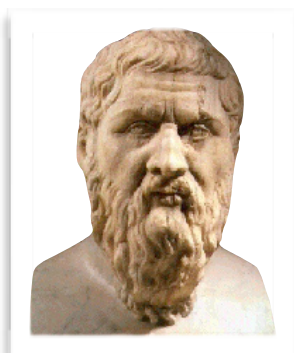
The trouble with monotheism
is that you can never get a
second opinion



Dualism teaches that...

- Two mutually hostile divine beings exist.

- 👍 One represents everything that is good
- 👎 The other representing everything that is evil.

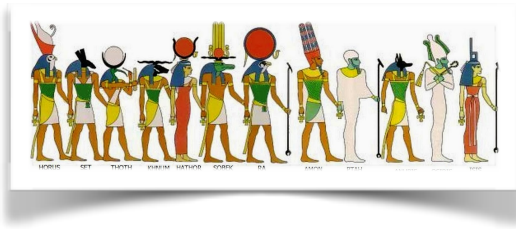


Plato was a dualist. He is widely considered the most pivotal figure in the development of philosophy. Along with his teacher, Socrates, and his most famous student, Aristotle, Plato laid the very foundations of Western philosophy and science.



Polytheism is the belief in and worship of many gods.

- ⇒ Most of the world's religions are overwhelmingly polytheistic.
- ⇒ Typically, these gods are distinguished by particular functions, and often take on human characteristics.
 - This was particularly true in ancient Greece & Rome.
- ⇒ In other polytheistic cultures such as ancient Egypt, gods take on



the form and characteristics of objects found in nature, including trees, sacred herbs, cattle, animals & animal-human hybrids.

- ⇒ Polytheism characterizes the beliefs of...
 - Hinduism → Taoism → Confucianism
 - Buddhism → Shintoism → Tribal religions in Africa & the Americas



In this lesson we are going to look at...

🔑 The **Trinity**...

- ✓ Three Persons
- ✓ Equal in majesty & power
- ✓ Undivided in splendor
- ✓ Yet also one Lord, one God.



To believe in the **Trinity** is to believe that...

- ✓ There is only one God
- ✓ Yet there are three distinct persons:
 - The Father
 - The Son &
 - The Holy Spirit
- ✓ All who possess eternally the same divine nature.



Although the word "**Trinity**" is not found in the Bible...

- ✓ There can be no question that both the Old & New Testament reveal that the Trinity exists as God who is three persons, but one essence.



Just because something is difficult for us to understand does not make it untrue. It is wrong to say that the **Trinity** does not exist simply because it is beyond our comprehension.

The **Trinity** in the Old Testament



God refers to Himself in the plural:



Genesis 1:26

"Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

- ➔ The Hebrew Word used for "God" here is "Elohim" which is in the plural form.
- ➔ See also [Genesis 3:22](#)



Isaiah 6:8

"Then I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?" Then I said, "Here am I. Send me!"



The Angel of the Lord...

- ✓ Is identified with the reincarnate Christ
- ✓ Distinct from God the Father
- ✓ His appearances in the Old Testament foreshadowed His coming in the flesh.
- ➔ See [Genesis 16:7-13](#) + [Exodus 3:2-6](#) + [Judges 13:2-22](#)



The Spirit is distinguished from God



Genesis 1:2

"The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters."

- ➔ See also: [Genesis 6:3](#) + [Psalms 51:11](#) + [Isaiah 40:13](#)



Personal pronouns use for the **Trinity**

- ➔ See: [Genesis 11:7](#)



The Lord is distinguished from the Lord

- ➔ See: [Genesis 19:24](#) + [Hosea 1:7](#)

i The Son is distinguished from the Father

 The Son speaking through the prophet Isaiah said in **Isaiah 48:16b**
"The Lord God has sent ME, and His Spirit"

➔ Jesus Christ did not become the eternal Son of God at the incarnation. He was the Son of God before He was given.

 **Micah 5:2**

"His goings forth are from long ago' from the days of eternity."

i The triple use...

- Of "Holy" in **Isaiah 6:3** may imply a **Trinity**
- See also the triple benediction of **Numbers 6:24-26**

The **Trinity** in the New Testament



Several New Testament passages imply or simply state that God is **Trinity**.

➔ See: **Matthew 3:13-17 + 28:19 + John 14:15-23 + Acts 2:32-33 + 2nd Corinthians 13:14 + Ephesians 1:1-14 + 3:16-19**

i The **Father** is God

 In **John 17:1-3** Jesus says that the Father is "the only true God"

 In **1st Corinthians 8:6** Paul says there is but one God, the Father.

 In **Galatians 4:6** the Father is distinguished from the Son & the Spirit.

 See also: **John 6:27 + Romans 1:7 + Galatians 1:1**

i The **Son** is God

➔ Jesus of Nazareth was more than an ordinary man. Here was a man who, though He ate, drank, slept, and became tired as ordinary mortals do, He also multiplied wine & food, gave sight to the blind, healed incurable diseases, stilled storms, cast out demons, and even raised people from the dead. Jesus was unlike any person who has ever lived.

➔ The reason is because Jesus is God!

➔ Jesus claimed to be God and His disciples were convinced of His claims, not merely because of what He taught and ascribed to Himself, but because of His miracle-working powers.



➡ The New Testament establishes the truth that Jesus is God...

- ⚙ Through direct statements
- ⚙ Through statements that imply His Deity
- ⚙ Through use of quotations from the Old Testament that refer to Him as Jehovah (Yahweh)/("I am that I am")

📖 In **Matthew 1:23** Jesus is called **Immanuel** = "God with us"

📖 In **John 1:1** Jesus is referred to as "**the Word**" and the verse goes on to state that Jesus was not only with God from all eternity, but also that He was God.

📖 In **John 14:9** Jesus claimed that whoever had seen Him had seen the Father.

📖 In **John 10:30** Jesus said that He and the Father were one.

📖 **John 8:58** "Jesus said to them, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am.'" (See also **Exodus 3:13-14**)

📖 In **Isaiah 44:6** Jehovah is described as the First & the Last, a title that, is given to Christ in **Revelation 1:17**.

🎯 Jesus said He was God, and that is what the disciples who wrote the New Testament proclaimed Him to be. Jesus was not just a great man or prophet that was sent from God. Nor was Jesus an angel. When we encounter this Man, we meet God. If we want to know who God is and what God does, we have to look at Jesus Christ.

i The Holy Spirit is God

➡ Attributes of Deity are affirmed of Him

📖 **Hebrews 9:14** - He is eternal

📖 **John 14:26** + **1st Corinthians 2:10-11** - He is omniscient

📖 **Luke 1:35** - He is omnipotent

📖 **Psalms 139:7-10** - He is omnipresent

➡ Works of Deity are affirmed of Him

📖 **Genesis 1:2** - Creation

📖 **John 3:5** - Regeneration

📖 **2nd Peter 1:21** - Inspiration of the Scriptures

📖 **Acts 8:11** - Raising of the dead

Lesson #7 ARE THERE 3 GODS OR ONE GOD IN THREE PERSONS?

➡ The way the Holy Spirit is associated with the Father & Son proves His Deity.



Matthew 28:19 - The Baptismal Formula



2nd Corinthians 13:14 - The Apostolic Benediction



1st Corinthians 12:4-6 - The Administration of the Church

➡ The Words & Works of the Holy Spirit are considered as the works of God.



Compare **Isaiah 6:9** with **John 12:39-41** & **Acts 28:25-27**

➡ The Holy Spirit is expressly called God



Acts 5:3 + **2nd Corinthians 3:17**



All these Scripture references prove that the Holy Spirit is God equally with the Father and the Son.



Although the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are equal, this does not exclude the arrangement by which the Father is first, the Son is second, and the Holy Spirit is third. This does not refer to a difference in glory, power or length of existence. This does refer to but rather of order. The Son and the Holy Spirit are equal with the Father, but are voluntarily subordinate to the Father. (See for example: [Philippians 2:5-7](#))

Lessons in Systematic Theology

Angelology

Definition of angelology

: the study of what the Bible says about angels, and how angels relate to humanity.



THE ORIGIN, NATURE, FALL... ...& CLASSIFICATION OF THE ANGELS



Their Origin...



Throughout the Scriptures one will find references to angels...



Both good & evil.



"Angel" means "messenger"



The Bible...



Does not definitively state the exact time...

...when God created the angels.



But it is most likely that angels were created before the creation of the heavens and the earth. (Genesis 1:1; Job 38:4-7)



How many angels did God create?



The Bible does not give us any definitive figures.

(Job 25:3; 2nd Kings 6:16-17; Hebrews 12:22; Matthew 26:53)



Their Nature...



Angels are created beings:



God created all the angels.

(Colossians 1:16; Nehemiah 9:6)



Angels are incorporeal (not composed of matter):

(Hebrews 1:7+14; Psalm 104:4)



Angels have revealed themselves in bodily form



But this does not mean that having material bodies as part of their necessary existence.

(Hebrews 31:2; Genesis 18+19; Luke 1:26; John 20:12)



Angels are not the spirits of the departed.



Angels are not glorified human beings.



Matthew 22:30 says that Believers will be like angels.



But Matthew 22:30 does not say that they will be angels.



Angels are a company:



Angels are not referred to as a race



Angels are referred to as hosts (Psalm 148:2)



Angels are referred to in the masculine gender.



But gender does not necessarily signify a given sex. (Luke 24:4)

-  Angels do not marry (Luke 20:34-36)
-  Angels are called the “sons of God” (Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7)
-  But you will never read anything in the Bible about the sons of angels.

Angels are knowledgeable...

-  But not omniscient (Matthew 24:36; 1st Peter 1:11-12)
-  Angels are considered to possess great wisdom
(2nd Samuel 14:20)

Angels are mighty...

-  But not omnipotent (Revelation 12:7; Daniel 10:13; Jude 9)
-  Angels are strong & powerful. (Psalm 103:20; 2nd Peter 2:11)

Angels are quick & mobile...

-  But not omnipresent (Daniel 10:10-14)
-  Angels walk & possibly fly about the earth
(Zechariah 1:11; 1st Peter 5:8; Hebrews 1:14)

Angels are divided into classifications:

YEAH! The Good Angels...

➔ *The Cherubim*



- Name means “to cover” or “to guard”
(Genesis 3:24; Exodus 25:19-20)
- Satan may have been one of the Cherubim before he fell. (Ezekiel 28:14-16)

➔ *The Seraphim*



- Are mentioned by name only in Isaiah 6:2+6
- They lead heaven in the worship of God.

➡ The Archangels



- ➡ This name occurs only twice in the Bible, but there are numerous references to the angel Michael, who is an archangel.
- ➡ They appear to have the responsibility of protecting Israel. (Daniel 10:13+21; 12:1)
- ➡ They were/ will be involved in...
 - Announcing the birth of Jesus (Luke 1:26-38)
 - Announcing Christ's return for His church (1st Thessalonians 4:16-18)

St. Michael Vanquishing Satan

A painting by the Italian High Renaissance painter Raphael

(With Michelangelo & Leonardo da Vinci, Raphael is one of the great masters).

⚙ The work of Good Angels...

1. They stand before God and worship Him
(Psalm 148:2; Matthew 18:10; Hebrews 1:6; Revelation 5:11)
2. They protect and deliver God's people
(Genesis 19:11; 1st Kings 19:5; Daniel 3:28; 6:22; Acts 5:19; 12:10)
3. They have guided & encouraged God's servants
(Matthew 28:5-7; Acts 8:26; 27:23)
4. They have interpreted God's will to men
(Job 33:3; Daniel 7:16; 10:5+11; Zechariah 1:9+19; Revelation 1:1)
5. They are executors of judgment towards individuals and nations. (Genesis 19:12-13; 2nd Samuel 24:16; Ezekiel 9; Acts 12:23; Revelation 16)
6. They will accompany the Lord's return in the air
(1st Thessalonians 4:16)
7. At the Second Coming, they will accompany Jesus.
(2nd Thessalonians 1:7; Jude 14)
8. They will gather elect Israel at Christ's return (Matthew 24:31)
9. After the tribulation and before the start of the millennial reign of Christ, the angels will be involved in separating the Believers from the non-Believers.
(Matthew 13:39+49)

The Bad Angels...

➡ Satan, also known as...

- The Slander = "Satan" (Revelation 12:9; Job 1:9)
- The Adversary (Zechariah 3:1; 1st Peter 5:8)
- The Devil (Matthew 13:39; John 8:44)
- The Wicked one (Matthew 13:19; 6:13; 1st John 5:19)
- The Tempter (Matthew 4:3; 1st Thessalonians 3:5)
- The Angel of light (2nd Corinthians 11:14)
- The Serpent/ Dragon (Genesis 3:14; Revelation 12:9; 20:2)
- The Roaring Lion (1st Peter 5:8)
- The Beelzebub (Matthew 10:25; 12:24-27; Mark 3:22; Luke 11:15-19)
- Belial (2nd Corinthians 6:15)
- Lucifer/Morning Star (Isaiah 14:12)
- The god of this world (2nd Corinthians 4:4)
- The prince of the power of the air (Ephesians 2:2)
- The ruler of this world (John 12:31; 14:30)

☞ Satan was once a holy angel, but through pride & sinful ambition to be above God, he fell and drew with him a host of other angels. (Isaiah 14:12-15)

☞ While Ezekiel 28:14-16 is speaking to the King of Tyre, this may have a secondary application to him, but it is clearly evident that the primary application is to the supreme of all of God's creatures - Lucifer.

➡ The angels kept in prison

☞ They sinned and God bound them with eternal chains and cast them into the pits of darkness where they will stay until the day of judgment. (Jude 6; 2nd Peter 2:4)

➡ The angels that are free (aka: demons)

☞ They serve under their leader Satan. (Matthew 25:4; Revelation 12:7-9)

☞ Their main activity seems to be that of supporting their leader Satan in his war against God, His angels, His people, and His cause. (Ephesians 6:12; Colossians 2:15)

The work of Bad Angels...

1. They try to separate the Believer from Christ, but will always fail to do so. (Romans 8:38-39)
2. They oppose the good angels in their work (Daniel 10:12)
3. They cooperate with Satan in carrying out his purposes and plans. (Matthew 25:41; Ephesians 6:12; Revelation 12:7-12)

4. They can cause physical and mental disorders
(Matthew 9:33; 12:22; Mark 5:1-16; Luke 9:37-42)
5. The spread false information (2nd Thessalonians 2:2; 1st Timothy 4:1)
6. They try to oppose the Believer's spiritual growth
(Ephesians 6:1)
7. They sometimes possess unbelievers and animals
(Matthew 4:24; Mark 5:8-14; Luke 8:2; Acts 8:7; 16:16)
8. They are sometimes used by God to carry out His purposes (Judges 9:23; 1st Kings 22:21-23; Psalms 78:49)



Their Fall...

There is every reason to believe that the angels were created perfect. In the creation account (Genesis 1), we are told seven times that all that God made was good. Surely this includes the perfection of the angels in holiness when they were originally created. If Ezekiel 28:15 refers to Satan, as many suggest, then Satan is definitely said to have been created perfect (like everything else).

Various Scriptures represent some of the angels as evil. This is because they sinned, having left their own principality and proper abode (2nd Peter 2:4; Jude 6). Satan no doubt was the leader in the apostasy. Ezekiel 28:15-17 and Isaiah 14:12-15 seem to describe his fall. There can be no question but that there was a definite fall for some of the angels.

The Scriptures do not tell us the exact time of the fall of the angels, but it is clear that it occurred before the fall of man, since Satan entered the garden in the form of a serpent and induced Eve to sin (Genesis 3). That being said, we cannot say definitely just how long before the incident in Eden the angels fell.

The fall of the angels was due to their deliberate, self-determined revolt against God.

Revelation 12:4 tells us that the Dragon(Satan)drew one third of the stars by his tail. This may have reference to one third of the angels falling with Satan.

Henry C. Thiessen
Lectures in Systematic Theology
pg. 135-137

The result of their fall...

1. All of the fallen angels lost their holiness and became corrupt in nature and conduct.
(Matthew 10:1; Ephesians 6:11; Revelation 12:9)
2. Some were cast down to hell (Tartarus) and are held in chains there until the day of judgment
(2nd Peter 2:4; Jude 6)
3. One day all the fallen angels will be cast into the lake of fire
(Matthew 25:41)
4. Satan will be thrown into the bottomless pit during the Millennial reign of Christ before he is cast into the lake of fire. (Revelation 20:1-3+10)



How are we to respond to all of this?



Know Your Enemy !

A devotional challenge by Michael Blackwell:

#1 Know we are in a War

Many people think the world is a playground instead of a battle ground.

1st Peter 5:8 warns us... *Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.*^{NASB}

I was reading a magazine article about an experience a Kruger National Park Game Ranger had while he was flying his helicopter on a survey mission. As he was flying over the park and nearing a watering hole he saw something that looked rather unusual: He saw a domestic donkey walking down a trail towards the water hole. Evidently this donkey must have somehow gotten into the park where there was a hole in the fence. Anyway the Game Ranger circled around once to check the donkey out and when he did he saw a **lion crouched in the grass about 20 meters from the donkey**. Anticipating what was going to happen next, the Game Ranger flew over to one side and hovered so that he could watch the lion take this donkey down. Well, the lion leaped out of the grass and charged down the trail towards the donkey. The donkey must have heard the lion coming and spun around to see what was coming. Well this move of the donkey totally surprised the lion as this was not the normal way a hunt plays out. Normally, when the lion charges, everything in the animal kingdom tries to runaway, but this donkey turned and faced lion. This so unnerved the lion that he stopped his charge and jumped back into the long grass. The donkey then turned around and trundled along the trail towards the watering hole. Well, the lion saw this as his second chance and he jumped back

out onto the trail and charged the donkey again, and again the donkey spun around to see what was coming, and again this unnerved the lion and he stopped his charge and jumped back into the long grass on the side of the trail. Well the donkey evidently was quickly losing interest in this game and continued towards the watering hole. The lion charged a third time, and this time the donkey being bored with this game didn't turn around. **WHAT do you think happened this time?**

The lion was rewarded with easy meal.

Just like the donkey didn't realize that he was walking in a very hazardous place & that lions are extremely dangerous, many Believers don't realize that they are living in a literal **spiritual war zone**, where Satan has committed himself **to attack us**.

So the donkey didn't know that the lion was his enemy ! If we don't know who are enemy is then we won't recognize him when he attacks either !

#2 Who is the enemy?

Ephesians 6:11-12 tells us...

¹¹ Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. ¹² For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.



The enemy is the devil



The war according to **Ephesians 6:12 is between God & Satan.**

Let's read some more about this in...

Isaiah 14:12-14...

¹² How you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning, son of the dawn! You have been cut down to the earth, You who have weakened the nations! ¹³ "But you said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God, And I will sit on the mount of assembly In the recesses of the north. ¹⁴ 'I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.'

Satan decided he wanted to be exalted higher than God. Satan wanted to be in control and have everything worship him, including God ! So God tossed Satan out heaven along with the angels that followed Satan. And now Satan is trying to get men to support him, to join his team, by not worshipping or following or obeying God, but instead living for themselves.

1st John 2:16...

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

According to John who is our enemy?

- ☢ The World
- ☢ The Flesh
- ☢ The Devil

#3 Know how our enemy attacks

This reminds me of a true story about [General Patton](#), the commanding officer of the United States 3rd Army. The 3rd Army experienced a great many battles in Northern Africa where they faced the famous German Tank Commander: [General Rommel](#).

[General Rommel](#) was considered the foremost expert in tank warfare. He was so good that before the war he had actually published a book about Tank Warfare Strategy. During the war the German Tank division easily swept across Northern Africa wiping out any opposition in their path. But then they

encountered the United States of America's 3rd Army under the command of [General Patton](#). To the surprise of the Germans the 3rd Army fought intelligently and always seem to know what the German's next move on the battlefield was going to be. It was long before [Patton's](#) 3rd Army was forcing the Germans to retreat and the US regained the territory once taken by the Germans.



HOW do you think General Patton won?

During one Battle a reporter accompanying [General Patton](#) saw [Patton](#) climb a sand dune so he could watch the German tanks flee, and he held up his fist and yelled, "[Rommel](#), I read your book, I read your book!"

The devil is no dummy !

Satan has been at the business of deceiving men and women for at least 6000 years, and he knows exactly how to approach every individual. The devil doesn't come to us and said...

"Good morning. I am the devil, and I want you to get into something that is going to cause you a lot of misery, and which will dishonor your Savior. So if you would please just listen to me and obey me, and do all these wrong things, I will be able to accomplish this."

So we need to be just like good ole **General Patton** and learn about the strategies of our enemy. Our text book for this is the Bible.

👎 We cannot afford to be lax, or casual with our spiritual lives.

👍 We need to be cautious, confident, and do our homework !

James 1:13-15

¹³ Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. ¹⁴ But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. ¹⁵ Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death.

According to James, what are the steps a person goes through when they sin?

1. **Lust**

2. **Sin**

3. **Death**

#4 Know how to defend against our enemy

There are two key thoughts that we need to keep in mind!

First Thought:

👎 Satan and his demons are not the target in our warfare!

👍 Our target, our goal is:

- ✓ To glorify God
- ✓ By obeying His Word
- ✓ And making disciples

2nd Corinthians 5:9

Therefore we also have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him.

Matthew 28:19

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations

- 🎯 That's what we focus on.
- 🎯 That's what we aim for.
- 🎯 That's what we pray for.
- 🎯 That's what we strive for.



We are not like **MARINES**...

...that storm a beachhead to take it from the enemy.

Yep!

We are like the **Coast Guard**...

...sent out to help rescue people.

Second Thought:

-  We are not fighting for victory
-  We are fighting from victory.

Yes! God delivered the decisive blow to Satan at the cross & the resurrection.

Yes! God paid the penalty for man's sins, so that those who confessed their sinfulness and placed their faith in Jesus to save them could have fellowship with God again.

 Now the devil may be defeated but that does not mean he is not dangerous. He still has power, and is seeking prey, like a lion.

 So we are to "**be of sober spirit**" which means to be "**serious-minded**".

 We're to be alert/ aware...

- Of his methods
- Of his traps that can make us stumble.



How to defend against these attacks:



1st Timothy 6:11+2nd Timothy 2:22...

Tells us to flee the temptations of the world system (1st John 2:15-17).



Romans 8:12

Tells us to deny the flesh.



1st Peter 5:8-9

Tells us we are to resist the devil by living our lives in submission to God's Word, and as we do that **James 4:7** says the devil will actually flee from you.



You don't need to fear Satan.

- Satan is a creature that is subject to God's control.
- He cannot be at all places at all times
- He does not know all things, nor can he do all things.
- His power is limited and his activities are supervised by God.
- He can go no further than God allows him to go.
- Satan is defeated and waiting to be thrown in hell forever.



In the mean time let's not worry ourselves with Satan and his cronies.



Instead lets focus on:



What God wants Believers to be doing with our lives !



Lets focus on:

-  Glorifying God
-  By becoming more like Christ
-  By making disciples



Now if you are **NOT** a Believer...



Then you've never admitted your sinfulness to God

Then you've never placed your faith...

...in Jesus Christ alone for your salvation.



So you my friend do have cause to be concerned.



Satan wants to take as many souls as he can with him to hell, and if you are **NOT** a Believer then you are guaranteed defeat.



When you die...



You will spend eternity separated from God in hell !



One must accept Jesus Christ as their Savior...



In order to be under God's protection.



To me the choice is rather simple !



Considering our souls live forever:



Do you want to spend eternity with God in heaven
enjoying absolute joy by being in his presence?

Or



Do you want to reject God's offer of the gift of salvation
and spend eternity separated from God in hell where
there is eternal pain, suffering and gnashing of teeth?



If you would like to accept Jesus Christ as your Savior all you have to do is confess/ agree to God that you are a sinner and believe in your heart that Jesus Christ died on the cross for your sins, and rose again, and ask Him by faith to save you and He will.



It's that simple !

Lessons in Systematic Theology

Anthropology

Definition of anthropology

: the study of man from God's perspective. When we delve into this subject, we get a clearer understanding of our fallen nature



THE CREATION, NATURE & FALL OF MANKIND

Mankind created in God's image & likeness

 **Genesis 1:26-27** introduces mankind as a created being in the image & likeness of God. This means that man has the qualities of personality, which are...

- ➔ Intellect
- ➔ Emotion &
- ➔ Will (the ability to make moral choices).

 These qualities...

 Do not exist in any creature other than man.

 These qualities...

 Make it possible for mankind to have communion with God.

 These qualities...

 Make it so that mankind is morally responsible for his actions.

 The Bible further defines man as composed of...

- ➔ Material (body)
- ➔ Immaterial (soul & spirit)

 **Genesis 2:7** says...

"The Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being".

 The immaterial part of man is considered in two major aspects:

- ➔ Soul &
- ➔ Spirit

 Several hundred times in both the Old & New Testaments man is declared to possess a soul.

 When man was created, according to **Genesis 2:7**, he "became a living being," literally, man became "a living soul".

 In **Hebrews 4:12** the Word of God is said to penetrate human consciousness to the point that "it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit."

 In general, the word "soul" seems to refer to the psychological aspect of man or his natural experience of life.



The Bible also claims that human beings possess a spirit.



The word "spirit" seems to refer to...

- ➔ Mankind's God-consciousness &
- ➔ Mankind's ability to function in moral & spiritual realms.



In the Bible these terms "body" or "soul" or "spirit." are sometimes used to refer to the whole man.



For example:



In Romans 12:1 Believers are exhorted to offer their bodies as living sacrifices to God.

- ➔ In referring to a Believer's body Paul is referring to the whole person.
- ➔ Likewise, "soul" sometimes refers to the whole person,
- ➔ Sometimes "spirit" refers to the whole person.



Other immaterial aspects of man are also mentioned in the Bible...



Mind



Will



Conscience



And other references to aspects of human personality.



While the body of a Believer is considered sinful, it, nevertheless, is referred to in Scripture as the "temple of the Holy Spirit" (1st Corinthians 6:19).



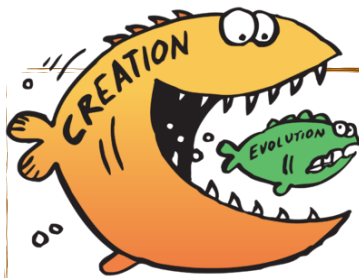
The bodies of Believers should be kept under control and made to submit to the human mind (1st Corinthians 9:27).



Though man in his present humanity is sinful and comes short of what God would have him to be and do, Believers can look forward to the time when their bodies will be made perfect in the presence of God.



The bodies of Believers, are going to be transformed, and made new like the resurrection body of Christ, at the time of resurrection or rapture (Romans 8:11, 17-18, 23; 1st Corinthians 6:13-20; Philippians 3:20-21).



The origin of man has long been the subject of human speculation. But in spite of all that has been done scientifically and otherwise, no one has ever come up with a better explanation than creation for the origin of man.

In recent centuries the theory of evolution has arisen, which attempts to explain all species of life, whether plant or animal, as a product of a gradual improvement that develops over many millions of years. The problem with evolution, however, is that it is a theory that has yet to be proved. With all the advantages of modern science, it has never been possible to change one species into another; a dog never becomes a cat; a plant never becomes a fish; and a tree never becomes a cow. In other words, a tree remains a tree though it may vary in its structure and leaf design and new kinds of trees can be formed, but the fact is that we have never been able by any scientific process to change one species into another.

Evolution has no solution for the origin of life. Science never has been able to produce life out of that which was not life. The Bible remains the simple and effective and clear explanation of how man was created. Further, in the creation of man he was made in the image and likeness of God ([Genesis 1:27](#)). No development in evolution could ever take an animal and produce in it that which corresponds to the image of God.

The revelation that man is the object of God's creation is not simply taught in one passage but in many. In the first chapter of Genesis alone the fact of man's creation is stated repeatedly. In the sweeping statement of [John 1:2-3](#), Jesus Christ as the Word was "with God in the beginning. Through Him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made." Colossians 1:16 is even more explicit, "For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him."

According to [Hebrews 11:3](#), all things, not simply human beings, were made by God: "By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible." If one accepts the Bible as the Word of God in other matters, one must necessarily accept the Bible when it indicates that God is the Creator and originator of all that has been created. It is significant that even unbelievers who scoff at the second coming of Christ have to conclude, "Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation" ([2nd Peter 3:4](#)), in other words, they must begin with creation. There is no alternative explanation to the doctrine of creation that satisfies the questions that are raised by the nature of our universe and the nature of man.

- by Dr. Walvoort

The Problem of Sin

 When we look at the world as we know it...

➔ It has never been totally free from:

 Wars, disease, crimes, violence, & death !

 On a personal level...

➔ No one can claim to be totally free from:

 Pride, envy, lust, deceit, greed, or hate !



If mankind was created...

 In God's image &

 Placed in a perfect environment (the Garden of Eden)



Then how did such a radical & terrible transformation come about?



If God created a world that He said was very good ([Genesis 1:31](#))...

 How could sin develop?

 Why would God allow for sin to develop?

 Is God the ultimately the author of sin?



The Bible makes it clear...

➔ God is the author of salvation, to all who obey Him - [Hebrews 5:9](#)

➔ God is by nature "holy" - [Isaiah 6:3](#)

➔ God hates sin - [Psalm 5:4 + 11:5](#)

➔ There is no unrighteousness in God - [Deuteronomy 32:4](#)

➔ God cannot do wickedness or commit iniquity - [Job 34:10](#)

➔ God cannot be tempted by evil &

➔ God does not tempt anyone - [James 1:13](#)



God could have prevented sin...

➔ By creating a universe of robots that would do only what they were programmed to do.

➔ But God's in His love, created angels and mankind with the freedom of choice, so that they could respond freely to His love.

➔ This of course meant that there would also be the possibility that some could choose to turn away from Him.



Lucifer...

- ➡ Was one of the highest ranked of God's angels.
- ➡ He was the first to choose to disobey God.
- ➡ Sin was thus introduced to the creation.



Lucifer...

- ➡ Became defiantly proud ([Ezekiel 28:17](#) + [1st Timothy 3:6](#)).
- ➡ He became dissatisfied with his exalted position, and he began to covet God's own place of authority ([Isaiah 14:12-14](#)).
- ➡ He managed to gain the allegiance of a third of the angels in heaven and they attempted to take control of the universe.
- ➡ The result was that God expelled Lucifer and his angels from heaven.
- ➡ He is now known as "the adversary" / "Satan".



Now, when God created Adam & Eve...

- ➡ He placed them in the Garden of Eden
- ➡ He only imposed one restriction on them:



The tree in the middle of the garden, "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil", was off limits.



To eat of this tree would be an act of deliberate disobedience and would result in estrangement from God as well as death ([Genesis 2:16-17](#)).



Seeing that Satan...

- ➡ Could not overthrow God
- ➡ Satan then determined to hurt God's creation
- ➡ Satan enticed mankind to choose to rebel against God.



Satan...

- ➡ In the guise of a serpent
- ➡ Approached Eve when she was near the "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil" and questioned her about God's prohibition against eating the fruit from the tree ([Genesis 3:1-2](#)).
- ➡ When Eve replied that God had told them that they must not eat of the tree or else they would die, Satan lied and said that she would not die as God had said.
- ➡ Satan then suggested that God was trying to keep her from being like God ([Genesis 3:4-5](#)).



Eve...

- ➡ Yielded to the temptation, and she took of the fruit and ate it !



Eve...

- Then took the fruit to Adam and he, not being deceived, but knowing exactly what he was doing, took the fruit and ate it as well.



The devastating consequences of Adam's decision...

- Was extended to the entire human race because Adam was the head, or beginner, of humanity.
- All of mankind is now born with a sinful nature. (Romans 5:12)



The philosophic world...



Has no solution for the problem of evil



The Bible...

- Not only accounts for the origin of sin
- But also provides a divine solution in the promise of Genesis 3:15 that tells us that the woman would have an offspring who would crush the head of the serpent.
- God provided in Christ the One who would make it possible for people to be saved (Romans 5:18-19).
- When Christ died on the cross, He died in our place as a Lamb of sacrifice because He was bearing the sins of the whole world (John 1:29).
- As stated in 2nd Corinthians 5:21, "God made him [Christ] who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."
- The fact that Christ has died and paid the price of man's sin makes it possible now for God to reckon, or impute, righteousness to those who believe in Christ.



The Effect of the Fall on the Human Race

- 🗨️ Mankind is born dead spiritually.
- 🗨️ Physical aging will lead to physical death. (Romans 6:23)
- 🗨️ The earth is now cursed and it is difficult to produce food.
- 🗨️ Woman now experience pain in childbearing (Genesis 3:16).
- 🗨️ God cursed the serpent for tempting Eve (Genesis 3:14-15).
- 🗨️ Man's reason is now darkened (Romans 1:21)

The History of Man

-  Though Adam & Eve's offspring drifted farther and farther from God...
 - ! Until God decided to destroy the whole human race...
 -  Except Noah and his family ([Genesis 6:13](#)).

-  Following the flood...
 -  God gave to Noah the basic principles of human government.
 -  However, the human race again demonstrated its depravity by building the Tower of Babel.
 - ! God had to judge by confusing the languages of the people.

-  With almost the entire world departing from God and sinning flagrantly...
 -  God chose Abram to fulfill His purpose in redemption.
 -  To Abram was promised that he would be able to bring blessing to the entire world ([Genesis 12:1-3](#)).
 -  This was ultimately fulfilled in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

-  Throughout the Old Testament...
 -  The descendants of Abram were used as channels of divine revelation.
 -  Prophets spoke orally to the people, and some of them wrote the Scriptures, including the opening books of the Bible written by Moses.
 -  In spite of increased knowledge of God and His moral standards, the human race became evil, and Israel, the immediate divine recipient of God's blessing, was also judged sinful and had to be dealt with in the captivities.

-  In the New Testament...
 -  Jesus' birth with His subsequent life on earth, His rejection by His generation, His crucifixion and death for the sins of the whole world, and His glorious resurrection, a new chapter in the history of man began.
 -  But, just as was true in the Old Testament, the human race, for the most part, rejected God and went on its wicked way.



In the present age...

-  God is calling out from both Jew and Gentile those who will believe in Christ and be saved.
-  He is not attempting to judge the sins of the world, though sometimes there is divine judgment upon sin.
-  Even with all the advanced revelation given in the writing of the New Testament and the presentation of Jesus Christ to the world, the moral history of the world has become more and more a record of departure from God.



The Day of the Lord is coming next...

-  An age in which God will deal directly with human sin in the time of trouble preceding the second coming of Christ.
-  A time that continues throughout the millennial kingdom when His rule will be one of absolute authority.
-  The millennial kingdom in many ways is a bright spot in the future history of the world.
-  But even in the millennial kingdom there is rebellion at the end when, in spite of all the divine revelation given to them in the Millennium, people will rebel against Christ and attempt to conquer Jerusalem by force.



In the sad destiny of the human race...

-  There will be division of those who are saved and those who are lost
-  With the saved being in the presence of the Lord forever in the new heaven and the new earth and the new Jerusalem.
-  And the lost ultimately being cast into the lake of fire ([Revelation 20:15](#)).



From God's viewpoint...

-  Out of the dark history of the human race will come those among angels and men...
 -  Those who chose to worship God.
 -  They will share in the joy of eternity in the presence of God in the new Jerusalem.



Questions:

1. How do the Scriptures represent the creation of man?
2. What is the claim of the theory of evolution?
3. Why is evolution rejected by those who believe the Word of God?
4. What solution does evolution have for the origin of life?
5. How does evolution fail to explain how man is created in the image of God?
6. How was Jesus Christ related to creation?
7. From what was the universe formed at God's command?
8. Define how man is divided into material and immaterial?
9. To what is "soul" referred to in man?
10. What does "spirit" refer to in man?
11. How are "soul" and "spirit" contrasted to "body"?
12. Why are these three terms sometimes used to represent the whole of man?
13. What immaterial aspects of man are mentioned in the Bible other than soul & spirit?
14. What is the contrast between the present sinful state of a person's body and his future body?
15. How has humankind attempted to solve the problem of sin in the world?
16. How does the Bible explain the entrance of sin into the human race?
17. In contrast to the world of philosophy, what does the Bible offer as a solution for the sin problem?
18. How is physical death related to sin?
19. What curses did God pronounce upon Satan, woman, and man after Adam and Eve sinned?
20. How does the sin of Adam relate to us today?
21. How does God solve the sin problem for people today?
22. What is meant by imputation? And how is it used in the Bible?
23. What does it mean to be justified by faith?
24. How does history demonstrate that conscience is not enough to keep people from doing what is wrong?
25. What did God do in the time of Noah?
26. What principles of government were introduced after the flood?
27. What did the descendants of Noah demonstrate regarding sin at the Tower of Babel?
28. What did God promise Abram?
29. To what extent were the promises to Abram fulfilled?
30. How did the world as a whole react to the coming of Christ, His death, and His resurrection?
31. What is God's primary purpose in the present age?
32. Does the Bible predict that evil will get worse or that sin will be gradually overcome?
33. What age follows the present age of grace? And what does it include?

Lessons in Systematic Theology

Soteriology

Definition of soteriology

: the study of the doctrine of salvation. Soteriology discusses how Christ's death secures the salvation of those who believe. It helps us to understand the doctrines of redemption, justification, sanctification, propitiation, and the substitutionary atonement.



WHO IS JESUS CHRIST & WHY DID HE COME?



Unlike the question “**Does God exist?**” very few people question whether Jesus Christ existed.

→ It is generally accepted that...



Jesus was truly a man



Who walked on the earth in Israel 2000 years ago.



Jesus was...

→ Born into a poor family in the obscure Middle Eastern village of Bethlehem.

→ Jesus grew up without any material or social advantages.



His ministry...

→ Which He started officially at the age of 30, was outside of any prominent center of civilization and it was confined to an area of a few hundred square kilometers.

→ At the age of 33 He was crucified on a Roman cross.



When one compares the life of Jesus to those of the famous philosophers, brave warriors and powerful conquerors of history, His life seems to pale in comparison.



Yet, since his death burial & resurrection some 2000 years ago...

→ Millions have died as martyrs to His cause !

→ Millions have gladly renounced the comfort of their homes, families, riches, and friends to take His message of the Good News to every corner of the earth.



Never before has there been such a polarizing person in history.

→ Jesus and His teachings are loved & hated.



Almost every major **cult** & **religion** teaches that Jesus was...

→ A prophet or

→ A good teacher or

→ A holy man



Christian Science teaches that Jesus is...



A man in tune with the Divine Consciousness, not the Christ.



Islam teaches that Jesus is...



Created being. A prophet. Not God.



Jehovah's Witnesses teaches that Jesus is...



Created being. Michael the archangel who became a man



Mormons teach that Jesus is...



Created being. The brother of the devil and of all people



Hindus teach that Jesus is...



The perfect example of "self-realization" (the goal of Hindu "dharma"). Many Hindus see Jesus as a symbol of what humans can attain, rather than a true historical person.



Buddhism teach that Jesus is...



A wise teacher, a "holy man", but He is not seen as divine.



The New Age Movement teaches that Jesus is...



A man who completed a process of "spiritual evolution" over successive generations of reincarnation, becoming an enlightened master.



Judaism teaches that Jesus was...



A rabbi and popular teacher (although they deny He is the Messiah).



The problem with all these cults & religions is that...

TRUTH

The **Bible** tells us...



Jesus was **infinitely more** than...

→ A prophet

→ A good teacher, or

→ A holy man

TRUTH

The **Bible**...



Portrays Jesus as the Messiah

TRUTH

The **Bible**...



Equates Jesus with God Himself.



For example:

-  Jesus Himself claims to be God in **John 10:30** where He said...
"I and the Father are one."
-  Jesus also announced His deity when He said in **John 8:58...**
"I tell you the truth...before Abraham was born, I am!"
-  God the Father said in **Hebrews 1:8...**
"But of the Son *He* says, "YOUR THRONE, O GOD, IS FOREVER AND EVER, AND THE RIGHTEOUS SCEPTER IS THE SCEPTER OF HIS KINGDOM."
-  John tells us in **John 1:1** "the Word was God" and then in **John 1:14** he tells us that "the Word became flesh" clearly indicating that Jesus is God in the flesh.
-  Paul says in **Philippians 2:5-8** that Jesus existed in the "form of God" prior to His incarnation.
-  The Old Testament prophecy of **Isaiah 9:6** announces Christ's deity, where it says...
"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace"



What do the following passages say about Jesus Christ?

-  Matthew 14:31-33 = God's Son
-  Luke 2:11 = Savior, Christ the Lord
-  John 14:9-11 = Jesus is God in the flesh
-  John 17:5+24 = Jesus has the glory of God
-  2nd Corinthians 5:10 = Jesus will judge the world
-  1st Timothy 6:13-15 = Jesus is the King of Kings
-  Hebrews 13:8 = Jesus is immutable & eternal
-  Titus 2:13 = Jesus is God
-  Revelation 1:17-18 = Jesus has always existed. He is eternal
-  Revelation 2:8+22:12-13 = Jesus is eternal



So...

-  Why is the question over Jesus' true identity so important?
-  Why does it matter whether or not Jesus is God?



It matters because...



A perfect sacrifice was needed...



To pay the debt of our sin



To take on the penalty for our sin.



Considering all mankind are born as sinners...



No man could qualify to be the spotless sacrifice for our sins.



God had to send Jesus Christ...



The perfect & sinless God/Man



To be that perfect sacrifice



To pay for our sins.

-IN OTHER-
WORDS



If Jesus was not God...



If Jesus was just a man like everyone else...



Then His death would not have been sufficient to pay the penalty for the sins of the whole world.

Therefore ...



Salvation is available only through faith in Jesus Christ !



Take away from Christianity the Name & the Person of Jesus Christ and you are left with nothing! The whole substance & strength of the Christian faith centers in Jesus Christ. Without Him there is absolutely nothing!



Romans 5:8 tells us ...

"But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."



John 14:6...

"I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me".



Romans 5:1 tells us...

"Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ"



1st John 2:2 says...

"and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for *those of the whole world.*"



2nd Corinthians 5:21 says...

"He made Him who knew no sin *to be sin on our behalf*, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."

? So Why Did Jesus Come?



To give His life as ransom for many !



Romans 6:23



1st Corinthians 15:3



To be an example to all who Believe !



John 16:33



Philippians 4:13



1st Corinthians 10:13



The Pre-incarnate Christ...

- Before Jesus birth at Bethlehem some 2000 years ago.
- He already existed in eternity past.



John 1:3+10



1st Corinthians 8:6



Hebrews 1:2



FOR THE PRE-INCARNATE CHRIST...

↪ BASED ON THE NAMES OF JESUS CHRIST...



Son of God: (Luke 1:35; John 1:49)

Jesus is the "only begotten of the Father" (John 1:14). Used 42 times in the New Testament, "Son of God" affirms the deity of Christ.



Alpha and Omega: (Revelation 1:8; 22:13)

Jesus declared Himself to be the beginning and end of all things, a reference to no one but the true God. This statement of eternality could apply only to God.



I Am: (John 8:58, with Exodus 3:14)

When Jesus ascribed to Himself this title, the Jews tried to stone Him for blasphemy. They understood that He was declaring Himself to be the eternal God, the unchanging Yahweh of the Old Testament.



Firstborn over all creation: (Colossians 1:15)

Not the first thing God created, as some incorrectly claim, because verse 16 says all things were created through and for Christ. Rather, Christ occupies the most exalted rank in the universe. He is pre-eminent above all others; He is at the head of all things.



The Incarnate Christ...

The idea of a "god" involving himself in the affairs of men by coming to the earth is not a novel one.



In the Greek culture of New Testament times there were numerous instances in which the "gods" were said to have manifested themselves in human flesh.

- ➡ In our own times there are numerous examples of fictional "super-beings" who have intervened in human history.
- ➡ Characters like "Superman", "Spiderman", "Captain America" are so popular today.
- ➡ These fictional "super-heroes" of our time are vastly different from the factual person of Christ...
 - ✓ Who is literally God incarnate &
 - ✓ Who came to literally save all of mankind from their sin.



When we consider the incarnate Christ we need to look back to the beginning, to Genesis.

- ➡ After sin entered the world, God instituted animal sacrifices ([Genesis 3:15, 21 + 4:3-5](#)) to illustrate the need for a Savior to come to pay for our sin.
- ➡ In Old Testament times, to show that the penalty for sin was death and that there could be no forgiveness for sin without the shedding of blood ([Hebrews 9:22](#)) a repentant sinner would have to bring a spotless lamb and sacrifice it on the altar for their sins. This act symbolized the need for Savior.
- ➡ God promised that the Savior would come through Abraham's family lineage ([Genesis 22:18](#)).
- ➡ The prophet Isaiah said the Savior would come as a male child, and would be both human and divine ([Isaiah 9:6](#)).



In [Luke 1:30-35](#) we see the promised Messiah finally comes...

³⁰ The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God. ³¹ And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus. ³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; ³³ and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end." ³⁴ Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" ³⁵ The angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God."

 **Galatians 4:4-5** goes on and tells us that...

⁴ when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, ⁵ so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons



Philippians 2:6-8 explains to us how and why Jesus became a man...

⁶ who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. ⁸ Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

➡ In becoming a man with a physical body Jesus “emptied Himself” by setting His glory and Divine abilities to the side in submission to the will of the Father. (See also: **1st Timothy 3:16** + **Hebrews 2:14+10:5** + **Romans 1:3**)

-IN OTHER- WORDS

➡ When Jesus became a man He did not exercise His ability as Deity so that He could identify with mankind.



For example:

➡ Jesus voluntarily did not use His Divine omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience.



That means that as a man...

Yep!

Jesus experienced all the things as we experience them.

- ✓ He grew weary (**John 4:6-8**) like we get weary.
- ✓ He had to grow in wisdom & knowledge (**Luke 2:52**) just like we do.



All that being said we must understand that Jesus did not surrender His Deity when He became a physical man (**Colossians 2:9**).



The Scriptures tell us that Jesus came as the...



Lamb of God: (**John 1:29**)

God's Law called for the sacrifice of a spotless, unblemished Lamb as an atonement for sin. Jesus became that perfect Lamb to take away the sins of the world (**John 1:29**). And through the shedding of His blood on the cross His death paid the penalty for all of mankind's sin.



Son of man: (John 5:27)

Used as a contrast to “Son of God” this phrase affirms the humanity of Christ which exists alongside His divinity.



Emmanuel: (Isaiah 9:6; Matthew 1:23)

Literally “God with us.” Both Isaiah and Matthew affirm that the Christ who would be born in Bethlehem would be God Himself who came to earth in the form of a man to live among His people.



Savior: (Matthew 1:21; Luke 2:11)

He saves people by dying to redeem them, by giving the Holy Spirit to renew them by His power, by enabling them to overcome their spiritual enemies, by sustaining them in trials and in death, and by raising them up at the last day.



There are some 200 names for Jesus in the Bible.

The following are some of the prominent names that reflect on His relationship with us...



Mediator: (1st Timothy 2:5)

A mediator is one who goes between two parties to reconcile them. Christ is the one and only Mediator who reconciles men and God. Praying to Mary or the saints is idolatry because it bypasses this most important role of Christ and ascribes the role of Mediator to another.



Chief Cornerstone: (Ephesians 2:20)

Jesus is the cornerstone of the building which is His church. He cements together Jew & Gentile, male & female - All Believers from all ages & places into one structure built on faith in Him which is shared by all



Head of the Church: (Ephesians 1:22; 4:15; 5:23)

Jesus Christ, not a king or a pope, is the only supreme, sovereign ruler of the Church - Which is those who have placed their faith in Him alone for salvation.



High Priest: (Hebrews 2:17)

The Jewish high priest entered the Temple once a year to make atonement for the sins of the people. The Lord Jesus performed that function for His people once for all at the cross.



Bridegroom: (Matthew 9:15)

The picture of Christ as the Bridegroom and the Church as His Bride reveals the special relationship we have with Him.



Judge: (Acts 10:42; 2nd Timothy 4:8)

The Lord Jesus was appointed by God to judge the world and to dispense the rewards of eternity.

? Why Did Jesus Become a man?



To Put Away Sin



Hebrews 9:26



Mark 10:45



Mark 2:9



1 John 3:5



John 1:29



Isaiah 53:6



2nd Corinthians 5:21



To confirm God's Promises



Romans 15:8-12



Isaiah 9:6



Isaiah 7:14



Isaiah 5:2



1st Corinthians 5:7



Matthew 16:18 + Acts 20:28
+ Ephesians 2:20+5:25



To Reveal the Father



John 1:18



John 14:9



John 16:27



To Become the Faithful High Priest



Hebrews 2:17



Hebrews 4:15



To Give us an Example of a Holy Life



Matthew 11:29



1st Peter 2:21



1st John 2:6



2nd Corinthians 3:18



To Prepare for the Second Coming



Hebrews 9:28



Romans 8:18-25



WHO IS HOLY SPIRIT & WHAT DOES HE DO?



The Holy Spirit is fully God.

- Attributes of Deity are ascribed to Him.
- Works of Deity are performed by Him.
- He is equal in every respect with the Father and the Son.



Matthew 28:19

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



The Holy Spirit is a Person

- Personal pronouns are ascribed to Him.
- He performs personal acts.
- He is associated in a personal way with the other persons of the Trinity.



The Holy Spirit was involved in the creation



Psalms 33:6

By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, And by the breath (Spirit) of His mouth all their host.



Psalms 104:30

You send forth Your Spirit, they are created; And You renew the face of the ground.



The Holy Spirit is involved in the preservation of the creation



Isaiah 40:7

The grass withers, the flower fades, When the breath (Spirit) of the LORD blows upon it



The Holy Spirit's relationship to Non-Believers

- The Holy Spirit is active in the non-believing world in three areas:
 1. He works through individuals to accomplish His purposes.
(Judges 11:29)
 2. He convicts the world of sin and the need of salvation.
(John 16:8)
 3. He restrains and controls the direction of evil.
(Genesis 6:3 + 2nd Thessalonians 2:6-8)



During the Great Tribulation, the Holy Spirit's ministry of restraining evil will be withdrawn. Then evil will not be held back and it will run rampant.



The Holy Spirit's relationship to the Bible

- The Holy Spirit is the author and the interpreter of Scripture.



2nd Peter 1:21

no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.



Acts 28:25

"The Holy Spirit rightly spoke through Isaiah the prophet to your fathers



See also: Acts 1:16 + Hebrews 3:7 + 10:15



Revelation 2:7+11+17+29+3:6+13+22

He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches



John 16:13-14

¹³ But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come.

¹⁴ He will glorify Me, for He will take of Mine and will disclose *it* to you.



1st Corinthians 2:12-13

¹² Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God, ¹³ which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual *thoughts* with spiritual *words*.



The Holy Spirit's relationship to Jesus Christ

- Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:35)
- Jesus was anointed by the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:16, Isaiah 61:1, Luke 4:18)
- Jesus was given the Holy Spirit without measure (John 3:34)
- The Holy Spirit is Jesus' replacement (John 14:18 + 16:7-15)



The Holy Spirit's relationship to Believers

- He regenerates



John 3:5-8

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

⁶ "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷ "Do not be amazed that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' ⁸ "The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit."



See also: Titus 3:5

● He indwells Believers

 Romans 8:9,11

⁹ However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.

¹¹ But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

● He baptizes Believers into the Body of Christ

 1st Corinthians 12:13

For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

● He seals Believers signifying Divine ownership & eternal security

 2nd Corinthians 1:22

who also sealed us and gave us the Spirit in our hearts as a pledge

 Ephesians 1:13

In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation - having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise

● He fills Believers

 Ephesians 5:18

And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit

● He guides Believers

 Galatians 5:16+25

¹⁶ But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. ²⁵ If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.

● He empowers Believers

 Galatians 5:22-23

²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control;

● He teaches Believers

 1st Corinthians 2:12-13

¹² Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God, ¹³ which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual *thoughts* with spiritual *words*.



Questions for Reflection...

- ? What are some attributes of Deity that the Holy Spirit possesses?
- ? Explain how the Holy Spirit is equal in every aspect with God the Father and God the Son.
- ? Is the Holy Spirit only an impersonal power or influence?
- ? How does Paul establish that the Holy Spirit is God in...
1st Corinthians 3:16 & 1st Corinthians 6:19?
- ? What is the Holy Spirit's role with regards to the Bible and our understanding of it?
- ? What is one important lesson you have learned from this study?



Why does a person need to get saved?

People might tell you that you need to be saved. But why is getting saved so important. Saved from what?

It's tough to understand the Good News of being saved if you don't understand the bad news. So let's go back to the beginning. In the beginning, God created everything:

Genesis 1:1

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

 When God created everything He said it was "very good".

- ➔ This meant that everything was perfect !
- ➔ The whole creation was perfect !
- ➔ In fact, God says that all His works are perfect !



And if you think about it...

 That is exactly what we would expect from a perfect God.

 Man lived in the perfectly created earth with a perfect relationship with God.

Genesis 1:31

God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day.

Deuteronomy 32:4

He is the Rock, his works are perfect, and all his ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is he.

 Seeing that the original creation was perfect...

 There was no death before this.

 God also created mankind in His image ([Genesis 1:27](#))...

 Which means that mankind different from animals.



So how are we created in God's image?

Like God, we are created with:

- ✓ Language,
- ✓ Creativity,
- ✓ Love,
- ✓ Holiness,
- ✓ Immortality &
- ✓ Freedom of choice.



You will probably be able to add to this list. But all can be summed up by saying that...

- ✓ We were made, in the immaterial part of man, to resemble God.



Adam & Eve...



Were allowed to freely eat from any tree in the Garden of Eden



Except the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.



Genesis 2:16–17

And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die."



They were to live forever with God.



There was no death at that point.



But Adam & Eve rebelled against God...



By eating from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good & Evil !



Genesis 3:6

When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.

-IN OTHER- WORDS...



They sinned against the Holy & Righteous God !



Because God is a Holy & Righteous God...

Nope!

He cannot not live with sin &

Nope!

He cannot let sin go unpunished.

 So because of Adam's sin...

-  God had to judge the ground, which mankind had dominion over to bring forth thorns and thistles.
-  God sentenced man & woman to die, fulfilling what was spoken in **Genesis 2:17**.
-  God also cursed the animals. (**Genesis 3:14–19**) !

 From this act of rebellion...

-  We (*descendants of Adam*) inherit a sinful nature.
-  Thus we are doomed to die physically & spiritually at the second death.

Romans 5:12

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

Romans 6:23a

For the wages of sin is death

 Since the wages/penalty for sin is death...

- ➔ God, in **Genesis 3:21**, shows that a life must be taken to cover sin.

 In order to make a temporary atonement (cover the sins for a time)...

- ➔ God killed some animals on behalf of Adam & Eve
- ➔ And clothed Adam & Eve with the skins of the animals.
- ➔ God did this to symbolize their need for atonement.

 But the punishment demanded from an infinitely holy God, who cannot look upon sin...

 Is an infinite punishment.

 Animals are not infinite, and so, they cannot ultimately take away the sin, but merely cover it.



Mankind needed a perfect, infinitely holy sacrifice.

 Mankind needed a perfect sacrifice to cover sins.



How does a person get saved?



God out of His love for us...

- ✓ Provided this perfect sacrifice through Jesus Christ !
- ✓ Jesus is the infinite and Holy Son of God.



John 3:16-17

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.



Jesus entered into our sin-cursed world...

➔ To live life on earth like one of us, but with a BIG difference...

- ✓ Jesus is God (John 1:1+14; John 10:30) &
- ✓ Jesus is without sin (2nd Corinthians 5:21+1st John 3:5).



Because of this...

- ✓ Jesus and only Jesus could satisfy the infinite punishment we deserve.



So Jesus took the punishment that our sin deserves.

- ✓ He paid the penalty for our sins for us. (1st John 2:2)
- ✓ He was the only One that could. (Acts 4:12)
- ✓ Jesus was God's plan for the ultimate atonement.



1st Peter 2:24

He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.



Isaiah 53:5

But he was wounded for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his stripes we are healed.



1st Corinthians 15:3

...Christ died for our sins, just as the Scriptures said.



Jesus, being the perfect sacrifice...

- ✓ Offers the free gift of salvation.



God loves you so much...

- ✓ That He sacrificed His own Holy Son to suffer the wrath against sin and die on the cross.



You see, it is God's will that all be saved (1st Timothy 2:4) by...



Repenting of our sinfulness &



2 Corinthians 7:10

For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death.



Trusting, placing your faith, in Christ Jesus alone to save you.



Romans 10:9–10

That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.



So that is why and how a person gets saved.

FACT Salvation is a simple and free gift.

FACT Jesus has done everything for us.



Jesus did what we or no one else could do...

- ✓ He paid the penalty for our sins.
- ✓ All we have to do is repent and believe.



If you are not a Christian...

- ➡ Then consider more deeply the claims of Jesus, and please take a few minutes to pray to God in the name of Jesus to forgive your sins and to receive Jesus Christ as your personal Savior



What is the sequence of the salvation experience?



There is no chronological sequence.

- ➔ Conversion,
- ➔ Justification,
- ➔ Regeneration,
- ➔ Adoption,
- ➔ Sanctification...

...all take place at the same instant.



But there is a logical sequence.

#1 Repentance



The importance of repentance is not always recognized as it should be. Some good meaning Believers will tell unbelievers to accept Jesus as their Savior through faith alone, but they never share with the unbeliever that he must repent of his sinfulness.



The Scriptures are packed full examples where God calls on mankind to repent of their sin...

- ✓ Repentance is the message of the Old Testament Prophets ([Ezekiel 14:6](#))
- ✓ Repentance was one of the key points in John the Baptist's message ([Matthew 3:2](#))
- ✓ Repentance was one of the main themes in Jesus' teachings ([Matthew 4:17](#))
- ✓ Repentance was preached by the twelve disciples ([Mark 6:12](#))
- ✓ Repentance was a fundamental part of Paul's outreach ([Acts 26:20](#))



Please note...

- The dispensational change from Old to New Covenant has not made repentance unnecessary in this age. It is definitely commanded to all men.



Acts 17:30

Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent

What do we mean by “repentance” ?

 Repentance is a change of mind, and it has three elements...

i. The Intellectual Element

This refers to a change of view point towards sin, God and self.
Sin is now recognized as personal guilt. (Romans 3:20 + Psalm 51:3)

ii. The Emotional Element

This refers to a change in feeling where one sorrows over sin and desires forgiveness. (2nd Corinthians 7:9 + Psalm 51:1)

iii. The Volitional Element

This refers to a inward turning way from sin. It is a change of will, disposition and purpose where one seeks pardon and cleansing. (Psalm 32:5 + 1st John 1:9)



Repentance...

✓ Is a condition of the heart that is necessary before we can believe unto salvation.

● True repentance never exists apart from faith.

● True faith never exists apart from repentance.

🔗 The two are inseparably bound together.

-IN OTHER-
WORDS...
🔄

A person cannot turn away from sin...

...without turning to God at the same time.

#2 Faith

 A person's life is controlled by what he has faith in.



The Scriptures tell us we are...

✓ Saved by faith (Romans 5:1)

✓ Walk by faith (2nd Corinthians 5:7)

✓ Please God by our faith (Hebrews 11:6)

What do we mean by “faith” ?

 Faith is the turning of the soul to God. It involves three elements...

i. The Intellectual Element

This includes belief in...

- The revelation of God in nature
- The historical facts of the Scriptures

- The teachings of the Scriptures
 - ▶ Romans 1:19
 - ▶ Romans 10:17

It is a belief that is based on the best evidence.

ii. The Emotional Element

This refers to a person's emotional response to the truths of God's Word that, to a certain degree, motivates a person to accepting the truth.

- ▶ Matthew 13:20
- ▶ John 5:35

iii. The Voluntary Element

This comes about as an outflow of the intellectual and emotional elements of faith. If a person accepts the facts of salvation, and feels remorse for their sinfulness, then logically they will move to action and willingly choose to believe by faith.

No one can be saved without voluntarily choosing to place their faith in Christ Jesus for their salvation.

#3 Justification

👉 All the way as early as Job, we find people asking the question:

❓ "How then can a man be just with God? Or how can he be clean who is born of woman?" - Job 25:4

❓ "Do not enter into judgement with Thy servant, for in Thy sight no living man is righteous." - Psalm 143:2

😊 Thankfully, Old Testament seekers of God did not wait until the New Testament was written to find the answer to their question.

- The Apostle Paul tells us in **Romans 4:1-5** that Abraham was justified by faith fourteen years before he was circumcised.
- In **Romans 4:5-8** Paul tells us that David rejoiced in the fact that God imputed righteousness to those who believe.



The point is...

- The New Testament doctrine of justification was a truth that was already known all the way back in Old Testament times.
- That means that they were able to receive righteousness in the same way we do in the Dispensation of Grace.

What do we mean by “justification” ?

● Justification can be defined as...

- ✓ That act by God, whereby He declares righteous all those who believe in Christ.
- ✓ Justification is the declaration of Holy God, the righteous judge, that all those who believe in Christ for their salvation are viewed as being righteous in Christ.
- ✓ Justification is a declaration. It is not something that mankind achieves.

The method of justification:

a. It is by the grace of God

- In God's kindness He determined to provide righteousness for us.
- It was His grace that led Him to provide it.
 - ▶ Romans 3:24
 - ▶ Titus 3:7

b. It is by the blood of Christ

- Because Christ has borne the punishment of our sins in His own Body, God is able to remit the penalty and to restore us to His favor.
- the resurrection of Christ is one proof that His death on the cross has satisfied God's claims against us.
 - ▶ Romans 4:25
- The gift of the Holy Spirit is another proof of satisfying God's justice.
 - ▶ Romans 8:16

c. It is by faith

- The Bible is SUPER CLEAR on this one...
 - ▶ Romans 5:1
 - ▶ Romans 10:10
 - ▶ Galatians 2:16

The results of justification:

- i. There is salvation from the wrath of God (Romans 5:9)
- ii. The condemnation is gone (Romans 8:1)
- iii. There is peace with God (Ephesians 2:14-17)
- iv. There is the imputation of Christ's righteousness (Romans 4:5)
- v. There is heirship (Titus 3:7)
- vi. There is glorification (Romans 8:30)



What is the sequence of the salvation experience? (Part 2)

#4 Regeneration



By nature, all men are...



"sons of disobedience" (Ephesians 2:2)



"children of wrath" (Ephesians 2:3)



"sons of this age" (Luke 16:8)



"children of the devil" (1st John 3:10)



Only the **NEW BIRTH** can produce that **holy nature** within sinners that makes fellowship with God possible.



John 3:3 "Truly, truly I say unto you, unless one is **born again** he cannot see the kingdom of God"



When a person accepts Christ as their Savior, the Holy Spirit...



Transmits to the heart the **life** & **nature** of God



Regeneration can thus be defined as:

- ✓ The transmitting **divine life** to the soul. (John 3:5 + 10:10, 28)
- ✓ The transmission of a **new nature**. (2nd Peter 1:4)
- ✓ The making of a new creation (2nd Corinthians 5:17)



Regeneration affects the Believers...

- ✓ Intellect (1st Corinthians 2:14)
- ✓ Will (Philippians 2:13 + Hebrews 13:21)
- ✓ Emotions (1st Peter 1:8)



Regeneration has the following results...

- i. Temptation can be overcome (1st John 1:9 + 5:4, 18)
 - The present tense in all these verses indicates a life of habitual victory.
 - Consequently, the regenerated person practices righteousness.
 - This does not mean that the Believer will live in sinless perfection.
- ii. The attitude of the regenerated person is different
 - He habitually loves other believers (1st John 4:19)
 - He loves God's Word (1st Peter 2:2 + Psalm 119:97)
- iii. The regenerated person also enjoys certain privileges
 - All needs are supplied (Matthew 7:11)
 - It is possible to understand God's Word (1st Cor. 2:10-12 + Eph. 1:9)

iv. The regenerated is a fellow-heir with Christ

- Although the actual possession of the inheritance is for the most part still in the future, the child of God receives immediately upon their salvation a token of that inheritance in the gift of the Holy Spirit indwelling that person. (Roman 8:17 + Ephesians 1:13)

#5 Adoption



Once we trust in Christ alone for our salvation...



God says we become part of His family.



Not through the natural process of human conception



But through adoption.



Adoption can be defined as...



placing as a son within God's family



a change in position



Galatians 3:26 says...

"For you are all son of God through faith in Christ Jesus"



1st John 3:1 says...

"See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God"



Romans 8:15 says...

"For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, 'Abba! Father!'"



Romans 8:23 says...

"And not only this, but we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body."

#6 Sanctification



Sanctification can be defined as:

- ✓ A separation to God (Romans 6:13)
- ✓ An imputation of Christ as our holiness (1st Corinthians 1:30)
- ✓ Purification from moral evil (Romans 8:12-14)
- ✓ A conformity to the image of Christ (Romans 8:29 + 1st John 3:2)



When we consider sanctification we need to understand that a believer is...

- ➔ **Positionally Sanctified** &
- ➔ Goes through a life long process of **Progressive Sanctification**.



Positionally Sanctification is where...

- Believers are sanctified at the time of their conversion

📖 **Hebrews 10:14** tells us...

“For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified”

(See also: Hebrews 10:10 + 1st Corinthians 1:2 + 1st Peter 1:2)

📖 **1st Corinthians 1:30-31** says...

³⁰ But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness & sanctification, and redemption, ³¹ so that, just as it is written, “Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord.”

- The Believer is declared holy as well as righteous, because he is clothed with the holiness of Christ.
- All Believers are called “**saints**” irrespective of their spiritual attainments because they are sanctified by Christ when they are saved.
(See: Romans 1:7 + Ephesians 1:1 + Philippians 1:1 + Colossians 1:2)

(see next page)



Progressive Sanctification is a continual process where...

- The Believer is asked to separate himself from their sinful nature and to grow in holiness.



2nd Corinthians 7:1 tells us...

"Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."



Paul declares in **Philippians 3:12-14...**

¹² Not that I have already obtained it or have already become perfect, but I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus.

¹³ Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, ¹⁴ I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

- The Believer is asked to compare their lives to Christ and to make necessary changes by **putting off sin** and **putting on righteousness** so that they will **conform to the image of Christ**.



See: **Colossians 3** + **Ephesians 4:15+17** to **Ephesians 5:17**



2nd Corinthians 3:18 tells us...

"But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit."



CAN A SAVED PERSON EVER BE LOST ?



- ? Can those who have been truly born again ceased to be saved?
- ? Can a person who has truly been saved revert to their former lost condition?
- ? Is it possible that a saved person can be eternally secure?



Contrary to what many religious groups claim...

- ✓ IT IS POSSIBLE for Believers to be certain of salvation
- ✓ IT IS IMPOSSIBLE for Believers to lapse into their former condition.



1st John 5:13

These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life. ^{NASB}



It should be noted that there is a difference between...

- ⚙ Security &
- ⚙ Assurance



Security: Implies that even though a Believer may sometimes backslide and be disobedient, nonetheless, if they have been truly converted, they are secure even if lapses occur along the way.



Assurance: Implies that a Believer is confident that Christ is their Savior, God is their heavenly Father, and the Holy Spirit has sealed them until the day when their final redemption is realized.



Just as a responsible father assures his children that they are loved, and will always be provided for and protected, so too does our heavenly Father inspire confidence in His children through the promises of security in His Word. God the Father does not want His children to feel unloved, fearful or neglected.



The Apostle Paul knew that God is faithful and will keep Believers secure!



2nd Timothy 1:12

for I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day.

? CAN A SAVED PERSON EVER BE LOST ?



Jesus said that if a person believes in Him for their salvation...

- They will NEVER PERISH
- They will NEVER FACE THE FINAL JUDGEMENT
- They will NEVER DIE
- No one can REMOVE THEM FROM GOD'S FAMILY

John 3:16

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

John 5:24

"Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life

John 11:25-26

²⁵ Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, ²⁶ and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?"

John 10:27-30

²⁷ My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; ²⁸ and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. ²⁹ My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. ³⁰ I and the Father are one."



We are not saved by ANYTHING we did.

- GOD DID EVERYTHING for us to be saved
- It makes sense then that we CANNOT DO ANYTHING to become unsaved.

Ephesians 2:8-9

⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; ⁹ not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.



The Believers is united with Christ in His death, burial & resurrection.

- Because death could not hold Jesus, it cannot hold the Believer either.
- Jesus will NEVER have to die again...
 - Because when He died FOR sin He died TO sin
 - This means that His relationship to sin changed and sin now has NO POWER over Him.
- Thus, BECAUSE we are in Christ...
 - Sin also has NO POWER over us
 - Sin CANNOT condemn us

? CAN A SAVED PERSON EVER BE LOST ?

Romans 6:8-11

⁸ Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, ⁹ knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him. ¹⁰ For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. ¹¹ Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

1st John 5:11-12

¹¹ And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. ¹² He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.



The indwelling of the Holy Spirit...

- Is our seal of salvation
- Is our guarantee of redemption
- Is our downpayment of our inheritance

Ephesians 1:13-14

¹³ In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, ¹⁴ who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory.

Ephesians 4:30

Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

2nd Corinthians 5:5

Now He who prepared us for this very purpose is God, who gave to us the Spirit as a pledge.

2nd Corinthians 1:21-22

²¹ Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and anointed us is God, ²² who also sealed us and gave us the Spirit in our hearts as a pledge.



The Source Of Assurance & Security



It is a sad fact that not every Believer enjoys assurance of their salvation.



The reason for this is that ASSURANCE IS RELATED TO FAITH !



Not every Believer has strong faith



BUT THEY CAN & SHOULD !

 Hebrews 10:22-23

²² let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. ²³ Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful;

FACT Assurance comes from faith...

 A faith that ALL Believers can & should possess !



Faith = Taking God at His Word.

➤ If we are willing to simply believe what God has said...

 Then we will have the assurance that accompanies salvation which is the rightful inheritance of every Believer, not merely and elite few.



The Basis Of Assurance & Security



Far too many make the mistake of determining the status of their salvation on the basis of how they feel. Human emotions fluctuate to such a degree that one would be unwise to make "feelings" be the basis of assurance.



Consider the following fundamental reasons for Assurance & Security:



The unconditional promises of God !



See all above verses !



God's ability to keep us !



Jude 24+25

²⁴ Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy, ²⁵ to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.



Philippians 1:6

For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.

 1st Peter 1:3-5

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, ⁵ who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

 Romans 8:31-39

³¹ What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? ³² He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things? ³³ Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies; ³⁴ who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us. ³⁵ Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ³⁶ Just as it is written, "For Your sake we are being put to death all day long; We were considered as sheep to be slaughtered." ³⁷ But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹ nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

 Jesus Christ's intercession for us !

 Hebrews 7:25

Therefore He is able also to save [a]forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

 The New Birth !

 2nd Corinthians 5:17

Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.

 2nd Peter 1:3-4

³ seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of

Him who called us by His own glory and [b]excellence. ⁴ For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.

Regeneration:

- A radical & supernatural change in the inner nature
- By which a person is made spiritually alive,
- The new life of God that is implanted in the believer is immortal.

FACT A born again person can no more forfeit his/her relationship with their heavenly Father than an earthly son or daughter can forfeit their relationship with an earthly father.

 Nothing can change the fact that the father's genes and DNA are an integral part of that child's makeup.

 A father will never cease to be the father.

 Nothing can alter that reality.

 Though earthly parents may, for some reason, forsake their children...

 Our heavenly Father plainly tells us that He will never leave us or forsake us !

 **Hebrews 13:5**

...for He Himself has said, "I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you"

 How IMPLAUSIBLE would it be for a person, who was a child of God, to end up in hell, bearing in his/ her body the heavenly Father's DNA !

 **Well what about Hebrews 6:4-6?**

⁴ For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, ⁵ and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, ⁶ if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame.

 So far have cited only some of the passages of Scripture that make it abundantly clear that Believers cannot be lost after they have been born again into the family of God.

We become children of God through faith in Christ. Once a person has become a child of God through faith in Christ he has *eternal* life. I cannot accept the interpretation that the people in **Hebrews 6:4-9** were once saved and had lost their salvation.



Interpretation #1

There is a one interpretation of this passage that has some merit in it. There are those who contend that this is a hypothetical case. "If they shall fall away." There is only a possibility that this might happen. The writer does not say that it happens, only that it might be possible. Those who contend that this is the correct interpretation say that it is the biggest " IF " in the Bible, and I would agree with them.



But only the King James Version translates **Hebrews 6:6** with " IF ". In the Greek there really is no " IF ".

Instead its a participle and should be translated...

"having fallen away."



Interpretation #2

The writer is not discussing the question of salvation at all in this passage. He is describing saved people.

- ✓ They have been enlightened.
- ✓ They have tasted of the heavenly gift.
- ✓ They have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit.
- ✓ They have tasted the good Word of God.
- ✓ They have tasted the powers of the world to come.

The whole tenor of the text reveals that he is speaking of *rewards* which are the result of salvation. In **verse 6** he says, "If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance".

- ✗ Not to salvation.
- ✓ But to *repentance*.

Repentance is something that God has asked *believers* to do. For example, read the seven letters to the seven churches in Asia, as recorded in **Revelation 2 + 3**. He says to every one of the churches to repent. That is His message for believers.



So the writer of Hebrews is talking about...

- ✓ The *fruit* of salvation,
- ✗ Not about the *root* of salvation.



And then "fell away" is an interesting word in the Greek. It is "*parapito*" and means simply "to stumble, to fall down." It would be impossible to give it the meaning of "apostatize." It is the same word used of our Lord when He went into the Garden of Gethsemane, *fell* on His face, and prayed.

? CAN A SAVED PERSON EVER BE LOST ?



Notice in **verses 7-8** that he is illustrating the fruit of the Christian's life:

"For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh off upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God: but that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned".

- If the believer's life brings forth fruit, it receives blessing from God.
- If it brings forth thorns & briers, it is rejected.



Notice in **verse 9...**

"But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation [he hasn't been discussing salvation but the things that accompany salvation], though we thus speak."

- He is speaking of the fruit of the Christian's life...
...and the reward that comes to him as the result.



The whole tenor of this passage is that...

- ! He is warning them of the possibility of losing their reward.
- ! There is danger of our works being burned up so that we will have nothing for which we could be rewarded.



1st Corinthians 3:11-15

¹¹ For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. ¹² Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, ¹³ each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. ¹⁴ If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. ¹⁵ If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire. NKJV



The work of every Believer, is going to be tested by fire, and fire *burns*! The work you are doing today for Christ is going to be tested by fire. Someday every Believer is going to stand before the judgment seat of Christ. He is going to test you and see if you really had any fruit in your life.

- ? Have you grown in grace & knowledge of Him?
- ? Have you been a witness for Him?
- ? Has your life counted for Him? Have you been a blessing to others?



Believers...

- ✗ Will not be judged for salvation.
- ✓ But because Believers are saved...
 - ↪ He is going to find out whether or not the Believer is to receive a reward.

? CAN A SAVED PERSON EVER BE LOST ?



When the apostle Paul wrote to Titus, a young preacher, he dealt with the matter of works: "Not by works done in righteousness, which we did ourselves, but according to his mercy he saved us ..." (Titus 3:5). From this, one might be inclined to think that Paul is not going to have much regard for good works, but move down in that same chapter to Titus 3:8...

"I desire that thou affirm confidently, to the end that they who have believed God may be careful to maintain good works...."

Good works do not enter into the matter of salvation, but when one becomes a child of God through faith in Christ, works assume supreme importance.

Lessons in Systematic Theology

Ecclesiology

Definition of ecclesiology

: the study of the church. The word Ecclesiology comes from two Greek words meaning "assembly" and "word" - combining to mean "the study of the church. It often deals with such topics as the nature of the church, including NT metaphors used to describe the church, the church's relationship to the kingdom of God, to Israel, and her purpose in the world. Other related topics include the government of the church, her God-given ordinances

Why Church?



What is a person to do once they have placed their faith in Christ as their personal Savior?



Where do they go for Biblical teaching and fellowship?

Where can they find people like themselves?



Believer's are not to be "Lone Rangers" who fend for themselves and who are left to their own resources.



As a matter of fact it is God's will for Believers to attend church regularly !



Hebrews 10:25 says...

"And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near." **NLT**



In **Acts 2:42** we see that the example of the early church where...



"They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer." **NASB**



The local church is a place where Believers can...

- ➡ Love one another - **John 13:24-25**
- ➡ Encourage one another - **Hebrews 3:13**
- ➡ Serve one another - **Galatians 5:13**
- ➡ Teach one another - **Colossians 3:16**



For these reasons and more, church attendance, participation, and fellowship should be regular aspects of a believer's life.



Weekly church attendance is not in a legal sense "required" of Believers, but it is God's will and it makes logical sense that a follower of Christ would have the desire to worship God, receive His Word, and fellowship with other Believers.

Questions to ponder...



At what level should a Believer participate in his/ her local church?

☞☞ See **1st Corinthians 12:12-31**



Who created/ started/ instituted the Church?

- The word “church” or “churches” is found in the New Testament over 100 times. The majority of the times the word “church” is used to refer to a local congregation.
- In the Bible the word “church” is a translation of the Greek word “ekklesia” which means “a called out assembly”.
- The word church first appears in **Matthew 16:18** when Jesus tells Peter, “On this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.”
- The “rock” here is referring to the statement Peter had made, in **Matthew 16:16** “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God”. In other words, Jesus is the “rock” upon which the church is built. Anyone who places their faith in Jesus Christ alone to save them from their sins becomes a member of the church
- The church began on the Day of Pentecost, fifty days after the Passover when Jesus died and rose again. (**Acts 2**)



What the Church is not...



The church is not Israel !

- ✗ Israel and the church are not synonymous terms.
- ✓ The Apostle Paul speaks of the church as being one new man that is composed of believing Jews and believing Gentiles.



Ephesians 2:13-22 says...

¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. ¹⁴ For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, ¹⁵ by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace, ¹⁶ and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity. ¹⁷ And He came and preached peace to you who were far away, and peace to those who were near; ¹⁸ for through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father. ¹⁹ So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, ²⁰ having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, ²¹ in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, ²² in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit. **NASB**

 **Colossians 3:11** says...

“there is no distinction between Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and freeman, but Christ is all, and in all.” NASB

FACT But God still has a future for national Israel.

FACT He is not finished with national Israel.

 **Romans 11:23-24**

²³ And they also, if they do not continue in their unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again. ²⁴ For if you were cut off from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these who are the natural branches be grafted into their own olive tree?

NB! ***The church is not a continuation of the Synagogue !***

- Admittedly, there are similarities between the church and the synagogue, but there are also marked dissimilarities.
- In **Matthew 16:18** Jesus said that He would build His church. This could not refer to the synagogue because the synagogue was already in existence.
- When the Apostles preached in the synagogues, their message was evangelistic. When people heard the Gospel and got saved, they left the synagogues and formed a local body of Believers, a local church.

NB! ***The church is not a Denomination !***

- We often speak of various denominations as churches, but the word “denominations” does not occur in the Scriptures.
- As a matter of fact **1st Corinthians 1:11-17** warns against denominational style divisions in the church.



What the Church is...

The church is referred to in two senses...

#1 The Universal sense:

- The church consists of all those, in this age of Grace, that have been saved and resultantly been placed by the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ.



1st Corinthians 12:13

"For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit."



1st Peter 1:3

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead"

The term is used in the universal sense because...

- ➔ Christ spoke of building His church, not churches - [Matthew 16:18](#).
- ➔ Christ is said to love the church and gave Himself up for the church [Ephesians 5:25](#).
- ➔ Christ is purifying and sanctifying the church - [Ephesians 5:26](#).

The term is used in the universal sense...

When one considers the figures used in the bible to represent the church.

- ➔ The church is referred to as "the body of Christ" - [Colossians 1:18](#) + [Romans 12:4-5](#).
- ➔ The church is referred to as "the bride of Christ" - [2nd Corinthians 11:2](#) + [Ephesians 5:24,32](#) + [Revelation 19:6-20:6](#).
- ➔ The church is referred to as "the vine" - [John 15:1](#)

#2 The Local sense:

- In the local sense the word "church" is used of the group of professed Believers in any one locality.
 - ➔ Jerusalem - [Acts 8:1](#) + [Acts 11:22](#)
 - ➔ Ephesus - [Acts 20:17](#)
 - ➔ Cenchrea - [Romans 16:1](#)
 - ➔ Corinth - [1st Corinthians 1:2](#) + [2nd Corinthians 1:1](#)
 - ➔ Church of the Laodiceans - [Colossians 4:16](#)
 - ➔ Church of the Thessalonians - [1st Thessalonians 1:1](#) + [2nd Thessalonians 1:1](#)

- Sometimes the term is in the plural...
 - ➔ The churches of Galatia - **Galatians 1:2**
 - ➔ The churches of Judea - **1st Thessalonians 2:14**
 - ➔ The churches of Asia - **Revelation 1:4**



How is the church to be governed?



The New Testament speaks of two church offices: Pastors & Deacons.

- The importance of these offices is underscored by the high moral & spiritual requirements set for those who would fill them.

Pastor/ Bishop/ Elder:

- Three terms used interchangeably in the New Testament to denote the person who is to give leadership in each church.
- Each name emphasizes the role that is being played.

"pastor"

 In the greek = "**poimen**" = "**shepherd**"

 **Ephesians 4:11**



Definition:

- As a "**poimen**" tends, feeds, protects and leads his sheep, so the pastor performs a similar function for his congregation.

"bishop"

 In the greek = "**episkopos**" = "**overseer**"

 **Acts 20:28**
 **Philippians 1:1**
 **1st Timothy 3:2**
 **Titus 1:7**
 **1st Peter 2:25**



Definition:

- This word "**episkopos**" (from which we get Episcopal) is used a total of 5 times in the New Testament, always in reference to someone who has authority to lead in ministry.
- It can be defined as one who superintends or looks after the church, being vigilant to protect it from false doctrine.

"elder"

 In the greek = "*presbuteros*" = "older one"

 **1st Timothy 5:17+19**

Definition:

- Occurs 72 times in the New Testament, and it has a range of meanings.
- The majority of the time (57 times) it is translated "elder" and means a position of leadership in the church, like a pastor or other member of church leadership.
- It differs from "*episkopos*" in that it also assumes the quality of old age. In other words, elders are leaders, in part, due to the wisdom and spiritual maturity they have obtained through a life-long walk with Christ. In fact, the word "*presbuteros*" is also translated at times to mean "older man" (10 times).

 The qualifications for the Pastor/ Bishop/ Elder are spelled out in detail in...

 **1st Timothy 3:1-7**



Three terms used interchangeably in the New Testament to denote the person who is to give leadership in each church.

- In **Acts 20:17–28** Paul gives a final word of exhortation to the church in Ephesus.
 - ➔ He begins in **verse 17** by addressing the "*presbuteros*" (elders) of the church, yet a few verses later in the passage, Paul refers to these same men in **verse 28** as "*episkopos*", or overseers.
 - ➔ By describing the same group one time as "*presbuteros*" and a second time as "*episkopos*", Paul seems to consider the two words to be synonyms for church leaders.
- In **Titus 1:5**, Paul reminds Titus that he left him in Crete with instructions to appoint "*presbuteros*" (i.e., elders) over every city.
 - ➔ In this context, an elder is clearly a position of leadership over a church, yet just a few verses later Paul begins to describes the qualifications for an elder using the word "*episkopos*" (i.e., overseer) to describe this same group.
 - ➔ Once again, Paul seems to use these two words for leader interchangeably.



It seems fair to conclude from these two passages...

- ➔ That scripture makes no clear distinction between a "*presbuteros*" (elder) and an "*episkopos*" (overseer) in terms of their role in leadership.
- ➔ Therefore, we should consider these two terms to refer generally to leaders over a church, whether they serve as a pastor, an elder or both.
- ➔ This fact also suggests that Paul was not especially concerned over the particular organizational form that church leadership assumed, though he does make clear he expects a plurality of leadership (i.e., overseers, elders) rather than just a single leader.

Deacon:

"deacon"



In the greek = "*diakonos*" = "servant/ helper"



Definition:

- The word appears 29 times in the New Testament.
- Of those 29 times, it is translated (by the NASB)...
 - As "deacon" 3 times
 - As "minister" 7 times
 - As "servant" 19 times.
- The best definition of the duties of a "*diakonos*" is one who ministers to the church through their service.
- "*diakonos*" are part of the leadership within a church, and they express their leadership primarily through acts of service for the benefit of the entire congregation (including other leaders).
- The best example of the appointment of "*diakonos*" within the church is found in **Acts 6** where Stephen and six other men are appointed to positions of service by the primary leaders in that church.
- Notice that several of these men eventually became evangelists themselves (e.g., Stephen, Philip), demonstrating that those who begin ministry in positions of service as "*diakonos*" are not precluded from eventually taking other roles in leadership.



In **1st Timothy 3...**

- ➔ Paul begins in **verse 1** by stating the qualifications for an "**episkopos**" (overseer).
- ➔ Later in the chapter, Paul switches to describing the qualifications for a man to serve as a "**diakonos**" (1st Timothy 3:8).
- ➔ By these verses, we learn an important additional piece of information. We can see that Paul envisions a clear break in leadership between overseers/elders on the one hand and deacons on the other hand.
- ➔ While both groups are considered leaders in the church, the first group (overseers/elders) appoints and rules over the second group (deacons).



To summarize then...

- ➔ "**diakonos**" are lesser leaders focused on service
- ➔ "**episkopos**" and "**presbuteros**" are primarily pastoral leaders over a congregation.

In conclusion...

- A classic New Testament church ought to be led by a plurality of overseers, including older, more mature elders who guard the flock, together with a cadre of secondary leadership called deacons focused on serving the body.
- Though churches often depart from this ideal form, that certainly doesn't preclude God from working through those churches nonetheless, as every church has its flaws and God accomplishes His work through us in spite of our form, not because of it.



What is baptism?

i There are two rites/ ordinances that Jesus has given the church to carry out...

#1 **Baptism** - Matthew 28:18-20

#2 **Communion** - 1st Corinthians 11:23-26



What's an ordinance?

thumbs up Ordinances are visual aids to help us better understand and appreciate and testify what Jesus Christ accomplished for us in His redemptive work.



thumbs up They were instituted by Christ. Since baptism & communion are the only rites which qualify, there can be only two ordinances, neither of which are requirements for salvation.

thumbs up Ordinances are generally understood to be those things Jesus told us to observe with other Christians.



What's a sacrament?

thumbs down Roman Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy, and Reformed churches use the term "sacrament" to refer to "a rite which results in God's grace being conveyed to the individual."



thumbs down Catholicism practices seven sacraments. They are baptism, confirmation, holy communion, confession, marriage, holy orders, and the anointing of the sick.

thumbs down Catholicism believes the sacraments are necessary for salvation and are the vehicles of grace.



The Bible, tells us that grace is not given through outward symbols and no ritual is "necessary for salvation."



Titus 3:4-7 says...

"But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs

✓ **Grace is free !**

i In **Matthew 28:18-20** Jesus' instructions specify that the church is responsible to teach Jesus' word, make disciples, and **baptize** those disciples. These things are to be done everywhere until "the very end of the age."



So, if for no other reason...



Baptism has importance because Jesus commanded it.



What does the word “baptize” mean?

i “Baptism” is a transliteration of a Greek word, “Baptizo”.



Transliteration transfers the spelling of a word from the alphabet of one language into the alphabet of another language. Thus the Greek word “baptizo” becomes the English word “baptism.”

i In the Bible the Greek word for “baptism” is, “Baptizo” which means...

- “to immerse or submerge an object into something else such as a liquid like water or dye.”



What is the mode for baptism ?

i Immersion is the only mode of baptism.



The Greek word “Baptizo”...



Never means to pour or sprinkle.



The Greek word which means “to pour” is “cheo.”



The Greek word which means “to sprinkle” is “rantidzo.”



Pouring & sprinkling does not fulfill the symbolism associated with baptism.



Who is Baptism for?

i Baptism is for Believers - People who have place their faith in Jesus Christ alone for their salvation.



For example: - Acts 2:38+41

- Acts 8:12

- Acts 8:36-39

- Acts 10:44-47

i Baptism is a symbol of the Believer's identification with Christ in His death, burial, & resurrection.



Baptism illustrates...

➔ The death, burial, and resurrection of Christ.



Baptism (at the same time) also illustrates...

➔ Our death to sin and new life in Christ.



Baptism by immersion...

➔ Is entirely symbolic.

➔ It serves as a public testimony of one's salvation.



So how does the picture of **baptism** work?

⚙ As the sinner confesses the Lord Jesus, he dies to sin (**Romans 6:11**)
➔ Being submerged in the water represents death to sin.

⚙ As the person is raised out of there water...
➔ It represents being cleansed from sin & having new life
(**Colossians 2:12**).

📖 **Romans 6:4** puts it this way...

"We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life."



Here is an example that will help you understand what baptism means...

A wedding ring represents the marital status of the person wearing the ring. The ring does not make the person married; it is simply an symbol identifying the person as being married. In like manner, baptism does not make a person a Christian. What baptism does is identify/ testify that the person is a Christian.



Why do we not **baptise** infants?



In the Bible...

✓ Only Believers who had placed their faith in Christ were **baptized** -
as a public testimony of their faith and identification with Him
(**Acts 2:38; Romans 6:3-4**).



Water **baptism** by immersion...

- ✓ Is a step of obedience after faith in Christ.
- ✓ It is a proclamation of faith in Christ.
- ✓ It's a statement of submission to Him.
- ✓ Its an identification with His death, burial, & resurrection.



With this in view...

- ✗ Infant **baptism** is not a Biblical practice.
- ✗ An infant cannot place his or her faith in Christ.
- ✗ An infant cannot make a conscious decision to obey Christ.
- ✗ An infant cannot understand what water **baptism** symbolizes.
- ✗ The Bible does not record any infants being **baptized**.
- ✗ The method of infant **baptism** (sprinkling & pouring) fails to agree with the Bible.



How does sprinkling or pouring...

- ! Illustrate the death, burial, & resurrection of Jesus Christ?



Is infant **baptism the new covenant equivalent of circumcision?**



According to this view...

- ✗ Just as circumcision joined a Hebrew to the Abrahamic & Mosaic covenants, so **baptism** joined a person to the New Covenant of salvation through Jesus Christ.



This view is unbiblical !



The New Testament nowhere describes baptism as the New Covenant replacement for Old Covenant circumcision.



The New Testament nowhere describes **baptism** as a sign of the New Covenant.



It is only through faith in Jesus Christ that enables a person to enjoy the blessings of the New Covenant.

(1st Corinthians 11:25; 2nd Corinthians 3:6; Hebrews 9:15).



Baptism does not save a person.

- ✓ It does not matter if you were baptized by immersion, pouring, or sprinkling - if you have not first trusted in Christ for salvation, baptism (no matter the method) is meaningless and useless.
- ✓ Water baptism by immersion is a step of obedience to be done after salvation as a public profession of faith in Christ and identification with Him.



Infant **baptism**...

- ✗ Does not fit the Biblical definition of baptism or the Biblical method of baptism.



If Christian parents wish to dedicate their child to Christ, then a baby dedication service is entirely appropriate.



However, even if infants are dedicated to the Lord, when they grow up they will still have to make a personal decision to believe in Jesus Christ in order to be saved.

 Caution should be used in baptizing young children who have made a profession of faith. While children are capable of truly understanding the Gospel and genuinely receiving Christ at very young ages, it is better to wait until it can be established that they understand the symbolism involved in water baptism. Baptizing them too soon may confuse them and make them think that the water had something to do with their salvation.



What about the “household” baptisms found in the Bible?



When we look at the New Testament, the closest thing to infant baptism that we find is the reference to three “households” being baptized.

#1 In **1st Corinthians 1:16**, Paul says...

“Now I did baptize also the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized any other.”

#2 In **Acts 16:15**, Luke reports concerning the new convert, Lydia, “When she and her household had been baptized, she urged us, saying, ‘If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and stay.’”

#3 In **Acts 16:33**, Luke tells us that after the earthquake in the jail of Philippi, the jailer “took [Paul and Silas] that very hour of the night and washed their wounds, and immediately he was baptized, he and all his [household].”



In any case...

- ➔ There is no mention of infants in any of these instances of household baptism.
- ➔ It is an argument from silence to say that there must have been small children.
- ➔ The concept of infant baptism goes is contradictory to the very message and method of the gospel.



What is Communion?



Why does the church have communion?



Communion is...

- ➔ A time to remember
- ➔ A time to thank the Lord for dying on the cross for our sins.

(put in place)



Communion was instituted by Jesus Christ

- ➔ Jesus Christ instituted two ordinances for His Church.
- ➔ An ordinance is a “*prescribed practice*”, something ordered by Jesus to be practiced by the church.
- ➔ Baptism & **Communion** are the two ordinances that are prescribed by Jesus to be practiced by the Church.
- ➔ **Communion** was instituted on the same night the Lord Jesus was betrayed. The very next day Jesus would go to the cross, suffer and shed His blood for all of mankind's sin.
- ➔ We can read about what Jesus did on this night in...

- ✓ Matthew 26:26-30
- ✓ Mark 14:22-26
- ✓ Luke 22:19-20
- ✓ 1st Corinthians 11:23-25



The reason we observe communion...



Is because Jesus told us to do so.

- ➔ In 1st Corinthians 11:23-25 Paul uses the verbs “received” & “passed on.”
 - i These are technical terms from Paul's Jewish heritage for the transmission of religious instruction.
 - i Paul's point is to establish that the instruction concerning **communion** came from Jesus himself: ‘I received [it] from the Lord.’”



What are the different “titles” for **communion** &...

What do they mean?



“Communion”

- Fellowship, Participation, Sharing (1st Corinthians 10:16)
- **Communion** is something that all Believers share in and participate in.

Communion
Nagmaal
The Lord's Supper The Lord's table Breaking bread



“The Lord’s Table”

- It was at a table that the Lord first instituted **communion**.
- It was at a table that the Lord first broke bread and passed the cup.
- This “title” is found in 1st Corinthians 10:21



“The Lord’s Supper”

- On the night before Jesus was crucified, He shared supper with His disciples. After this supper, Jesus instituted **communion**.
- This “title” is found in Luke 22:20 & 1st Corinthians 11:25



“The Breaking of Bread”

- This is what Jesus did when He instituted **communion** (Matthew 26:26)
- This “title” is found in Acts 2:42



What does **communion** picture?

1st Corinthians 11:23-25

²³ ...the Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took bread; ²⁴ and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, “This is My body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me.” ²⁵ In the same way He took the cup also after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.” ²⁶ For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until He comes.



“He... took the bread” - “This is My body”

- ➔ This bread is a picture (symbol) of His body.
- ➔ When you look at the bread you will think of His body & what He did for mankind when He died on the cross for our sins.

1st Peter 2:24

and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.

1st Peter 3:18

For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit;



“He took the cup” - “This cup is... My blood”

- ➔ This cup/ wine is a picture (symbol) of His blood.
- ➔ When you look at the cup/ wine you will think of His blood & how He shed His blood on the cross to pay the penalty for mankind's sins.

Matthew 26:28

for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins.

Ephesians 1:7

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



When Jesus shed His blood on Calvary...

- ➔ That blood ratified (*gave formal sanction to*) the New Covenant that Jeremiah had predicted ([Jeremiah 31:31–34](#)).
- ➔ The New Covenant replaced the old Mosaic Covenant ([Hebrews 8:8–13; 9:18–28](#)).
- ➔ Even though the Jews will be the major beneficiaries of the benefits of this covenant in the Millennium, all believers began to benefit from the death of Christ when He died.

When Christ established the Lord's Supper it was as though He notarized His will; it became official then. The will is the New Covenant. When He died His “estate” became available to those He chose to profit from it. Soon many people around the world, Jews and Gentiles in the church, began to benefit from the blessings of His death. However His chosen people, His son Israel, will not enter into their inheritance until the appointed time, namely the Millennium. Blessings for the church began almost immediately after Christ's death. Blessings for Israel will not begin until Christ's appointed time arrives. - *Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible*



Who should take part in **communion**?



Jesus did not tell everyone to eat the bread & drink the cup.



This was something that He told His disciples to do.



Acts 2:41-46... It was Believers who participated in the “**breaking of bread**”



1st Corinthians 11:23-25 was written to the church...i.e. Believers.



What does it mean to eat the bread & to drink the cup unworthily?



1st Corinthians 11:27...

Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord.



“**unworthy**” refers to...



The state of mind in which one comes to the Table of the Lord.



Of course in ourselves we are altogether unworthy. (**Romans 3:23**)



But we have found acceptance in the worthy One, and in Christ every believer is worthy to approach **communion**. (**2nd Corinthians 5:21**)

For Example:

During the time that you are partaking of **communion**:



You don't think of the Savior...



But instead think of a thousand and one other things...



And continue to participating in **communion** with this mindset



You would then be taking **communion** in an unworthy manner.



Essentially **communion** then becomes a pointless, dead religious ritual.



To partake with this state of mind is to do so unworthily.



Being “**guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord**” means...



Being guilty of treating them in an unworthy manner



Of profaning the “**body and the blood of the Lord**”.



It does not mean that such a person is in some special sense responsible for the death of Christ.



What does it mean to “**examine**” oneself during **communion**?



1st Corinthians 11:28...

But a man must **examine** himself, and in so doing he is to eat of the bread and drink of the cup.

i “**examine**” = “*dokimazeto*” (Greek) = “test to approve”



The reason for examining oneself is:

- ➡ To determine that we are partaking in a worthy manner...
...rather than in an unworthy manner.
- ➡ Is there anything in their life that would not meet God's approval?



This would involve...

- 👍 Being appreciative of the significance of the Lord's body & blood.
- 👍 Confessing any known sin.



What could happen if I don't take **communion** seriously?

1st Corinthians 11:29-32

²⁹ For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself if he does not judge the body rightly. ³⁰ For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep. ³¹ But if we judged ourselves rightly, we would not be judged. ³² But when we are judged, we are disciplined by the Lord so that we will not be condemned along with the world.



We need to examine ourselves...

- ➡ So the Lord will not have to examine and judge us
...for failing to participate worthily.

Coming to the Lord's Supper without confessed known sin brought judgment on the guilty participants in Corinth. In **1st Corinthians 11:30-31** we see if God's people do not judge their own sins themselves, God will judge them. This judgment may involve physical illness or even, in extreme cases, premature physical death (see: **Acts 5**; **1 John 5:16**).



What is a good way to approach **communion**?

#1 We should look back in history

1st Corinthians 11:23–25

²³ ... the Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took bread; ²⁴ and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "This is My body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me." ²⁵ In the same way He took the cup also after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

2nd Corinthians 5:21

"He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."

- ➔ The broken bread **reminds us** of Christ's body given for us (1 Peter 2:24)
- ➔ The cup **reminds us** of Christ Jesus' shed blood. (1 Peter 1:18-19 & Ephesians 1:7)

#2 We should look forward to the future

1st Corinthians 11:26

For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.

Titus 2:13

looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of [a]our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus,

- ➔ We observe **communion** until the Lord returns for us
- ➔ The return of Jesus Christ is the blessed hope of the Believer & church

#3 We should look within ourselves now

1st Corinthians 11:28

But a man must examine himself, and in so doing he is to eat of the bread and drink of the cup.



Paul did not say that we had to be worthy to partake of **communion**.



Paul says that we should partake in a worthy manner.



If we are to participate in a worthy manner:

- ➔ We must examine our own hearts
- ➔ See if there is any unconfessed sin in our lives.
- ➔ Confess those sins to the Lord.



What is the Mission of the Church?

(What is the church to be doing?)

#1 The Church is to Glorify God



Man's chief purpose is to glorify God in all that he does.



The church is **also** to glorify God in all that it does.



The Scriptures repeatedly point this out:



Romans 15:6...

"all of you can join together with one voice, giving praise and glory to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." **NLT**



Ephesians 3:21...

"to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever." **NASB**



1st Peter 4:11...

"Whoever speaks, *is to do so as one who is speaking the utterances of God*; whoever serves *is to do so as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies*; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen." **NASB**



How do we glorify God?

a) By worshipping Him



John 4:23...

"But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers." **NASB**

b) Through prayer & praise



Psalms 50:23a

"But giving thanks is a sacrifice that truly honors me." **NLT**

c) By living a godly life



John 15:8...

"My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples." **NASB**

#2 The Church is to Edify Itself (uplift, teach, improve)

Ephesians 4:11-16...

¹¹ Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. ¹² Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ. ¹³ This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ. ¹⁴ Then we will no longer be immature like children. We won't be tossed and blown about by every wind of new teaching. We will not be influenced when people try to trick us with lies so clever they sound like the truth. ¹⁵ Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church. ¹⁶ He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love. **NLT**

Colossians 2:7-8...

⁷ having been firmly rooted *and* now being built up in Him and established in your faith, just as you were instructed, *and* overflowing with gratitude. ⁸ See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ. **NASB**

These passages are clearly telling us that the members of the church must...

- ✓ Be taught the Word of God thoroughly &
- ✓ Be taught to study & understand the Word of God for themselves



This way they will be able to stand against the heresies around them !

Jesus in His "Great Commission" said that...

- ✓ Not only should people be made disciples & baptized
- ✓ But they should thereafter be taught to "observe all" that He commanded them (Matthew 28:20)

The public church service is to be used for edification of the church.

1st Corinthians 14:26...

"Well, my brothers and sisters, let's summarize. When you meet together, one will sing, another will teach, another will tell some special revelation God has given, one will speak in tongues, and another will interpret what is said. But everything that is done must strengthen all of you." **NLT**



But this is not just the church's job!



Individuals have the responsibility to also build themselves up.



2nd Peter 3:18...

"but grow in the grace & knowledge of our Lord & Savior Jesus Christ." **NASB**



Paul instructs Believers to dwell on all types of worthy knowledge.



Philippians 4:8...

"Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy, think about such things." **NIV**

#3 The Church is to Purify Itself



Ephesians 5:25b-27...

^{25b} Christ loved the church. He gave up his life for her ²⁶ to make her holy and clean, washed by the cleansing of God's word.

²⁷ He did this to present her to himself as a glorious church without a spot or wrinkle or any other blemish. Instead, she will be holy and without fault. **NLT**



The Father cleanses individual Believers



John 15:2...

"Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every *branch* that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit." **NASB**



The Father does this primarily through chastening (disciplining) the Believer



1st Corinthians 11:32...

"But when we are judged, we are disciplined by the Lord so that we will not be condemned along with the world." **NASB**



Hebrews 12:10b...

"He *disciplines us* for our good, so that we may share His holiness." **NASB**



The local church is to discipline it's own members when they refuse to repent from their sinful behavior.



Romans 16:17...

"Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them." **NASB**



1st Corinthians 5:6b-8+13...

^{6b} Don't you realize that this sin is like a little yeast that spreads through the whole batch of dough? ⁷ Get rid of the old "yeast" by removing this wicked person from among you. Then you will be like a fresh batch of dough made without yeast, which is what you really are. Christ, our Passover Lamb, has been sacrificed for us. ⁸ So let us celebrate the festival, not with the old bread of wickedness and evil, but with the new bread of sincerity and truth. ¹³ God will judge those on the outside; but as the Scriptures say, "You must remove the evil person from among you." **NLT**



2nd Thessalonians 3:6+14...

⁶ And now, dear brothers and sisters, we give you this command in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ: Stay away from all believers who live idle lives and don't follow the tradition they received from us. ¹⁴ Take note of those who refuse to obey what we say in this letter. Stay away from them so they will be ashamed. **NLT**



Titus 3:10-11...

¹⁰ If people are causing divisions among you, give a first and second warning. After that, have nothing more to do with them. ¹¹ For people like that have turned away from the truth, and their own sins condemn them. **NLT**



2nd John 10...

"If anyone comes to your meeting and does not teach the truth about Christ, don't invite that person into your home or give any kind of encouragement." **NLT**

#4 The Church is to Evangelize the World

- i** The “Great Commission” directs the church to go into all the world and make disciples of all nations (See: [Matthew 28:19](#); [Luke 24:46-48](#); [Acts 1:8](#)).

 The Bible...

 Does not tell us to “convert” the world,
 But to “evangelize” it.

- i** Evangelism by the church takes place on multiple fronts...

- Prayer ([Matthew 9:38](#))
- Financial Support ([Philippians 4:15-18](#))
- Sending of Missionaries ([Romans 10:15](#))

- i** The church will not convert the world

 The church is not going to win the world to Christ.
 [Matthew 13:24-30 + 36-40](#) (Parable of the Tares)
 [Matthew 13:47-50](#) (Parable of the Dragnet)

 There will be no mass turning to the Lord. Life will continue as usual.

 [Luke 17:26...](#)

“And just as it happened in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man” **NASB**



Why?

 [1st Timothy 4:1...](#)

“Now the Holy Spirit tells us clearly that in the last times some will turn away from the true faith; they will follow deceptive spirits and teachings that come from demons.” **NLT**

(See also: [2nd Timothy 3:1-9](#))

#5 The Church is to Act as...

A Restraining & Enlightening Force in the World

- i** Jesus said in [Matthew 5:13-14](#) that Believers are...

- ✓ “the salt of the earth” &
- ✓ “the light of the world”

- i** Because of a Believers influence & testimony...

- They along with the Holy Spirit
- Act as a restraining force
- On the development of lawlessness.

(See: [2nd Thessalonians 2:6-7](#))

Believers are to make known...

- ✓ God's righteous requirements of man &
- ✓ The need for repentance & regeneration.
- 🎯 To this end God has made His people the custodians of His Truth.

 **2nd Corinthians 5:19...**

"God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation." **NASB**

#6 The Church is to Promote All that is Good

The Believer is to separate himself from all evil alliances

(See: 2nd Corinthians 6:14-18)

The Believer is to promote that which is good

 **Galatians 6:10...**

"Therefore, whenever we have the opportunity, we should do good to everyone—especially to those in the family of faith." **NLT**



Jesus' practice is the best example to follow...

- He always subordinated physical and other material help to the spiritual !
- He went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed of the devil, though He never lost sight of His principle mission. (**Acts 10:38-43**)



The Believer should do all his charity work and kindnesses in such a way that it bears testimony of Christ.

 **1st Corinthians 10:31...**

"So whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God." **NLT**

 **Colossians 3:17...**

"And whatever you do or say, do it as a representative of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through him to God the Father." **NLT**

(See also: John 2:11 + John 9:35-38)

Lessons in Systematic Theology

Eschatology

Definition of eschatology

: the study of what the Bible says is going to happen in the end times. It deals with themes such as, the return of Christ, resurrection, judgment, tribulation, the millennial kingdom, and the eternal state. How we understand Eschatology has an impact on how we should live our lives and what we are to expect to occur in God's plan.



What happens when you die?



It's a question that has crossed everyone's mind, because death happens to everyone, regardless of age, race, gender, religion, or status.



If you ask people what they think happens when we die you will find a significant amount of confusion.



Most people get their view of the after-life from Hollywood.



Don't laugh!



A lot of people base their beliefs on TV and movies.



So what does the Bible say?



The Bible describes three different deaths...

#1 Spiritual death,

#2 Physical death, &

#3 Eternal death.

#1 Spiritual death...

➡ Spiritual death can be defined as man separated from God.

➡ It is the spiritual state that all of mankind are born into.



Why?



When Adam chose to disobey God ([Genesis 3](#))...



His nature became sinful &



He became spiritually dead.



After Adam sinned...



He could no longer have unhindered access to God, as he had enjoyed before he sinned because God, is a perfect and holy God who cannot abide, tolerate, or even look upon sin.



Adam's sin not only effected him...



But it also effected and effects all of his descendants.



Mankind, therefore, is born spiritually dead.

 **Romans 5:12** says...

"Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned"

 **Romans 3:23** says...

"for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God"

 **Ephesians 2:1** says...

"And you were dead in your trespasses and sins"

 **Proverbs 20:9** says...

"Indeed, there is not a righteous man on earth who continually does good and who never sins."



It should also be noted that...



God does not want mankind to be separated from Him.



2nd Peter 3:9 says...

"The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance."

FACT

God is a merciful, loving and gracious God.



Due to God's love, He told Adam and Eve in **Genesis 3:15** that He would one day send a Redeemer who would pay the penalty for sin, and make it possible for mankind to once again have unhindered access & communion with Him.



The hope of the future Redeemer is what Adam & Eve, & the other Old Testament saints put their faith in to save them.



For example in **Genesis 15:6** and **Romans 4:3**, the Bible tells us that because Abraham had faith in the Lord, this belief was credited to him as righteousness.



Genesis 15:6...
Abram believed the LORD, and the LORD counted him as righteous because of his faith.



Romans 4:3...
For what does the Scripture say?
"ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS."



In **Genesis 3:21**, the Bible tells us that God also made garments from the skin of animals to cover Adam & Eve's nakedness and to serve as reminder of God's promise to send a Redeemer.



These animal skin garments also serve as a type of how Christ would one day come, and die for mankind's sins, and cover us in His holy righteousness so we could be made, once again, fit for God's presence.



We see in **Genesis 4** how God also instructed Cain & Able to bring a blood sacrifice to the Lord. This blood sacrifice showed that sin had to be punished, and God would one day send a substitute to take our place, to pay for our sins, and to redeem mankind once and for all for all mankind's sins.



The Apostle Paul tells us in **Philippians 2:6-8** & **Romans 6:23**, that God kept His promise and He sent His Son, Jesus Christ to willingly come, and pay the penalty for the sin of all of mankind.



Whoever believes through faith that Christ died in their place for their sins, and places their faith in Jesus Christ to save them from their sins, can and will be saved from spiritual death (**John 3:15-18**) and eternal death.



Philippians 2:6-8...

"Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. ⁸ Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."



Romans 6:23...

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

#2 Physical death...



Adam's first sin also brought physical death to all of mankind.



Before Adam sinned...



God created the human body to have the ability to live forever.



Now, with sin, the body experiences decay where ultimately the body's metabolic processes will be overcome and eventually return to dust from which it was originally made (**Genesis 2:7**).



It is important to understand that...



Physical death does not bring an end to a person's existence.



It merely brings an end to the physical body.



Physical death is something that affects both believer & unbeliever.



Although, Jesus has paid the penalty for sin, and the believer has placed their faith in Christ alone for salvation the believer must still experience physical death, because with sin entering the creation, physical death has become a condition of human existence.



The Apostle John tells us in [Revelation 21](#) that one day, when God creates the new heaven and new earth, there will no longer be any kind of death. Although the believer must face physical death, they can take comfort in the fact that physical death will bring them into the unhindered presence of God ([Philippians 1:20-23](#)).

#3 Eternal death...



Adam's sin also brought eternal death to mankind.



The Apostle John calls eternal death...

➔ The second death in [Revelation 20:11-15](#).



Revelation 20:11-15

¹¹ Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them.

¹² And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is *the book of life*; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. ¹³ And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of *them* according to their deeds. ¹⁴ Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. ¹⁵ And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.



This eternal, or second death...



Is an eternal separation from God in the Lake of Fire from which there is no escape and no relief from the pain and suffering that will be experienced there.



Unbelievers will be cast into the Lake of Fire...

➔ After they appear before Christ at the great white throne judgment.

➔ At this final judgment, unbelievers will be judged according to their deeds, and because of their unbelief their names will not be found in the book of life, and they will be cast for eternity into the lake of fire. (See [Revelation 21:8](#))



Revelation 21:8...

"But for the cowardly & unbelieving & abominable and murderers and immoral persons & sorcerers & idolaters & all liars, their part *will be* in the lake that burns with fire & brimstone, which is the second death."



So what happens when we die?



Well it depends...



When believers die...



Their soul/spirit immediately goes to be with the Lord in heaven.



2nd Corinthians 5:6-8 says...

"⁶ Therefore, being always of good courage, and knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord—⁷ for we walk by faith, not by sight—⁸ we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord." (See also Philippians 1:23)



Their physical bodies remains in the grave "sleeping".



At the rapture, the believer's physical body is resurrected, glorified, and then reunited with the soul/spirit for eternity.



1st Corinthians 15:50-54 says...

"⁵⁰ Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. ⁵¹ Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, ⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. ⁵³ For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality. ⁵⁴ But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, "DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP in victory."



1st Thessalonians 4:13-17 says...

"¹³ But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope. ¹⁴ For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. ¹⁵ For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of *the* archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord."

⚙️ When unbelievers die...

- ! Their soul/spirit goes immediately to a temporary holding place, to await their final resurrection, & judgment.

📖 **Revelation 20:11-15** says...

"¹¹ Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. ¹² And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is *the book of life*; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. ¹³ And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of *them* according to their deeds. ¹⁴ Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. ¹⁵ And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire." (See also Luke 16:22-23)

- ! So all the unbelieving dead will be...

- ➡ Resurrected,
- ➡ Judged at the great white throne,
- ➡ And then being cast into the lake of fire.

💡 Unbelievers, then...

- ✗ Are not sent to hell (the lake of fire) immediately after death
- ✓ But rather they stay in a temporary realm of judgment.

💡 Even though...

- ✗ Unbelievers are not instantly sent to the lake of fire
- ✓ Their immediate fate after death is not a pleasant one
(See Luke 16:24)



Therefore, after death...

- ➡ A person either resides in heaven or in a "temporary" hell.

i At the Great White Throne Judgment...

- ✗ A person's eternal destiny will not change.
- ✓ But the "location" of that eternal destiny is what changes.

i Believers will ultimately be granted entrance...

- ✓ Into the new heavens & new earth (Revelation 21:1).

i Unbelievers will ultimately be sent...

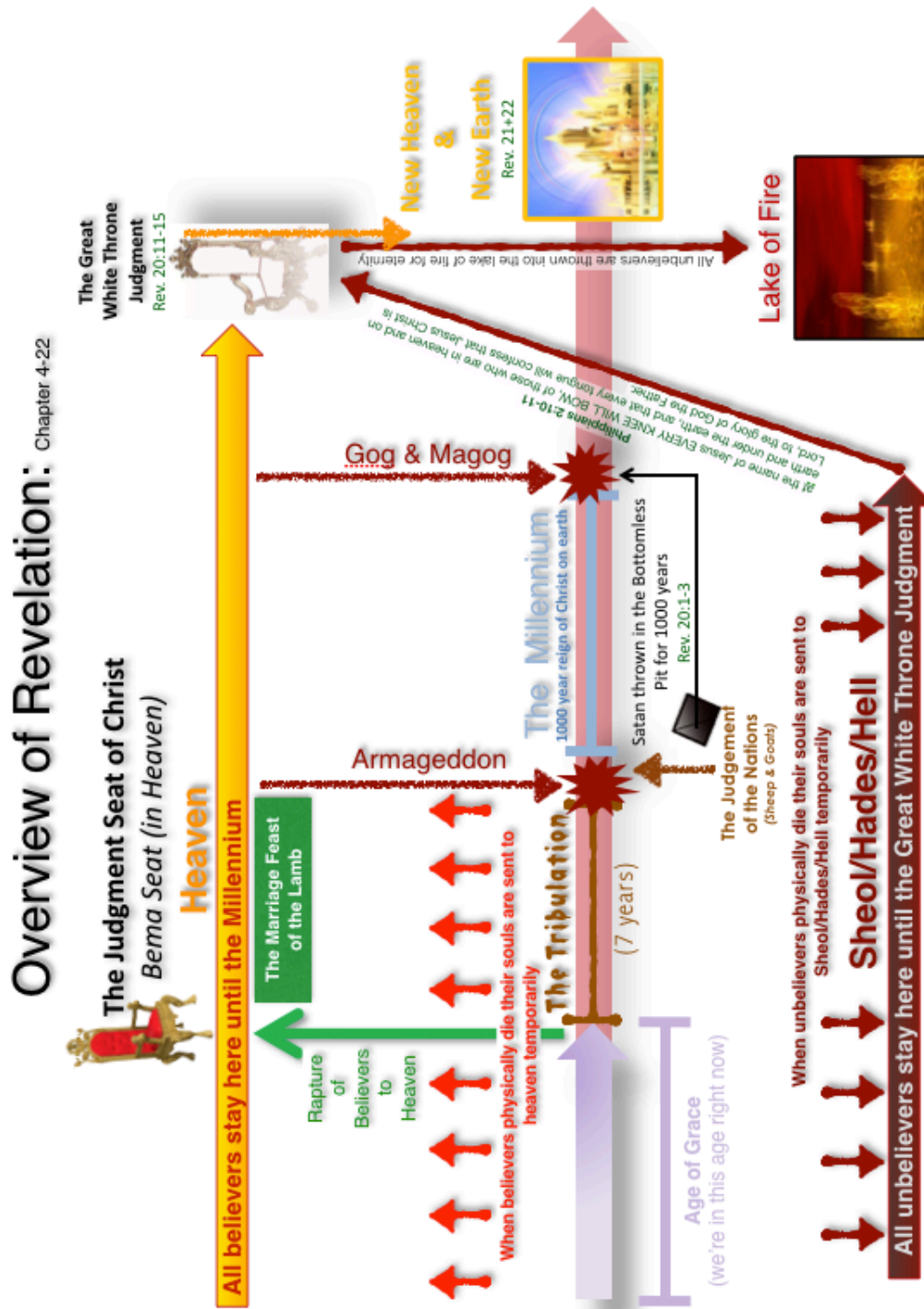
- ✓ To the lake of fire (Revelation 20:11-15).



These are the final, eternal destinations of all people...

FACT

People's eternal destination is based entirely on whether or not they had trusted by faith in Jesus Christ alone for salvation in this earthly life (Matthew 25:46 + John 3:36).





Will Christ Return ? (The Second Coming)

- i** One of the foundational & prominent teachings found in God's Word is...
✓ The literal Second Coming of Jesus Christ to earth.

- i** Jesus Christ Himself declared that He would return...
- ✓ Personally (John 14:3 + John 21:22)
 - ✓ Unexpectedly (Matthew 24:32-51 + Matthew 25:1-13 + Mark 13:33-37)
 - ✓ Suddenly (Matthew 24:26-28)
 - ✓ In the glory of His Father with His angels (Matthew 16:27 + 19:28 + 25:31)
 - ✓ Triumphantly (Luke 19:11-27)

- i** The Apostles all looked forward to the possibility of Christ's return...
- ✓ Peter (Acts 3:19-21 + 2nd Peter 3:3 + 2nd Peter 3:8-13)
 - ✓ Paul (Philippians 3:20 + 1st Thessalonians 4:16)
(2nd Thessalonians 1:7-10 + 1st Corinthians 15:51 + Titus 2:13)
 - ✓ James (James 5:7)
 - ✓ John (1st John 2:28 + 1st John 3:2 + Revelation 22:12)

- i** The generation of believers after the Apostles believed that Christ's return was imminent.

- ✓ Polycarp (AD. 70-156)
- ✓ Papias (AD. 70-155)
- ✓ Ignatius (AD. 67-110)
- ✓ Irenaeus (AD. 120-202)
- ✓ Tertullian (A.D. 155 - 240)
- ✓ Hippolytus (AD. 170-236)



These early "church fathers" all believed in the literal premillennial return of Christ whereupon He would reign here on literal earth for 1000 years.

- i** Over time, the teaching of the Second Coming of Christ was neglected and many people started rejecting it! The Apostle Peter actually said that in the last days scoffers would come asking why Christ had not returned as He promised (2nd Peter 3:4).

- i** Over the past 150 years, there has been a renewed interest in studying and teaching the whole counsel of God. Thus the Second Coming of Christ is being taught with more frequency in Non-reformed, evangelical churches today.



The Scriptures encourage Believers...



To look forward everyday to the appearing of their Lord.

It is the great hope of the Church.

Titus 2:11-15...

¹¹ For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, ¹² instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, ¹³ looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, ¹⁴ who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds. ¹⁵ These things speak and exhort and reprove with all authority. Let no one disregard you.

1st Peter 1:3-5...

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ to *obtain* an inheritance *which is* imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, ⁵ who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

2nd Peter 3:9-13...

⁹ The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance. ¹⁰ But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. ¹¹ Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, ¹² looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat! ¹³ But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.

Yes!

Perhaps today is the day that Jesus will come and rapture His church to be with Him! What a great day that will be when we will see our Savior face to face !

1st John 3:2...

"Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is."

Christ's return encourages the Believer to live for the Lord

 **YES!** By conducting ourselves in holiness & godliness

 **2nd Peter 3:1...**

"Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness"

 **1st John 3:3...**

"And everyone who has this hope *fixed* on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure"

 **YES!** By being watchful and persevering

 **1st Thessalonians 5:4-6...**

⁴ But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day would overtake you like a thief; ⁵ for you are all sons of light and sons of day. We are not of night nor of darkness; ⁶ so then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober.

 **1st John 2:28...**

"Now, little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming."

 **YES!** By being a comfort to us

 **1st Thessalonians 4:13-18...**

¹³ But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope.

¹⁴ For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. ¹⁵ For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep.

¹⁶ For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of *the* archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord. ¹⁸ Therefore comfort one another with these words. (See also: Hebrews 10:35-39 + James 5:7-8)

 **YES!** By reminding us to serve Him

 **1st Corinthians 3:11-15...**

¹¹ For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. ¹² Now if any man builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, ¹³ each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is *to be* revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. ¹⁴ If any man's work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward. ¹⁵ If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.



Based on these and many more reasons too numerous to mention, it is safe to say that the Second Coming of Christ is a VERY important doctrine of the Bible that we must understand, live and teach !



So how will Christ return?



The second coming of Christ is one event, but it develops in two stages.

- ➔ The **first stage** Jesus comes **FOR** His church/ Believers in the **AIR**.
- ➔ The **second stage** Jesus comes **WITH** Believers to **EARTH**.

STAGE 1

Jesus comes **FOR** His church/ Believers in the **AIR**.

* This is sometimes labeled “the rapture” which means...

- “to snatch away”
- “to transport”

* It is at this stage that Jesus Christ comes...

- But He does not come all the way down to “terra firma”
- Instead Believers are “caught up” to meet the Lord in the **AIR**.
- Unbelievers will be left on earth to experience the tribulation period.

 **1st Thessalonians 4:16-17...**

“¹⁶ For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of *the* archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.”

 **John 14:3** - Jesus says...

“If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, *there* you may be also.”

STAGE 2

Jesus comes **WITH** Believers to **EARTH**.

* After the tribulation period, Jesus Christ will return...

- To defeat the Antichrist &
- To established His kingdom.

* When Jesus Christ returns...

- His saints, all believers that were in heaven, will be with Him

 **1st Thessalonians 3:13...** “...at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints.”

 **Acts 1:11**, the Angels said...

“Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven.”

 **Zechariah 14:4...**

“In that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which is in front of Jerusalem on the east...”



In the **first stage** of Jesus' return...

- ➡ Those that have already died...
 - ✓ Will receive their glorified bodies first.
- ➡ Those that are alive...
 - ✓ Will have their bodies transformed as they go to meet the Lord in the air.

 1st Thessalonians 4:16-17...

¹⁶ For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord."

 Romans 8:23...

"And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body."

 Philippians 3:20-21...

²⁰ For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; ²¹ who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.

 1st Corinthians 15:51-53...

⁵¹ Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, ⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. ⁵³ For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality.



So when will Christ return?

 Matthew 24:36+42, Jesus said...

³⁶ But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone.

⁴² "Therefore be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming.

FACT No one knows the exact time of Jesus' return.



Believers should always maintain an attitude of anticipation...



Where they eagerly await His return every day



But Believers must be careful NOT TO SET DATES !



Throughout history there has always been some people who have ignored our Savior's warning and have gone ahead and set dates for His return.



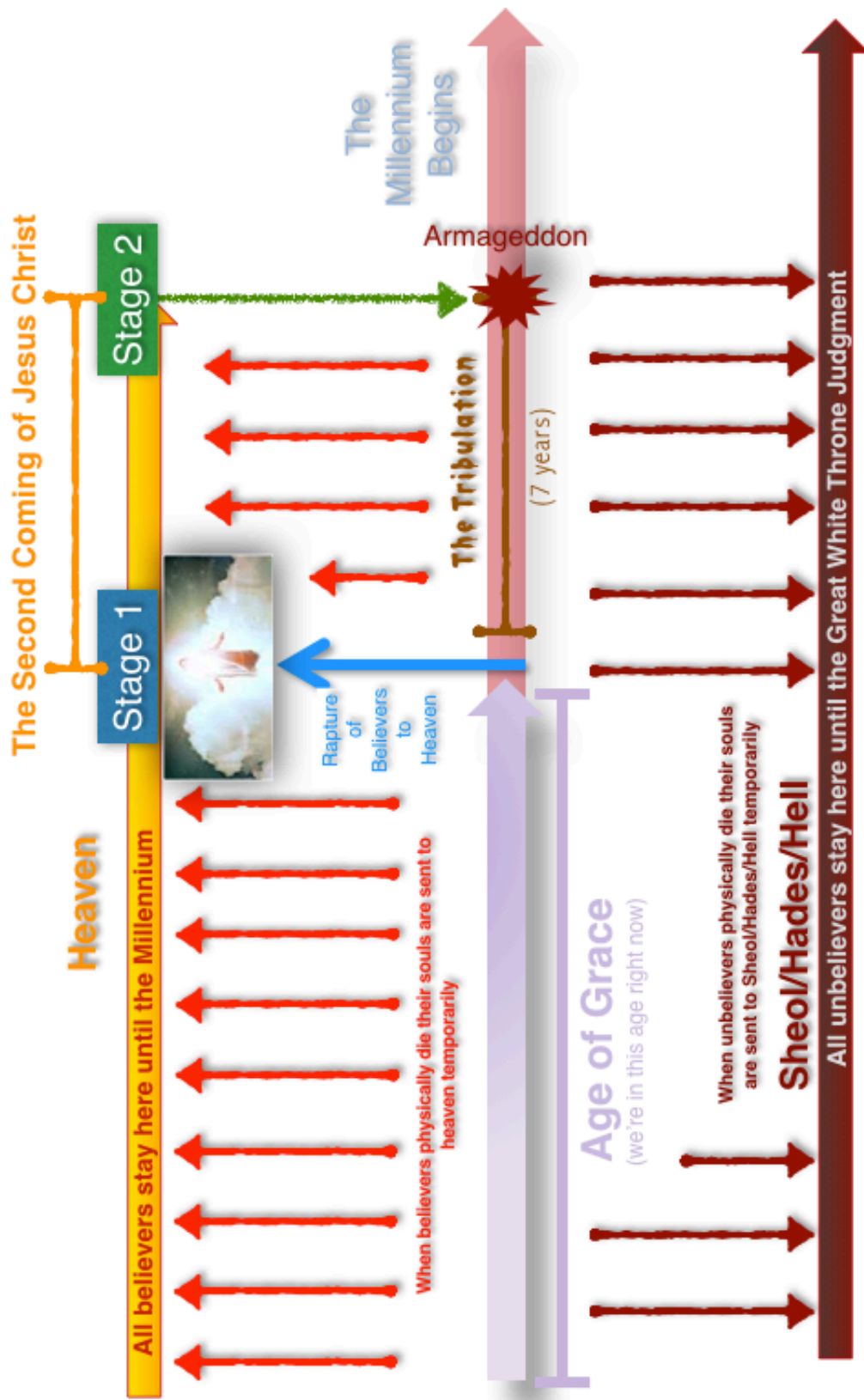
Seriously, think about it...



How could they know the time if...



Not even the Son of God knows the exact time !



Title: Seven Churches of Asia - The BIG Picture of Church History

Passage: Revelation 2+3



Today we are going to be looking at:



The Big Picture of Church History



And to do this we are going to learn about:



The letters written to the **Seven Churches of Asia...**



That is found in the book of **Revelation**



Now, people for the most part...

→ Find the book of Revelation...

...to be quite a mystery.



Many confused...

→ *Teachers* &

→ *Theologians...*



Have said that **it cannot be understood completely**



And **most people avoid the book** all together.



This is sad because...

FACT

The word "Revelation" actually means...



"an uncovering, an unveiling or a disclosure"

FACT

It was **given to us:**



To clear up confusion !



To help us understand things better !



Not to make things more confusing

FACT

It was **written for us...**



To understand why certain things **have happened** &



To understand what God's **plan** is **for things to come.**



The book of **Revelation** becomes amazingly clear...



Once the obvious **key to the book** is understood.



The key is found in **Revelation 1:19**



Where it says...

"Therefore write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after these things."



This **verse 19** is...

- ✓ The **key verse**
- ✓ That **unlocks the door** of this **Great Book of Prophecy**



We can divide the verse into three parts:

- PAST
- PRESENT &
- FUTURE

Let's take a look at **verse 19**, it says...

● "Therefore, write the things which you have seen"

- PAST TENSE



The Apostle John does this in **Revelation 1**...

- ➔ Where he writes about the things
- ➔ That had recently happened to him.



The next part of **verse 19** says write...

● "...the things which are"

- PRESENT TENSE



The Apostle John does this in **Chapters 2 & 3**...

- ➔ And they contain the letters
- ➔ To the **Seven Churches of Asia**





Now important to understand that...



These **Seven Churches**...

FACT

Were **physically in existence**...

...in Asia Minor at the time.



These **Seven Churches** also represent...

FACT

Seven periods in Church History...

...that span the **entire Church Age**.



I.A.W...

FACT

These **Seven Churches**...

...give a **panoramic view** of that history.



These **Seven Churches** also represent...

FACT

Traits that can be found...

...in any church, in any age.



Lastly, these **Seven Churches** represent...

FACT

Traits...

➡ Both **Good** & **Bad**

➡ That can be found in **individual Believers**.

Transition:

So let's see what Jesus says to the first church...



The Church at Ephesus



#1 The Church @ Ephesus – the Apostolic Era



Let's read...

Revelation 2:1-7

¹ "To the angel of the church of Ephesus write, 'These things says He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands:

² "I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars;

³ and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name's sake and have not become weary.

- ⁴ Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love.
⁵ Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place — unless you repent.
⁶ But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.
⁷ "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God."



Let me tell you a little bit about the city of **Ephesus**...

- 🔧 This was a prosperous **port** city
- 🔧 This was also a city full of **idolatry**
- 🔧 The **Temple of Diana** was located there !



Now, anytime you add:

→ **Prosperity** + **Idolatry** together...

...it typically = **BIG TIME SIN**

→ And **Ephesus** was **SIN CENTRAL**



In **His** letter...

✓ **Jesus** commends **the Church @ Ephesus** in verse 2:

✓ For their **work & endurance**

📖 And then **He** says...

"and... you cannot bear those who are evil.
And you have tested those who say they
are apostles and are not, and have found
them liars"



Jesus commends **the Church @ Ephesus**...

✓ Because they checked everything against the **Word of God**



And if anybodies...

→ Ministries & Teachings



Didn't match up...

✓ Then they were able to detect it

✓ And know that they were **false teachers**

✓ And have nothing to do with them.



This is one aspect of Church life that very few people like !



In the...

- 🔥 Politically Correct
- 🔥 Post Modern world...

...that we live in today

...people want the Church to be:

👎 Light on **judgment**

👎 Light on **discipline**

🔥 And the last thing that they want you to talk about...

➡ Is **SIN** !



It seems now-days...

- 🔥 Many people have got to the point...
- 🔥 Where they think that anything...

👎 That has a **"Jesus" bumper sticker** slapped on it is ok.



But **the Church @ Ephesus...**

✓ Understood that it's not all okay !



In fact it is **a rip off**



And it's down right **dangerous** !



Then Jesus moves on...



To another **area of commendation**

He says in **verse 6...**

"But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also **hate**."



We are always...

- A little **surprised & shocked**
- When we hear Jesus say that...

! He **hates** something !



It doesn't seem like Jesus could hate anything !

✗ But that is not the case !

✓ There are a-lot-of things that Jesus **hates**



And here is something else...

- That you can add to the list of things that God **hates...**

! Jesus hates are **the deeds** of the **Nicolaitans** !



Very important: ????



Does Jesus hate the Nicolaitans?

✗ No, He **hates what they do**

✓ Jesus **hates the sin...**

✓ **BUT loves the sinner**



So what were the deeds of the **Nicolaitans** that Jesus **hated**?



Let me break this down for you...

➔ "Nico" means to "stand above" or "over"

➔ "Laity" refers to "people"



These people wanted to be the ones who...



Represent you to God



And God to you.



They would say that...



They **hear** from God...

...in a way that you don't



They **know** things about God...

...that you don't



If you really want **to go deep with God**...

...then you need them



Why would Jesus hate that?



Because Jesus laid down His life...



So that you can have an...

✓ Unhindered

✓ Personal

✓ Intimate relationship

...with **Him**.



The Church @ Ephesus...

➤ Would not put up with these people...



And neither should we.



Now you hear all of that and you could be thinking...

👍 That is right on

👍 That is a happening Church !

YEAH! And it was !

BUT...

↪ **Jesus** still has more to say to this Church and in **verse 4...**

↪ **He corrects the Church @ Ephesus.**

📖 "Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love."



The Church @ Ephesus...

👍 Had **good works**

👍 Had **perseverance**

👍 Had **a passion for God's Word**

👎 **BUT** they had "**fallen out of love with Jesus.**"



Essentially...

👎 The **work** became **more important...**

...than **the One** who they were **working for.**

👎 The **ministry** was **more important...**

...than their **relationship with the Lord**

👎 **Ministry** was **no longer the outflow of love...**

...it became the **replacement for love.**



Listen, this can happen very easily.



Think about it...

❓ Do you **pray** because you are told to...

...or because of your love for Jesus?

❓ Do you **come to church...**

...because of **your love for the Lord?**

...because you **love studying God's Word?**

...because you **want to be an encouragement to others?**



The Believers @ **Ephesus** had left their first love...



So **Jesus gives them the solution** in **verse 5**...

"Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place — unless you repent."



The solution...

➤ **If we are going to get back to our first love**

➤ Can be summed up with three words...

➡ **REMEMBER**

➡ **REPENT** &

➡ **RETURN.**

#1 First we need to **REMEMBER** where we have fallen.



Think back to the early days of your Christian life.

? What happened that made us loose that **first love**?

? Is it the way that we **prioritize our time**?

? Is it **too much self**?

? Is it the **people that we have fallen in with**?

? Is it **sinful habits that have taken over our lives**?

#2 The **second** thing that we need to do...

➤ **If we are going to get back to our first love** is... **REPENT**



To repent means **to do a 180**.

➡ You were heading one way...

...and you turn around

...and head the opposite way.

? What is keeping us away from **our first love relationship with Jesus**.



Is there **habitual sin** in your life...

...that robbing you of a relationship with God?



Then cut those sins off.



Have your **priorities become detrimental**...

...to your walk with the Lord?



Then get rid of them.

FACT

If you are a **Believer** **you don't have to stay** trapped by sin !

FACT

By the **power of God working in you**, **you can change**.

#3 The third thing we need to do **to get back to our first love** is to... **RETURN**

➤ To do the things that you did at the beginning.

? So what were those things you did when you first got saved?

? How was your **prayer time**?

? How was your **Bible study**?

? How was your **service for the Lord**?

? What did you do out of your Love for God?

🎯 Get back to doing those things.



Now there were repercussions...

! If **the Church @ Ephesus** didn't get back to their **first love**.

📖 Let's read you **verse 5** one more time....

"Remember therefore from where you have fallen;
repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you
quickly and remove your lampstand from its place —
unless you repent."

i **Jesus** says...

➡ If you don't repent...

! **He** will remove the "lampstand" from its place.

➡ The "lampstand" is the picture of the Church.

i Jesus is saying...

! He will close its doors

! He will dissolve it



You might be thinking:

" **Would Jesus really do that ?** "



Well, it wasn't but a few years after this...

☹ That there was no Christian presence in Ephesus at all.

☹ The church's **good works**...

...was not enough to keep them going!

☹ Their **perseverance**...

...gave out &

...they folded

...they didn't survive.



WHY?



Because **the most important thing was missing...**

...their Love for Jesus.

! So **Jesus** removed their light.



#2 The Church @ Smyrna – The Pagan Persecutions



This is by far the shortest of all the letters...

...that Jesus writes to His Churches



BUT they are *powerful* verses...

...which brought **a message of hope**

...to a Church that **was really going through it.**



Let's read these verses together...

Revelation 2:8-11

⁸ "And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write, 'These things says the First and the Last, who was dead, and came to life:

⁹ "I know your works, tribulation, and poverty (but you are rich); and I know the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.

¹⁰ Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.

¹¹ "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death."



This Church represents historically...



The Persecuted Church



That went from about **54 A.D.** to about **305 A.D.**



This was an **intense time in Church history !**



200 years of brutal persecution...

...that effected Churches

...through out the Roman Empire.



In this Church...

➔ There were no lukewarm Christians !

➔ You were either **all in**, or **all out** !



Lets take a look at Smyrna itself...

🔑 The city of Smyrna was situated about **35 miles north of Ephesus**.

🔑 The city's **main source of income** was...

→ From **Myrrh**

→ Which is a *tree resin*...

...that when *crushed*

...would give off a sweet fragrance.

🔑 You might say that Smyrna was a **boutique Sea Port City**...

→ Not near as big & bustling as Ephesus

→ But **much nicer**.

🔑 Hence Smyrna's **nickname** was...

→ The **Ornament of Asia**.

🔑 Smyrna's **claim to fame** was it's famous **Temple hill** in the city.

→ On the one end you had the Temple of **Zeus**

→ On the other end you had the Temple of **Sybile**...

...the "**mother of the god's**"

→ **In between** you had the temple of **Apollo**s

🔑 **Emperor Worship** was also huge in Smyrna

🔑 Smyrna also had a very **large Jewish population**.



So let's look at what Jesus has to say to the Church at Smyrna again.



Look at **verse 9**...

"I know your works, tribulation, and poverty (but you are rich); and I know the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan."



The church was faithful to the Lord...



In-spite of intense "**tribulation**."



This word "**tribulation**" is the Greek word "**thlip-sis**"

🔑 It literally means "**pressure**"

🔑 What would come to mind when they used the word "**thlipsis**" is...

→ "**pressure**" from stones that ground wheat into flour.



The "**pressure**" came from those that worshipped the **pagan gods**.

- ⚙ In the **pagan** community...
 - 🔧 They had unions or guilds
 - 🔧 If you were a member in good standing...
 - ...you could do business
 - 🔧 If you were not...
 - ...and Believers were not
 - ...they cut you off.

i The **"pressure"** also came from those that worshipped **the Emperor**.

- ⚙ Believers wouldn't worship Caesar...
 - ! So they were considered the enemy of Rome.
- 💣 Usually the husband would be put in jail...
 - ...and the family would be put out on the street.
- 💣 Anyone who turned a Christian in...
 - ...would be rewarded with 10% of what was seized !
 - ...so there was great incentives for turning Christians in.

i The **"pressure"** came from **the Jews** from **the local synagogues**.

- ⚙ The Jews were determined...
 - ! To drive the Christians out of their city
 - ! And they were not nice about it.
 - ! These guys meant business.
- ⚙ These guys had the **full support**...
 - **Of the community &**
 - **The Roman Authorities**
- 💣 So you know that **they held nothing back**...
 - ...in their persecution of the Christians.
 - ...nobody would stop them !
- ⚙ The result of all this persecution was **"poverty."**
 - In the eyes of the world...
 - ...they were a people of **"poverty"**
 - BUT in the eyes of God...
 - ...they were **"rich"** (Rev. 2:9).

📖 Jesus says...

i "I know your works, your tribulation, your poverty, BUT, you are rich."
Suffering...

✗ Does not continue forever

✓ The **blessings & promises...**

...that is ours as a result of salvation through Christ

...will **go on for eternity.**

📖 **1st Corinthians 15:58** say's it so well...

“Be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.”



Let's read on in **verse 10**. Jesus says...

📖 “Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.”



Jesus is telling this church...

- Guys, you have **done great this far...**
...but **get ready, more persecution is coming.**
- In-fact you will have tribulation for ten days
- There are ten more waves of tribulation that are going to come
- So be ready
- But don't fear
- **Satan is going to test you...**
...don't give in.”



The **10 days of persecution...**

➡ **Came between AD54 - AD305**

➡ From **ten different Roman Caesars**



It will start with...

1. Nero (AD 54-68)
2. Domitian (AD 81-96)
3. Trajan (AD 98-112)
4. Marcus Aurelius (AD 161-180)
5. Severus (AD 193-211)
6. Maximinus (AD 235-238)
7. Decius (AD 240-251)
8. Valerian (AD 253-260)
9. Aurelian (AD 270-275)
10. Diocletian (AD 285-305)

i In **155 AD, Polycarp...**

- Who was a disciple of the Apostle John
- Served as the Pastor of the church at Smyrna

i Polycarp was **arrested...**

- And was about to be burned at the stake.
- They gave him one **last chance...**

...to recant and worship Cesar.

i Here is what Polycarp said...

"For 86 years I have served my King and he has been faithful to me. Why should I deny Him now? You ask me to forsake my God for a fire that burns for less than an hour. You are in danger of fire that will never die"

- With that they lit the fire
- But it burned away from him
- So they stabbed him to death...

...and then burned his body.

i The **believers in Smyrna** were **perfect examples** of...

✓ Being "**faithful unto death.**"

i It is estimated that **more than 6 million Believers died...**

👍 **Refusing to deny the Lord**

👍 **They wouldn't fold !**

i God used **the enemies efforts** for **His own glory...**

...and **the church grew.**

i Failing to destroy the church...

↪ **Satan changes his tactics.**

↪ Satan's plan now was to infiltrate the Church



#3 The Church @ Pergamos – State Church

i Let me tell you a little bit about the City of Pergamos...

🔑 It was situated about **60 miles north** of **Smyrna...**
...and **20 miles inland**.

🔑 It had the **2nd largest library** in the world.

🔑 It also had was the **largest medical school** in the Roman Empire.

🔑 The **Temple of Zeus**, one the **Seven Wonders of the World** was there.

🔑 It also had the **largest temple** dedicated to **Cesar** Worship in the Empire.

📖 Let's read **Revelation 2:12-17**

¹² "And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write,
'These things says He who has the sharp two-edged
sword:

¹³ "I know your works, and where you dwell, where
Satan's throne is. And you hold fast to My name, and
did not deny My faith even in the days in which
Antipas was My faithful martyr, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells.

¹⁴ But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold
the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the
children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual
immorality.

¹⁵ Thus you also have those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing
I hate.

¹⁶ Repent, or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the
sword of My mouth.

¹⁷ "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him
who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give
him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows
except him who receives it."

i Rome had been **persecuting the Church for over 200 years !**

i Then an interesting thing happened...

➡ **The Emperor of Rome dies**

➡ His **two main generals** Maxentius & Constantine...

...began to **scramble** to take over his throne.

-  It came down to a **decisive battle...**
 - ...the Battle at the Milvian Bridge
 - ...that would determine which general would lead Rome
-  Constantine **prays...**
 - And asks the God of the Christians...
 - ...to give him the victory
 - Constantine Promises God...
 - ...that if he came into power
 - ...he would **make Christianity the religion of Rome.**
-  Constantine...
 - Wins the battle
 - Takes over the throne
 - And Christianity becomes the **State Religion of Rome.**
-  The Church & State...
 - Were now allies
 - And it became popular to be called a "Christian."
-  The church at Pergamos...
 - Was a thriving Church
 - But, it **began to thrive in a different & negative** way...
 - ... once Constantine came into power.
-  With Constantine...
 - The whole Roman Empire was now open to them...
 - ...but that was part of the problem.
-  The struggle was going to be...
 -  How to be **in the world**
 -  **BUT** how to **keep the junk of the world out!**
-  Sadly the church failed and allowed...
 -  The **culture** of the day...
 -  The **religions** of the day &...
 -  The **politics** of the day...
 - ...to **INFLUENCE** the church
 - ...and it became totally corrupt
 - ...and ineffective.



For example the false doctrines of...



Baptismal Regeneration...



Mary-worship...



Praying for the dead...

...came into the church.



Taken as a whole...

➤ The message to the church in Pergamum is...



A warning against compromise from the Word of God.



Believers are commanded...



To remain **pure** & **separate**

➔ From the world's...

➔ **Religious**

➔ **Moral, &**

➔ **Ethical standards**



Believers need to be careful to examine...

➔ Their **motivations**

➔ Their **actions** ...in *light of God's Word*



Believers...



Are **not to live** according to the **standards of the world.**



Pergamos is...



Known as the **State Church**



Which prepared the **groundwork** for the powerful **4th stage...**

● **Thyatira – The Papacy !**



#4 The Church @ Thyatira – The Papal Church

Revelation 2:18-29

- 18 "And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write,
'These things says the Son of God, who has eyes like a
flame of fire, and His feet like fine brass:
- 19 "I know your works, love, service, faith, and your
patience; and as for your works, the last are more
than the first.
- 20 Nevertheless I have a few things against you,
because you allow that woman Jezebel, who calls
herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce My
servants to commit sexual immorality and eat things
sacrificed to idols.
- 21 And I gave her time to repent of her sexual immorality, and she did not repent.
- 22 Indeed I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her
into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds.
- 23 I will kill her children with death, and all the churches shall know that I am He
who searches the minds and hearts. And I will give to each one of you
according to your works.
- 24 "Now to you I say, and to the rest in Thyatira, as many as do not have this
doctrine, who have not known the depths of Satan, as they say, I will put on
you no other burden.
- 25 But hold fast what you have till I come.
- 26 And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give
power over the nations —
- 27 'He shall rule them with a rod of iron; They shall be dashed to pieces like the
potter's vessels' — as I also have received from My Father;
- 28 and I will give him the morning star.
- 29 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."



Thyatira...

- Represents the Church that went from **600 A.D. to 1517 A.D.**
- It represents the **Church of the Dark Ages.**



So what is going on here...

- Well, the Church had Jesus as the figure head
- But their **doctrine** became **full of mumbo jumbo**

...that had **no basis** in **Scripture** at all.



Let me explain how this happened...

- In **Revelation 2:20** we are introduced to **a false prophetess...**
...named **Jezebel**

- **She** became known by that name...

→ Because her works so closely paralleled

→ Those of **Jezebel** in the **Old Testament**

(1 Kings 16:31; 18:1-21:29).

🗨️ **She** taught the church *how to compromise*



So as the Church...

! Became the Church of the State - **The Church of Rome**

! They allowed people to come in...

...and **bring pagan practices & doctrines**

...that had **no basis** in the **Scriptures** at all



Many of **the false doctrines...**



That came into the Church **during this period** are **still around today**.



The following **false doctrines...**



Were introduced during this **1000 year** period of Church history

- 🗨️ The doctrine of Purgatory = 593
- 🗨️ Latin the only language permitted for prayer and worship = 600
- 🗨️ Prayers directed to Mary, dead saints, and angels = 600
- 🗨️ Title of Pope or universal Bishop = 610
- 🗨️ Worship of the Cross, images, and relics = 786
- 🗨️ Celibacy of the Priesthood = 1079
- 🗨️ The Rosary, prayer beads, rote prayers = 1090
- 🗨️ The Inquisition instituted by the Counsel of Veronica = 1184
- 🗨️ Sale of Indulgences = 1190
- 🗨️ The Doctrine of Transubstantiation = 1215
- 🗨️ Forbidding laypeople to read the bible = 1229
- 🗨️ Infallibility of the Pope in matters of faith and morals = 1870



You **will not find Biblical support** for any of these doctrines !

! And yet they were brought into the Church at this time

! And many are **still held in some portions** of the Church **today !**



It is interesting to note that...

🔑 The meaning of the word "Thyatira" = "Continual Sacrifice"

🔑 "Continual Sacrifice" describes...

→ The **Roman Catholic doctrine** of Transubstantiation



Transubstantiation is where...

👎 The sacrifice of the mass became a continual offering for sin



Transubstantiation teaches that...

👎 The wafer becomes the literal body of **Christ**

👎 The wine offered becomes the literal blood of **Christ**

...thus the term "Continual Sacrifice."



The Bible teaches us that...

👍 **The work of atonement** was **completely finished...**

...when the **Lord Jesus** uttered the words

..."It is finished" on the cross.

(John 19:30)



Turn with me in your Bibles to **Hebrews 10:10-14...**



And let see what it says concerning **the finished work of atonement**

¹⁰ By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ **once for all**.

¹¹ Every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins;

¹² but He, having **offered one sacrifice for sins for all time**, sat down at the right hand of God,

¹³ waiting from that time onward until His enemies be made a footstool for His feet.

¹⁴ For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.



Not only did our **Lord Jesus Christ**...



Die once for all our sins



But **He** was taken off the cross



And **He** rose from the dead !



1 Corinthians 15:4 says, "and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures"



The **Lord Jesus Christ** is risen !



God accepted **His sacrifice once & for all** !



The Church of this period made **Jesus** so angry.



That **Jesus** says in **verse 18**...

➔ That **He** is standing with...

"eyes like a flame of fire, and
His feet are like burnished bronze."



His eyes were "like a flame of fire"

➤ Meaning that **nothing is hidden** from **Him**

➤ **He** knew exactly what was going on in this Church.



Bronze in the scriptures is always a **picture of Judgment**.



That is quite a picture of **Jesus** isn't it?



Jesus promises...

! **To judge THIS church**

! And its followers **once & for all**

! And He will do this **at the tribulation**...

...as **they will not be raptured** up

...with the **true bible believing church**.



In **Revelation 2:24+25**...

➤ **The Lord tells Believers**

➤ In the **true** church...

...to **hold fast until He comes**.



#5 The Church @ Sardis – Reformation Church

Revelation 3:1-6

- ¹ "And to the angel of the church in Sardis write,
'These things says He who has the seven Spirits of
God and the seven stars: "I know your works, that
you have a name that you are alive, but you are
dead."
- ² Be watchful, and strengthen the things which
remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfect before God.
- ³ Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent.
Therefore if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not
know what hour I will come upon you.
- ⁴ You have a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments;
and they shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy.
- ⁵ He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out
his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and
before His angels.
- ⁶ "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."

 The word "Sardis" means "remnant".

 This **stage** in the life of **the church @ Sardis...**

→ Pictures **the Reformation period**

 After 1000 years of **papal** domination...

 The churches **escaped from Roman Catholicism**

 Only to later **fall into the trap of...**

 **DEAD THEOLOGY &**

 Lifeless **FORMALISM.**

 If you really want to see a graphic picture of this...

- Go to Europe.
- Travel through...
 - Italy
 - Austria
 - Germany
 - France &
 - England

! You could spend the rest of your life...

- Going through Churches & Cathedrals in those countries
- The church buildings...

✓ Are amazing structures

✓ Beautiful beyond belief !

☹ And yet there is **no spiritual life in them at all.**



When I go into those Churches...



I get the creeps



I get the heebie-jeebies



All that I can think of is...



"What happened here?"



It's become...



A monument !



In some cases it's even worse, it's become **a museum !**



Or even worse yet...

...it's become a **mausoleum**

...a place for the dead.



What is *particularly shocking* is...

⇒ When you think about **the men who started those churches !**



They were men & woman of great faith !

 During the **Reformation** the Bible was...



Translated & published at great cost of life



So the complete Word of God could be in the hands of the people



In their **own language.**

 They did this...

-  So that the Bible
-  Could go to all people
-  And **no longer be controlled** by **the Papacy**



This was awesome !

-  The **Reformation** was RADICAL !
-  It was POWERFUL !
-  **It changed the course of nations !**



BUT it died !



How did this happen?

 It died...

➤ Because **the old traditions** of Rome like...

-  Infant Baptism...
-  Union of Church & State...
-  Clerical Hierarchy...

...were **still** found in the **Reformation** Church !
...they didn't reform enough !
...they didn't get rid of those heresies !

 God calls on these churches to...

- ✓ **Remember** the truths committed to them
- ✓ To **hold fast** to the **Word of God**
- ✓ **Repent** for the slack way they have now treated the **Word of God**.



Ok, lets wrap this church up with one final thought...

 It's great to think about the letter to **the Church at Sardis**...

...as being **historical**.



BUT we can't forget that...



This message relates to us as well !



We can be coming to church...

- ✓ Singing the songs
- ✓ Listening to the messages
- ✓ Saying a few prayers
- ✓ Fellowshiping with other Believers
- ✓ Serving here & there
- ✓ Throwing a few bucks into the offering



BUT STILL BE SPIRITUALLY DEAD !



It can happen...

- If we haven't accepted Jesus Christ as our personal Savior !
- **NOTHING ELSE MATTERS !**



#6 The Church @ Philadelphia – Missionary Church

- ⚙ The word “**Philadelphia**” means “**brotherly love**.”
- ⚙ The city stood in a **wine-producing area**
- ⚙ Was called the so-called **gateway** to **central Asia Minor**



Revelation 3:7-13

⁷ And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write,
'These things says He who is holy, He who is true, "He who
has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts,
and shuts and no one opens":

⁸ "I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can
shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied
My name.

⁹ Indeed I will make those of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews
and are not, but lie — indeed I will make them come and worship before your
feet, and to know that I have loved you.

¹⁰ Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from
the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell
on the earth.

¹¹ Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take
your crown.

¹² He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he
shall go out no more. I will write on him the name of My God and the name of

the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And I will write on him My new name.

¹³ "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."



As much as you DON'T WANT to be a part of...



The Church of **Sardis**, the **dead** church

OR



The Church of **Laodecia**...

...which we will see is the **lukewarm** church



YOU WANT to be a part of...



The **faithful Church**...

...the Church of **Philadelphia**.



The church @ **Philadelphia** pictures...

➤ A stage in history

➤ That can be dated back to...

➔ The **Great Awakenings**

➔ That took place throughout **Western Culture**

➔ In the **18th & 19th centuries**



During those years there were...



Several **revivals** of a **return** to **God's Word**.



These **revivals** took place under the leadership of...

- The Puritans
- The Wesleys
- The Plymouth Brethren
- Jonathon Edwards
- George Whitefield
- And others...



These Believers...



Were **not flashy**



But they were **faithful !**



Multitudes throughout...



Europe &



America...

...**accepted Christ as their Savior !**



They approached the **understanding of the Scriptures**...



From a **literal perspective**.



There was an **explosion of hymn writing...**



That had **bright melodies**



They **replaced...**



The **liturgical chants & dirges**



With **lyrics** that communicated solid...

✓ Doctrine

✓ Instruction

✓ And challenged the people...

...to live their lives

...according to **God's Word**



It was an era when **the Bible was faithfully preached.**



Like **the Church @ Philadelphia...**



We must be faithful to **the Lord**



And take advantage of **the opportunities He** gives us

...to proclaim the **Good News**

...to those around us & beyond.



Jesus' disciples...



Took the **Gospel** into...

● **Asia Minor &**

● The Eastern fringes of the **Roman Empire**



During the **Reformation...**



The Church sent people out...

● **All over Europe**



During the **Great Awakening...**



Missionaries were literally sent...

● **World wide.**



Now think about...



Your own personal life & ministry...



The opportunities to share **the Gospel** is staggering !



#7 The Church @ Laodicea – The Ecumenical Church

Revelation 3:14-22

- 14 "And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write,
'These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True With
the Beginning of the creation of God:
- 15 "I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I
could wish you were cold or hot.
- 16 So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor
hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.
- 17 Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and
have need of nothing' and do not know that you are
wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked
- 18 I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich;
and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your
nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that
you may see.
- 19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.
- 20 Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens
the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.
- 21 To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also
overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.
- 22 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.'"



The Church @ Laodicea...



Is a church so deceptive...
So lukewarm...

...that Jesus actually says

...that He is going to vomit it out of His mouth !



This is **NOT** a Church that you want to be a part of.



Let me tell you a little bit about the city of **Laodicea** itself...



The City of Laodicea was located...

...**40 miles southeast** of Philadelphia



Laodicea sat right in the middle...

...of **three major trade routes**

...so it was a very important **financial & commercial** center.

🔑 It had a...

- Huge **stadium**
- **Theaters**
- **Lavish public baths,**
- A **medical university**



This was a happening place !



It only had one problem...



But it was a big one...



Laodicea had **no water**.



The water **had to be piped in...**

- From the hot springs that were in **Hieropolis**
- Which was a few miles away.



This water...



Was full of impurities



This water...



Smelled bad



This water...



Was always lukewarm



It was not uncommon for **a visitor...**

- Who **didn't know better**
- To take a drink of water...



And then **immediately spit it out of their mouths.**



It was impossible to get a GOOD, COLD, GLASS of WATER in this city !



We know from history...



That for a while the Church was very effective



And had a great impact on the city



BUT, we also know that...



By about 90 A.D.



It had no effectiveness at all.



Jesus sent this letter to shake the **Laodiceans...**

- Out of their...



Self-sufficient



Complacency &

➤ To encourage them...

👍 To **self-sacrifice**

👍 For **higher spiritual goals**.

i When Jesus says in verses 15 & 16...

📖 ¹⁵ "I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot.

¹⁶ So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.

🎯 What **Jesus** was saying here is...

➤ **He** wants Believers to be **spiritually refreshing**

👍 As **cold water**

OR EVEN

👍 As **hot water** can be

RATHER THAN

👎 A Believer being **spiritually bland...**

...as **lukewarm water**.

i Here is the way that it usually happens...

YEAH! God grabs a hold of a person...

Awesome! And they are so excited to be saved !

👍 **Old things** are **passing away...**

...all things are **new** !

👍 They are **loving righteousness...**

...and **hating sin**

👍 They are in **excited** about reading the **Bible**

👍 They are in **enthusiastic** about **prayer**

👍 They are in **love** with their **new Church family**

👍 IT'S ALL GOOD !!!

👍 IT'S GREAT !!!



BUT, then something happens !



They start...



Getting **complacent**



They start saying...



Who needs to go to **church every week** ?



Who needs to **read the Bible every day** ?



I mean **lets not be legalistic here.**



And before you know it...



Your **spiritual temperature has cooled...**

...right down to lukewarm !



And here is what we can't miss...

➤ **Jesus** says that **if we stay there...**

! He will spit us out of His mouth !



You see...



It's not one of those things...

➤ Where Jesus just sits back & says...



Well too bad



I guess I will just wait until they come around



No, Jesus says...



! If you stay in this condition...

...I will spew you out of My mouth !



The people in **Laodicea**...



Knew exactly what this meant !



So here is what we need to do about this...



It's down in **verse 19**, "Be zealous and repent."



In other words:



Do something about it



Get back to your first love



Get back to where God is first in your priorities again



Ok, lets read on in **verses 20 & 21**...

²⁰ Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.

²¹ To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.



How amazing is this...

! **Jesus** doesn't right them off !

! **Jesus** doesn't rain down fire from heaven on them !

No !



Out of **His** love...

✓ **He** patiently waits outside

✓ **And He** knocks on the door of the Church

✓ Hoping that they will open the door and let Him back in !



Right now...

➤ All around the world

➤ Jesus is standing outside of the door...

... of so many Churches

...and He is knocking !

➤ It's Sunday !

➤ You are all inside !

➤ Let Me in...

...that I might have fellowship with you



But **His** knock will go unheeded !



How sad !



What about you?



Overview of Revelation



People for the most part find the book of Revelation to...



Be quite a mystery &



Most people avoid the book all together



This is sad because remember the word "Revelation" actually means...

✓ "an uncovering"

✓ "an unveiling" or

✓ "a disclosure"



It was given to us...



To clear up confusion



To help us understand things better



Not to make things more confusing



It was written for us to understand...

✓ Why certain things have happened and

✓ What the Lord's divine plan is for things to come



The book of Revelation becomes amazingly clear...

...once the obvious key to the book is understood.



And the key is found in **Revelation 1:19** where it says,



Therefore write the things which you have seen,
and the things which are, and the things which
will take place after these things."



This **verse 19...**



Is the key verse that unlocks the door of this great book of prophecy.



We can divide the verse into three parts: PAST - PRESENT - FUTURE!



Let's take a look at **verse 19**, it says...



"...write the things which you have seen" – **PAST TENSE**



The Apostle John does this in **Chapter 1...**



Where he writes about the things that **at that time**
had recently happened to him already.



The next part of **verse 19** says write...



"...the things which are" – **PRESENT TENSE**



Now, **Revelation chapters 2-3** deals with – the present:



This contains...



The letters Christ delivers through the Apostle John...



To the Seven Churches of Asia Minor

- ⚙️ These letters deal with **the present age** that we are currently in...
 - ➡️ Which **started at Pentecost** (when the church was formed)
 - ➡️ And **concludes with the Rapture of the Church**
- ⚙️ The letters were prophetic to those actual churches that received the letters because it told them of what was going to happen to them in **the future !**
- ⚙️ We, the current day church...
 - ➡️ Will see by looking back through history
 - ➡️ That many of these prophecies have already been fulfilled.



BUT...



You must understand that we are still living in the present age that those letters refer too because the church has not been raptured yet.



The final instruction John receives in **verse 19** is to write...



"...the things which will take place after these things" – **FUTURE TENSE**



Revelation **Chapter 4** to end of the book goes on & deals with **the future !**



Ok, so today the focus of our study will be on...



"...the things which will take place after these things"

● **THE FUTURE AGE** found in Revelation Chapters 4+22.



Let's start are study with a Panoramic view of the Tribulation Period.

#1 Panoramic View of the Tribulation Period



The Bible makes it clear throughout **Scripture** that...



There has never in the history of mankind been such a terrible event...
...such as what is coming during the Tribulation.



Jesus Himself said the Tribulation would take place...

...just before His second coming.



In **Matthew 24:29,30** Jesus told His disciples in His **Olivet Discourse** what would happen...



"Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken:\ and then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven, and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with great power and great glory."

 The reason the Tribulation will be a holocaust of proportions never seen before is because it combines...



The wrath of God



The fury of Satan &



The evil nature of man running unchecked.

 The Length of the Tribulation will be...



7 years



Divided into 2 periods of...

...3 ^{1/2} years or 1260 days.

 During this time **a miraculous event will occur** where...



The whole Jewish Nation will place their faith in Jesus Christ !

 At first...



144,000 Jews will be converted & begin preaching the gospel.

 Then later...



The whole nation will turn to the Lord.

 So when Christ comes...



All of surviving Israel will be saved



And be watching for their Lord's Return.

 During this time...



Many Jewish believers will be killed for their faith.



Including the 144,000 Jewish witnesses.

 During the Tribulation many Gentiles will be saved as a result of the testimony from the Jewish remnant.



These Gentiles will refuse...



To take on the mark of the Antichrist on their foreheads



Or worship his idol.



These Gentile believers will...



Support the persecuted Jewish witnesses with food & clothing & visit them when sick or cast into prison.



A great number of the Gentile believers will die as martyrs for Christ.

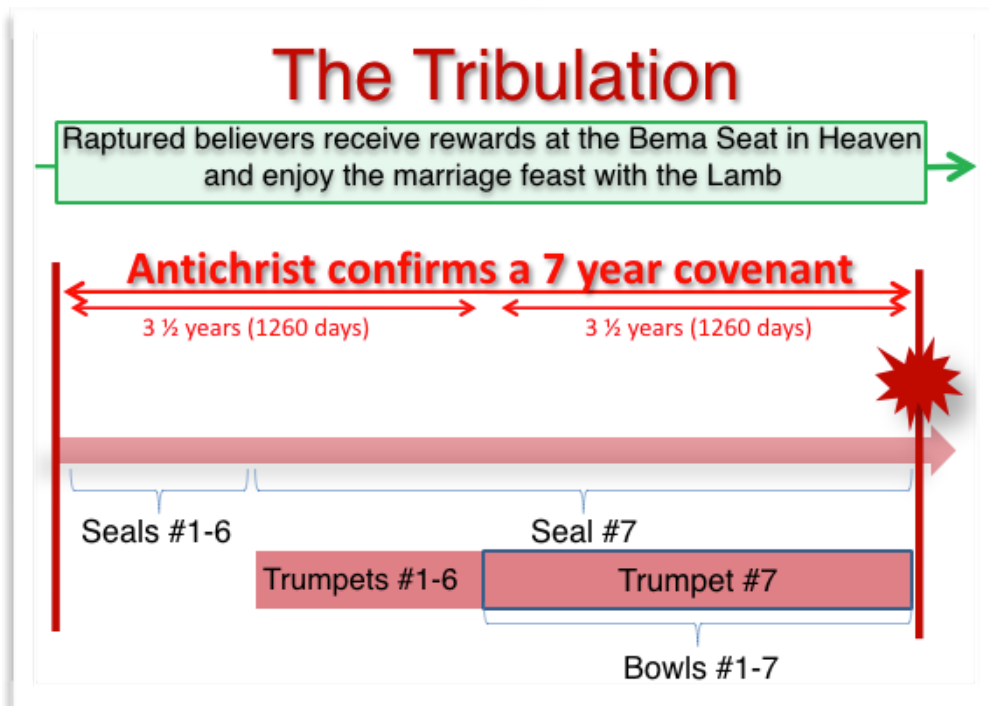


The graphic below shows...



The Panoramic View of the Tribulation along with...

- The 3 Major Judgments...
- And how they are connected with each other.



Judgement #1: The SEAL JUDGMENTS...



They cover the first quarter or about 21 months,



During which the Antichrist comes on the scene &



Conquers the world by diplomacy.



Then when the 7th Seal is broken...



It introduces the **7 Trumpet Judgments**...



Which will cause even greater catastrophes to come to earth.



The 7th Trumpet introduces the **7 Bowl Judgments**...



Which are the severest of all the judgments.



Then the Tribulation Period ends with the Battle of Armageddon.



Ok, so let's take a look at the Seven Seal Judgments.



#2 The Seven Seal Judgments

During the Tribulation, the seal judgments come first (Rev. 6: 8:1)

- i** In the ancient world, seals were used to close up a scroll.
 - ⚙ Hot wax was dipped onto the closed scroll &
 - ⚙ Then the sender's signet ring was pressed into the wax to form a mark.
 - ⚙ This seal assured that the message would not be opened...
...before it reached the individual to who it was sent.

- 🔑 Only Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God...
 - ✓ Is found worthy to open the Seals & commence the judgments of the Tribulation



Seal #1: Peaceful Conquest

Revelation 6:1,2

"Then I saw when the Lamb broke one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures saying as with a voice of thunder, "Come." I looked, and behold, a white horse, and he who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer."

- i** On the horse is the **Antichrist...**
 - ⚙ Who comes at the beginning of the Tribulation to conquer.
- i** We read that he is wearing a crown, but...
 - ⚙ The fact that he does not have arrows for his bow...
 - ⚙ Indicates that he will conquer the world's governments by peaceful diplomacy
 - ⚙ Rather than military might



Seal #2: Open War

Revelation 6:3,4

"When He broke the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, "Come." And another, a red horse, went out; and to him who sat on it, it was granted to take peace from the earth, and that men would slay one another; and a great sword was given to him."



The rider on this horse...



Is given a sword and...



He brings warfare and annihilation to the world.



Essentially what happens here is there is...



Internal strife...



Class-wars...



Civil wars...



The breaking up of all established order.



Where the Antichrist negotiated a false peace through diplomacy...



We see that it does not stand very long &



Men literally attack one another.



Seal #3: Famine

Revelation 6:5,6

When He broke the third seal, I heard the third living creature saying, "Come." I looked, and behold, a black horse; and he who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand. And I heard something like a voice in the center of the four living creatures saying, "A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius; and do not damage the oil and the wine."



In this **Black Horse Judgment...**



We have a rider that comes with a pair of scales in his hands.



This indicates a severe famine which is often the case following military conflicts.



People today know what it is like to have food sold to them by a measure.

- During World War 1 & World War 2...

➤ Food that was sold was rationed to people.



When the 2nd Seal is broken the wars that result will be so severe that...



People will only be able to buy enough wheat to make a man one meal at the cost of a man's full wage for one day.



If they decide to buy barley they will get enough for three meals for a man full wage for one day.



Oil & wine which is the food that is considered a luxury is not touched.



Seal #4: 1/4 of the World's Population Dies

Revelation 6:7,8

"When the Lamb broke the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, "Come." I looked, and behold, an ashen horse; and he who sat on it had the name Death; and Hades was following with him. Authority was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword and with famine and with pestilence and by the wild beasts of the earth."

i This is the most severe of the four judgments.

⚙ The rider on the ashen/ pale horse appears

⚙ With power to kill 1/4 of the worlds population.



If the total population of the world was 6 Billion...

! Then this would involve the death of 1^{1/2} Billion people.

i Nobody knows really how this will take place exactly



Seal #5: Martyrs

Revelation 6:9-11

"When the Lamb broke the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God, and because of the testimony which they had maintained; and they cried out with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, will You refrain from judging and avenging our

blood on those who dwell on the earth?" And there was given to each of them a white robe; and they were told that they should rest for a little while longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brethren who were to be killed even as they had been, would be completed also."

i By this point in the Tribulation period...

⚙ About 25% of the World's population will have died.

i When the 5th Seal is broken...

⚙ Martyrs of the Tribulation will cry out to God for revenge on those unbelievers who killed them.

i The martyrs are told that the time for vengeance had not come yet...

⚙ But it will come...

⚙ But first more believers were still going to be killed !

i After the rapture...

⚙ Any who turn to Christ will suffer intense persecution.

i The martyrs prayer for vengeance is finally answered in...

📖 Revelation 16:4-7

⚙ During the 3rd Bowl Judgment



Seal #6: Heavenly & Earthly Cataclysm

Revelation 6:12-17

I looked when He broke the sixth seal, and there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth made of hair, and the whole moon became like blood; and the stars of the sky fell to the earth, as a fig tree casts its unripe figs when shaken by a great wind. The sky was split apart like a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.

Then the kings of the earth and the great men and the commanders and the rich and the strong and every slave and free man hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains; and they said to the mountains and to the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"

i Six things happen here:

- 1) A Great Earthquake
- 2) The Sun is blacked out
- 3) The Moon becomes like blood
- 4) Stars fall to the Earth
- 5) The Sky tears apart like a scroll
- 6) Every Mountain and Island is moved out of place.

i Men will hide in caves and cry out in fear of the Lord !

⚙️ But even though all of this happens...

🗨️ Man still will not repent and turn to God !

😡 They just get angrier...

🗨️ And rebel against God even more!



Seal #7: Seven Trumpets

Revelation 8:1-6

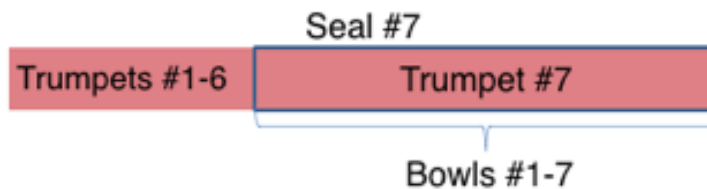
When the Lamb broke the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and seven trumpets were given to them. Another angel came and stood at the altar, holding a golden censer; and much incense was given to him, so that he might

add it to the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, went up before God out of the angel's hand. Then the angel took the censer and filled it with the fire of the altar, and threw it to the earth; and there followed peals of thunder and sounds and flashes of lightning and an earthquake. And the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound them.

i The Seventh Seal Judgment...

⚙️ Introduces the next series of seven judgments...

⚙️ Known as the Trumpet Judgments.



- i** A Trumpet was used in the ancient world to...
 - ⚙ Signal a special announcement or the start of a major event.
- i** These trumpet judgments definitely qualify as major events...
 - ⚙ As these each set of judgments get more & more severe.
- i** The judgments are all administered by special angels and all the judgments come directly from heaven to earth...
 - ☯☯ Clearly showing:
 - 👍 That it is God...
 - 👎 Not nature...
 - That is the origin of these afflictions.

#3 The Seven Trumpets



Trumpet #1: Hail & Fire

Revelation 8:7

The first sounded, and there came hail and fire, mixed with blood, and they were thrown to the earth; and a third of the earth was burned up, and a third of the trees were burned up, and all the green grass was burned up.



Trumpet #2: Burning Mountain

Revelation 8:8,9

The second angel sounded, and something like a great mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea; and a third of the sea became blood, and a third of the creatures which were in the sea and had life, died; and a third of the ships were destroyed.



Trumpet #3: Falling Star

Revelation 8:10-11

"The third angel sounded, and a great star fell from heaven, burning like a torch, and it fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of waters. The name of the star is called Wormwood; and a third of the waters became wormwood, and many men died from the waters, because they were made bitter."

i The star that falls from heaven is called "Wormwood"...



Which means "bitter"...

- And it contaminates the world's rivers & water systems
- And many men die after drinking the bitter water.



Trumpet #4: Sun, Moon & Stars

Revelation 8:12-13

The fourth angel sounded, and a third of the sun and a third of the moon and a third of the stars were struck, so that a third of them would be darkened and the day would not shine for a third of it, and the night in the same way. Then I looked, and I

heard an eagle flying in mid-heaven, saying with a loud voice, "Woe, woe, woe to those who dwell on the earth, because of the remaining blasts of the trumpet of the three angels who are about to sound!"

i One third of the light from the Sun, Moon, and Stars is taken away.



This results in...

- The light during the day to be shortened by one third &
- The night to be lengthened by one third.



Climatic changes will no doubt occur.

i With this judgment comes an angelic announcement...



Warning about the 3 remaining **Trumpet Judgments** to come.

#5 Bottomless Pit Opened



Trumpet #5: Bottomless Pit Opened - First Woe !
Revelation 9:1-11

1st Woe

- i** An angel is sent to open the bottomless pit...
 - ⚙ Which up to this point in time has been kept locked up.
- i** When the bottomless pit is opened...
 - ⚙ A great swarm of demonic beings get released from their imprisonment.
 - ⚙ They proceed to torture, but not kill anyone on earth who had not placed their faith in God!
 - ⚙ They do this for 5 months.

#6 Army Kills Third of Mankind



Trumpet #6: Army Kills a Third of Mankind - Second Woe !
Revelation 9:13-21

2nd Woe

- i** The 6th trumpet judgment...
 - ⚙ Releases four demonic angels...
 - ⚙ Who are specifically created for this moment in history.
- i** These angels command the largest army ever assembled on earth.
 - ⚙ The army numbers 200 million strong &
 - ⚙ They go forward and inflict death upon 1/3 of the people on earth.
- i** By this time a little more than half of the world's population will have died.
-  Even after all these happenings, **Revelation 9:21** says...
...that the people will still refuse to repent!

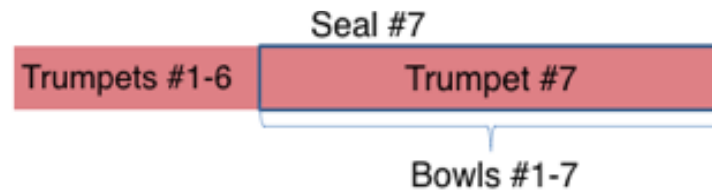
#7 Seven Bowls Announced



Trumpet #7: Seven Bowls Announced - Third Woe !

3rd Woe

- i** The 7th Trumpet announces...
 - ⚙ The Kingdom of Christ is at hand and
 - ⚙ It announces the releasing of the 7 Bowl Judgments.
 - ⚙ This brings us to the second 3 ½ years of the Tribulation.



- i** The Bowl Judgments...
 - ⚙ Are the most intense and severe of all the judgments.
- i** It appears that these bowls have been collecting God's wrath, so to speak for a long time.
- i** Now the bowls are filled to the brim & ready to be poured...
 - ⚙ Which will prepare the way for Christ Second Coming !
- i** The angels who administer these judgments are pictured...
 - ⚙ As turning the bowls upside down
 - ⚙ To ensure that every last drop of God's wrath goes forth.

#3 The Seven Bowls



Bowl #1: Sores

Revelation 16:1-2

Then I heard a loud voice from the temple, saying to the seven angels, "Go and pour out on the earth the seven bowls of the wrath of God." So the first angel went and poured out his bowl on the earth; and it became a loathsome and malignant sore on the people who had the mark of the beast and who worshiped his image.

- i** The bowl is poured on the earth and aimed specifically at those who have the mark of the beast.
- i** The judgment is an affliction of grievous, malignant sore upon the human body.

#2 Sea becomes Blood



Bowl #2: Sea Becomes Blood

Revelation 16:3

The second angel poured out his bowl into the sea, and it became blood like that of a dead man; and every living thing in the sea died.



This bowl is poured into the sea, turning the water into blood so that every living thing that was left alive from previous judgments will be killed



The stench and disease that will result from this is unimaginable.

Bowl #3: Rivers become Blood

Revelation 16:4-7

Then the third angel poured out his bowl into the rivers and the springs of waters; and they became blood. And I heard the angel of the waters saying, "Righteous are You, who are and who were, O Holy One, because You judged these things; for they poured out the blood of saints and prophets, and You have given them blood to drink. They deserve it." And I heard the altar saying, "Yes, O Lord God, the Almighty, true and righteous are Your judgments."



The 3rd bowl is poured into the...



Rivers...



Drinking water &



Fresh water &



They are all turned into blood !



This judgment is God's answer to the martyrs prayers that their deaths be avenged.

#4 Scorching Sun



Bowl #4: Scorching Sun

Revelation 16:8-9

The fourth angel poured out his bowl upon the sun, and it was given to it to scorch men with fire. Men were scorched with fierce heat; and they blasphemed the name of God who has the power over these plagues, and they did not repent so as to give Him glory.



This bowl poured on the sun so that extraordinary heat goes forth and scorches people.



Despite this mankind still refuses to repent!

#5 Beast's Kingdom Filled with Darkness



Bowl #5: Beast's Kingdom Filled with Darkness

Revelation 16:10-11

Then the fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom became darkened; and they gnawed their tongues because of pain, and they blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores; and they did not repent of their deeds.

- i** This bowl is poured out on the throne of the beast so that his whole domain is darkened with a blackout.
- i** This darkness is not normal because it is accompanied by some kind of agony that will cause people to gnaw their tongues because of the pain!

! Once again mankind refuses to repent !



Bowl #6: Euphrates Dries Up

Revelation 16:12-15

The sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river, the Euphrates; and its water was dried up, so that the way would be prepared for the kings from the east. And I saw coming out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits like frogs; for they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go

out to the kings of the whole world, to gather them together for the war of the great day of God, the Almighty. "Behold, I am coming like a thief. Blessed is the one who stays awake and keeps his clothes, so that he will not walk about naked and men will not see his shame."

- i** This bowl is poured out on the Euphrates River so that its flow of water dries up.

⚙ This prepares the way for the armies of the kings of the East...

- To come to Israel
- For the Battle of Armageddon.



Bowl #7: Great Earthquake

Revelation 16:17-21

Then the seventh angel poured out his bowl upon the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple from the throne, saying, "It is done." And there were flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder; and there was a great earthquake, such as there had not been since man came to be upon the earth, so great an earthquake was it, and so mighty. The great

city was split into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. Babylon the great was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of His fierce wrath. And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. And huge hailstones, about one hundred pounds each, came down from heaven upon men; and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, because its plague was extremely severe.

- i** This last judgment is poured out upon the air so that flashes of lightning & thunder announce the greatest earthquake in the history of the world.

- i** This worldwide earthquake will...

- ⚙** Flatten the cities of all the nations and
- ⚙** Split Jerusalem into three sections.

- i** Furthermore, this global judgment...

⚙ Is accompanied by 100-pound hailstones from heaven.

! Once again the response of the unbelievers is to blaspheme God...
➡ Because the plague of hail is so severe !



So those are all the Judgments that take place throughout the Tribulation.



Each Judgment became more & more severe.



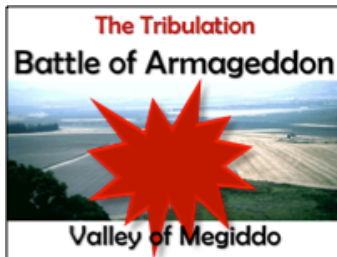
The Seven Year Tribulation period will be brought to an end...



At the Battle of Armageddon



In the valley of Megiddo.



#5 The Battle of Armageddon



According to Scripture...



Great armies from the East & the West will gather



And assemble on this Valley of Megiddo.



The Antichrist will turn his forces towards Jerusalem to destroy it and the Jews once and for all.



As his armies approach Jerusalem...



God will intervene and

Jesus Christ will return to rescue His people Israel.



The Lord will...



Destroy the armies



Capture the Antichrist and the False Prophet, and



Cast them into the Lake of Fire.



Those who survive to the end of the Tribulation...



And are believers...



Both Jew & Gentile...



Will be permitted into the Millennial Kingdom.



Those who survived to the end of the Tribulation...

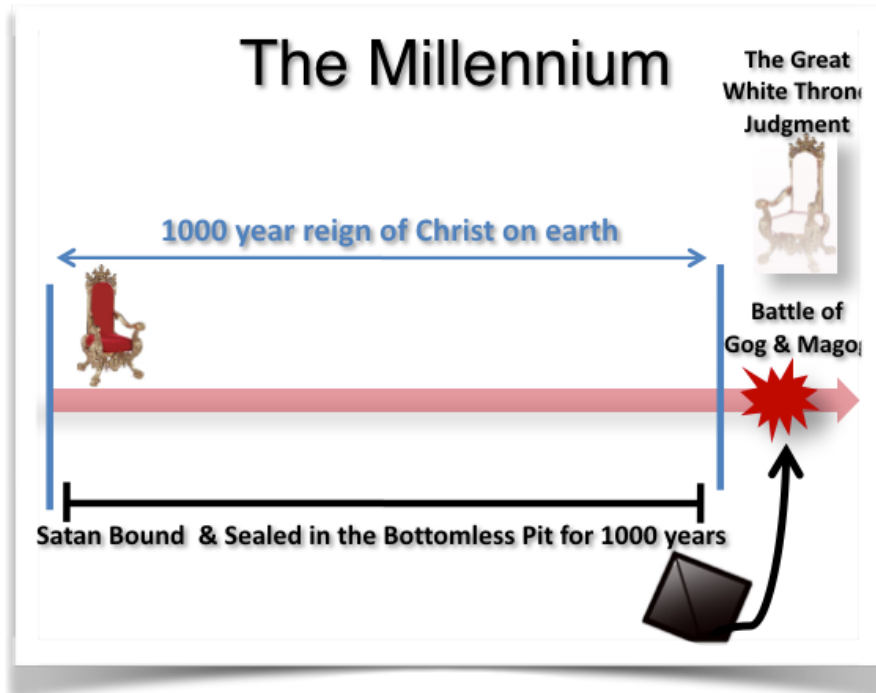


And are not Believers...



Will be cast into Hell !

#6 The Millennium



- i** The Millennium will be for 1000 years...

 - ⚙ In which the Adamic curse will be rolled back
 - ⚙ Except for death.
- i** Christ will sit on the throne of David...

 - ⚙ And rule the world &
 - ⚙ Bring peace & righteousness.
- i** The Millennial Temple will be present and functioning.
- i** The Millennium will be a time of tremendous environmental transformation...

 - ⚙ **Isaiah 35:1,2** tells us that the desert will blossom & become productive again.
 - ⚙ There will be abundant rainfall in areas that today are known for their dryness
 - ⚙ There will be plenty of food for animals (**Isaiah 30:23,24; 35:7**).
 - ⚙ The predatory instincts of animals will cease.
 - ⚙ The distinctions between tame & wild will be erased as all creatures will live in harmony (**Isaiah 11:6,7**).
 - ⚙ Physical conditions for people will also drastically change for the better.
 - ✓ People will live much longer
 - ✓ Physical infirmities and health concerns will be eradicated (**Isaiah 29:18; 33:24**).
 - ⚙ Spiritual life in the Millennial Kingdom will be unlike anything we've ever experienced...
 - ✓ Living daily in the personal and physical presence of Jesus Christ will have an enormous impact on the lives of believers.

⚙️ The knowledge and worship of Christ will be global and unimpeded
(Isaiah 11:9).



BUT...

⚙️ Even in the midst of such pristine conditions...

🤔 There will still be human rebellion !

📘 Because the complete effects of the Fall will not have been erased...

⚙️ There will be one final revolt against Jesus Christ.

📘 This will occur at the end of the Millennium when Satan is briefly released from the bottomless pit.

📘 Satan will go out...

⚙️ And deceive the nations

⚙️ And then gather them together into a massive army for one final battle

⚙️ Where he will again try to destroy Jerusalem.



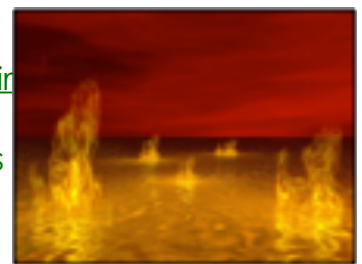
But God will consume them with fire from heaven.



#7 The Great White Throne Judgment

Revelation 20:11-15

Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.



📘 The Judge who sits on the Great White Throne, is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ Himself !

📘 The very person who was rejected and scorned by the world, will ultimately sit in judgment on the world.



Revelation 20:12 identifies those who will be judged at the Great White Throne Judgment:

📖 "the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne"

- i** Those being judged are called...
 - ⚙️ "the dead" because of their rejection of Jesus Christ
- i** They are resurrected from Hell in order to appear at this judgment.
- i** What many people do not understand is that...
 - 👍 All unbelievers are spiritually dead !
 - 👍 Even while they are alive !
- i** The apostle Paul said that...
 - 👍 Before a person receives Christ as Savior,
 - 👍 He/she is **dead in trespasses and sins** (Eph. 2:1)
- i** When unbelievers die...
 - ⚙️ They go to hell...
 - 😞 Because they have no life
 - 😞 Because they rejected the free gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ.
- i** So unbelievers who die...
 - ⚙️ Remain in hell...
 - Until the Great White Throne Judgment.
- i** It is at the Great White Throne Judgment...
 - ⚙️ Where unbelievers are then finally brought before Christ for their final judgment.
 - ⚙️ After which they get cast into the lake of fire for eternity.

#8 The New Heaven & New Earth

Revelation 21 + 22

- 🔥 Everything gets burned to nothing

- i** God creates...
 - ⚙️ A new heaven &
 - ⚙️ A new earth &
 - ⚙️ A new Jerusalem.



- i** All things made new (Rev 21:1)
- i** No longer anything unclean or evil (Rev 21:1)
- i** No longer any sea (Rev 21:1)
- i** No longer any death, crying, or pain (Rev 21:4)
- i** No longer any night (Rev 21:25)
- i** No longer any curse (Rev 22:3)
- i** No longer any sun (Rev 22:5)
- i** Believers are able to see the Father face to face (Rev 22:4)