



**REAL  
XTIANS**

**The Gospel of The Kingdom of  
God Manifesto**



DARYLL BRYANT

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# REAL Xians

The Gospel of The Kingdom of God  
Manifesto

By Daryll Bryant

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**Why Am I Writing This ?**

How can anyone really define what a REAL Christian is?

Well, I cannot.

But God, and more specifically His word, can and does.

And we can look at the earliest Christians and their groups of fellowships throughout the Roman Empire of the first century.

As you read this, some of you will come to realize that no, you really don't know Christ, or more importantly, Christ doesn't know you. Others of you will be steadily reassured that yes, you do indeed know Christ and most importantly He knows you.

Matthew 7:22-23

Many will say to Me on that day [when I judge them], 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, and driven out demons in Your name, and done many miracles in Your name?' And then I will declare to them publicly, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who act wickedly.'"

So, my reason for writing this is to open your eyes to the reality of what it means to follow Christ, to be a REAL Christian according to God's word.

Today, in our post-Christian culture, there is very little talk of what it really means to be a REAL Christian.

What percent of the population is Christian?

In 2019 according to the Pew Research Center 65% of America claims to be Christian.

This is absurd.

We, as REAL Christians, MUST proclaim and live out the

TRUTH of God's word!

What percent of self-identified Christians are REAL Christians?

According to a 2022 study, "The State of Theology" by Ligonier Ministries and Lifeway Research:

Four statements to which respondents must strongly agree to be categorized as evangelical:

- The Bible is the highest authority for what I believe.
- It is very important for me personally to encourage non-Christians to trust Jesus Christ as their Savior.
- Jesus Christ's death on the cross is the only sacrifice that could remove the penalty of my sin.
- Only those who trust in Jesus Christ alone as their Savior receive God's free gift of eternal salvation.

God learns and adapts to different circumstances...  
Agree - 51% Christians / 48% "Evangelical Christians"

"Jesus was a great teacher, but he was not God."  
Agree 43% of "Evangelical Christians"

"The Bible, like all sacred writings, contains helpful accounts of ancient myths but is not literally true."  
Agree - 53% Christians / 26% of Evangelical Christians

"Religious belief is a matter of personal opinion; it is not about objective truth."  
Agree - 38% of Evangelical Christians

"God accepts the worship of all religions, including Christianity, Judaism, and Islam."  
Agree - 56% of Evangelical Christians

So the question, “Does a person really have to go through Jesus to have eternal life?” has clearly become questioned within the realm of Psuedo-Christianity today.

And it seems that very few pastors, leaders, and fellow Christians are concerned with confronting and warning others.

If you call yourself a Christian because you go to a church, whether it be twice a year, every week, or multiple times a week for that matter; this DOES NOT mean you are a Christian.

Because your parents are or were Christians DOES NOT mean you are a Christian.

Because you were baptized, touched the pope, or even went to seminary, still DOES NOT mean you are a Christian.

Belief in and recitation of creeds and confessions DOES NOT mean you are a Christian.

Even if you combine ALL these things, AND are a really good person, feeding the poor and homeless, helping the down and out and those in prison, giving money to various charities..., it DOES NOT mean you are a Christian.

After being confronted with God's words to the prophet Ezekiel, I was compelled that this book had to be written.

Ezekiel 33

And the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 2 “Son of man, speak to the sons of your people [who are exiled in Babylon] and say to them, ‘If I bring a word on a land, and the people of the land take one man from among them and make him their watchman, 3 and he sees the sword coming on the land, and he blows the trumpet and warns the people, 4 then whoever hears the sound of the trumpet and does not

take warning, and a sword comes and takes him away, his blood will be on his [own] head. 5 He heard the sound of the trumpet but did not take warning; his blood shall be on himself. But if he had taken warning, he would have saved his life. 6 But if the watchman sees the sword coming and does not blow the trumpet and the people are not warned, and the sword comes and takes any one of them, he is taken away because of his corruption and sin; but I will require his blood from the watchman's hand.' 7 "Now as for you, son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; so you shall hear a message from My mouth and give them a warning from Me. 8 When I say to the wicked, 'O wicked man, you will certainly die,' and you do not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man will die because of his sin; but I will require his blood from your hand. 9 But if you on your part warn the wicked man to turn from his [evil] way and he does not turn from his [evil] way, he will die in his sin; but you have saved your life.

I write this book as a plea to my friends, family, countrymen, and the rest of humanity.

Turn from your wicked ways and repent, follow Christ and enter the Kingdom of God.

Your children and grandchildren are and will be reaping the harvest of what has been sown. The only hope for you or anyone else is to LEAVE the kingdoms of men and ENTER The Kingdom of God.

Let me state emphatically right up front; **Salvation is NOT by works in any way, shape, or form. A person is justified or "made right" before God purely by God's grace alone through His gift of faith alone in Jesus Christ alone for His applied righteousness. A**

**person is NOT justified by their works because this would give a person reason to boast.**

Ephesians 2

8 For it is by grace [God's grace] that you have been saved [actually delivered from judgment and given eternal life] through faith. And this [salvation] is not of yourselves [not through your own effort], but it is the [undeserved] gift of God; 9 not as a result of [your] works [nor your attempts to keep the Law], so that no one will [be able to] boast or take credit in any way [for his salvation].

The remainder of what you will read, in no way, implies things that you can DO to gain justification [right standing with God]. Right standing with God can only be obtained through God's grace alone by His gift of Faith alone in Jesus as Christ/King alone and His finished work of atonement on the cross for your sins.

**Is it possible that you are wrong in your  
theology..?**

I've been wrong in my theology in the past. I am also wrong in some of my theology now.

How do I know that?

Because the Bible is the product of an infinite God, and I am a finite person.

As Paul exclaimed:

Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! (Rom 11:33)

This is not to say that we cannot search the Scripture and grow in knowledge and understanding of the truth it contains. Rather, as finite beings we neither live long enough nor have the mental capacities to fully comprehend all of the truths contained in the Bible. The very fact that I am still studying and learning proves that my theology is incomplete; by God's grace, however, my theology will continue to develop and grow ever closer to the Truth. The corollary to recognizing the fact of my incomplete theology is that it must also be wrong in some areas as well.

Against that background I hope that you will understandably affirm my claim that your theology is also wrong—somewhere.

Furthermore, the theology of every person is also wrong—somewhere.

The problem is that none of us knows what parts of our theology are wrong. If we knew where we were wrong we would simply correct those beliefs. After all, who willingly holds onto a view which they know is wrong? (Is it even possible to believe something that you know is false?)

How can we identify those areas of errant theology and correct them?

I like how my brother in Christ frames the issue when discussing theology with others... he will often ask two questions,

The first one being “If you were wrong in some area of your understanding of the Bible, would you want to know it?”

Our first impulse might be to answer with an emphatic “Of course!” But admitting to being wrong can be uncomfortable. It’s one thing to admit that we don’t know everything, but it’s quite another matter to have a specific item identified and proven to be wrong, because now we are responsible for that knowledge— now we must change. And change isn’t always easy or comfortable.

Let’s assume that we all want to know if and where we are wrong in our theology...

My brother’s second question is, “How are you going to find out?”

That’s the kicker! If you agree with my opening paragraphs, then you acknowledge that our individual theologies are at least partially wrong—but how do we find out where our theology is wrong? Here is where things can get dicey.

Do we listen to more sermons from our pastor, read more books from our favorite author, or spend more time discussing the Bible with our trusted circle of fellow Christians?

All of these are beneficial and have their places in our spiritual lives, but if these sources have helped to shape our current theology, isn’t it also true that they’ve contributed to shaping our wrong theology? I tell people that if they agree completely with their pastor’s or favorite author’s theology

that simply means that they are both wrong in the exact same areas of their theology. Think about it. If both my pastor and I have a finite, limited understanding of God's Word, then we are both wrong in certain areas of our theology. And if I agree 100% with my pastor's theology that simply means that we are both wrong in the same areas of our theology!

So how do we break free from this theological rut?

May I suggest that we must interact with theologies that differ from our own? By "differing theologies" I don't mean theologies as in Hinduism or Islam, but differing theologies within Christianity.

Do you believe that the gifts of the Spirit are not for Christians today? Read a scholarly work by a respected theologian who disagrees. If you are correct, your theology should be able to counter his/her points. Even if you are correct, you will have gained a better understanding of the issue from both perspectives and will likely have identified and corrected some weak areas in your position.

This is iron sharpening iron. Unless the steel is brought into contact with the knife, no sharpening will take place.

Likewise, unless we expose ourselves to differing theologies, our personal theology will not be sharpened. If we limit ourselves to our safe and comfortable theological sources we also limit the sharpening process. While we may all agree, we will all have the same wrong theology. We will become like matching butter knives: unified in appearance, but unable to cut. Unable to rightly divide the Word of Truth.

The bottom line is that everyone is wrong somewhere... on the other hand, unless we take the risk of exposing ourselves to differing theologies, we are destined to become butter knives: conformed to a standard but dull.

## Acts 17

10 The brothers immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea; and when they arrived, they entered the Jewish synagogue. 11 Now these people were more noble and open-minded than those in Thessalonica, so they received the message [of salvation through faith in the Christ] with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so.

## 2 Timothy 3

16 All Scripture is God-breathed [given by divine inspiration] and is profitable for instruction, for conviction [of sin], for correction [of error and restoration to obedience], for training in righteousness [learning to live in conformity to God's will, both publicly and privately—behaving honorably with personal integrity and moral courage]; 17 so that the man of God may be complete and proficient, outfitted and thoroughly equipped for every good work.

## 2 Timothy 2

15 Study and do your best to present yourself to God approved, a workman [tested by trial] who has no reason to be ashamed, accurately handling and skillfully teaching the word of truth.

## 2 Peter 1

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

## 1 John 4

Beloved, do not believe every spirit [speaking through a self-proclaimed prophet]; instead test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets and teachers have gone out into the world.



## The Calf Path

Sam Walter Foss

One day, through the primeval wood,  
A calf walked home, as good calves should;  
But made his trail all bent askew,  
A crooked trail as all calves do.

Since then, two hundred years have fled,  
And, I infer, the calf is dead;  
But still, he left behind his trail,  
And hereby hangs my moral tale.

The trail was taken up next day  
By a lone dog that past that way,  
Then a wise bell-weather sheep,  
Pursued the trail o'er vale and steep;  
And drew his flock behind him too,  
As good bell-weathers always do.

From that day, o'er hill and glade,  
Through those old woods a path was made.  
And many men wound in and out,  
And dodged and turned and bent about,  
And uttered words of righteous wrath,  
Because 'twas such a crooked path.

But still they followed; do not laugh,  
The first migrations of that calf;  
And through this winding wood way stalked,  
Because he wobbled when he walked.

This forest path became a lane,  
Which bent and turned and turned again.  
This crooked lane became a road,  
Where many a poor horse with his load  
Toiled beneath the burning sun,  
And travelled some three miles in one.

Thus, a century and a half  
They trod the footsteps of that calf.

The years past on in swiftness fleet,  
The road became a village street.  
And this, before men were aware,  
A crowded city's thorough-fare.  
Then the central street was this,  
Of a renowned metropolis.  
And men, two centuries and a half,  
Have trod the footsteps of that calf.

Each day a hundred thousand route  
Following that zig-zag calf about.  
And O'er his crooked journey went  
The traffic of a continent.  
A hundred thousand men were led  
By one calf near three centuries dead.  
They followed still his crooked way,  
And lost a hundred years a day.

For thus, such reverence is lent  
To well established precedent.  
A moral lesson this might teach,  
Were I ordained and called to preach.

For men are prone to go it blind,  
O're the calf paths of the mind.  
And work away from sun to sun  
To do what other men have done.

They follow in the beaten path,  
Out and in and forth and back.  
But still their devious pursue,  
To keep the path that others do.  
But how the wise old wood-gods laugh,  
Who saw that first primeval calf.  
Ah! Many things this tale might teach,  
But I am not ordained to preach.

## **Definitions**

## X

The "X" representing "Christ" originates from the first letter of the Greek word *Christos* (Χριστός), meaning Christ. In the Greek alphabet, "X" is the letter chi, and it has been used historically as a symbol for Christ. This usage carries a long and sacred tradition, rooted in early Christian shorthand, not as a sign of disrespect but as a practical abbreviation.

The church has frequently adopted Greek letters for similar purposes. For instance, the letter theta (θ), often represented as an "O" with a line through it, is used as a shorthand for God, coming from *Theos*, the Greek word for God.

The use of "X" for Christ is comparable to other symbols in Christian history, like the fish symbol (*ichthus*). In Greek, *ichthus* is an acronym formed from the first letters of the phrase "Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior." This tradition of using shorthand symbols has been a consistent practice in the church, deeply embedded in respect and reverence for Christ's name.

In summary, "X for Christ" is a time-honored, reverent abbreviation, deeply rooted in church history and Greek language, with no intent to diminish or disrespect the name of Christ.

## Manifesto

1. A public declaration of principles, policies, or intentions, especially of a political nature.
2. A public declaration, as of a sovereign or government, or of any person or body of persons, making known certain intentions, or proclaiming certain opinions and motives in reference to some act or course of conduct done or contemplated; in general, a proclamation.

3. A public declaration, usually of a prince, sovereign, or other person claiming large powers, showing his intentions, or proclaiming his opinions and motives in reference to some act done or contemplated by him.

*Manifesto* is related to manifest, which occurs in English as a noun, verb, and adjective. Of these, the adjective, which means "readily perceived by the senses," is oldest, dating to the 14th century. Both *manifest* and *manifesto* derive ultimately from the Latin noun *manus* ("hand") and *-festus* (Holy, of God).

Something that is manifest is easy to perceive or recognize, and a manifesto is a statement in which someone makes his or her intentions or views easy for people to ascertain.

### **Repent**

Greek: μετάνοια

Transliteration: metanoia

Definition: a change of mind or worldview, change in the inner man.

### **Adultery (National)**

Exodus 20:14 "Thou shalt not commit adultery

Most biblical references to adultery describe a nation being unfaithful to God, rather than just individuals being unfaithful in marriage. It's about asking for provision and protection from someone or something other than Yahweh, just like when people misused religious offerings (Corban) to avoid true obedience to God. It also refers to the greedy practices that enslave us and harm future generations. Our selfish desires, which we thought would help us, actually lead to traps. James understood that true religion is about

genuine faithfulness to God, not aligning with worldly powers like Rome, Herod, or the pharisees.

James 4:4 You adulteresses [disloyal sinners—flirting with the world and breaking your vow to God]! Do you not know that being the world's friend [that is, loving the things of the world] is being God's enemy? So whoever chooses to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

### **Corban**

Corban refers to offerings or gifts dedicated to God. It's a completely misunderstood concept today. In Jesus' time, it was central to His conflict with the Pharisees and later the Christian conflict with Rome. The Roman system of "Qorban" changed over time, leading to corruption and weakening society through reliance on state-provided benefits, like free bread, which eroded moral values.

In the early church, Corban was about freely giving to support the needy, following Jesus' command to care for others through acts of charity and love. This was a form of "pure religion," where offerings were voluntary and rooted in compassion.

Today, many Christians rely on benefits from governments (called "benefactors") who exercise control over them, rather than supporting each other through freewill charity. This system, based on force and covetousness, contrasts with the early church's practice of charity and weakens society by promoting dependency. As a result, modern practices stray from Christ's teachings, despite claims of faith.

### **Coveting**

Exodus 20 17 "You shall not covet [that is, selfishly desire

and attempt to acquire] your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.”

Coveting isn't just wanting something like your neighbor has; it's wanting what they have, even being okay with them losing it so you can get it.

In a free system, like early farming or hunting societies, people could choose to share what they produced—this is charity. However, in systems like democracy, socialism, or communism, the state or a group decides how charities are gathered and shared, taking away that personal choice from the one who earned it. Coveting happens when we desire to take away someone's right to decide what to do with what they've worked for. True free market capitalism respects the individual's right to make that choice.

The effects of covetousness on the part of the people is always a loss of freedom.

## **The Way**

All the followers of Jesus and what they were doing was not called Church nor was it originally called Christianity.

Acts 24:14

But this I confess to you, that according to The Way, which they call a sect, I worship the God of our fathers, believing everything laid down by the Law and written in the Prophets,

Acts 18

24 Now a Jew named Apollos, an Alexandrian by birth, an eloquent man, arrived at Ephesus; and he was mighty in the Scriptures. 25 This man had been

instructed in The Way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he was speaking and teaching accurately the things concerning Jesus, being acquainted only with the baptism of John; 26 and he began to speak out boldly in the synagogue. But when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained to him The Way of God more accurately.

What they were doing was called "The Way". "The Way" that they sought and followed was different from "the way" of the Pharisees and their Corban which made the word of God to no effect. One was a way of righteousness and the other was the way of error. And certainly different than the way of the world of Rome with its idolatry and covetous practices.

The distinctive difference between The Way of Jesus and the rest of the nations was love and virtue. His way did not depend on those covetous practices that Peter said would make you Merchandise and would curse your children.

2 Peter 2:1 But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves. 2 And many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned. 3 And in their greed they will **make you merchandise** with false words, their judgment from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep. 14 having eyes full of adultery and unceasing sin, enticing unstable souls, having a heart trained in greed—they are **accursed children**.

It did depend on faith, hope, and the charity of the people who sat down in Ekklesia (assemblies of free men of a city state) that practiced what James called pure Religion.

## Ekklesia

Ekklesia' is mistranslated in our modern English versions 'church,'  
Ekklesia in the first century world was a body or assembly of **free men** of a city state or nation. The Ekklesia or Assembly, open to all citizens as soon as they qualified for citizenship.

Matthew 16  
18 ...I will build My Ekklesia; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it.

Gates' in the OT represent the established power structure or authority of a city or its administration, in other words the existing status quo or paradigm.

Whereas Hades/Sheol was the abode of the dead. In mythology, it was understood as an underworld. Under the old covenant, the way to God's eternal presence not yet being opened by Messiah, this was the destination of the souls of the dead.

Christ, in the fulfillment of his redemptive mission, established His Ekklesia, empowered by the Holy Spirit, and equipped with the gospel. He completely overturned the old spiritual paradigm. The souls of those who believed in him and died under the Old Covenant would be raised, and those who believed in Him in the New Covenant would never die. Thus His people would no longer be separated from Him, looking forward to eternal life, but would actually possess it. What's more, having fulfilled the law of God for His bride, it no longer had the power to accuse her, and death no longer had the power to terrorize, harm or hold her.

In free assemblies - Ekklesia, the people remain as free individuals.

Cain's city-state, Nimrod's Kingdom of Babylon, Pharaoh's Egypt, Herod's/Pharisees Israel, Caesars Rome, and President's Republics and democracies are not free assemblies of the people but, instead, were/are places of bondage.

## **Believer**

One who puts trust, faith, or confidence in someone or something.

While two people may identify themselves as believers they may have different versions in their mind as to what that belief consists of or requires.

Belief is NOT merely a mental ascent

Matthew 7:21-23 “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?’ And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.’”

A Believer is one who has complete trust, faith, and confidence in Jesus as King of His Kingdom and all that entails.

Belief that Jesus died and rose again is not what makes someone a “believer”

The death and resurrection of Jesus is proof that He is King and of first importance to His eternal Kingdom.

Acts 17:31 because He [God] has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a

Man whom He determined, having furnished **proof** to all by raising Him from the dead.”

1 Corinthians 15:3 For I delivered to you as of **first importance** what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,

Even true believers in the past “believed” that Jesus was THE Christ (King) and He would have His Kingdom, without knowing anything about the death and resurrection.

Hebrews 11:13 All these died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. 14 For those who say such things make it clear that they are seeking **a country of their own**. 15 And indeed if they had been remembering that country from which they went out, they would have had opportunity to return. 16 But now, they aspire to **a better country**, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for **He prepared a city for them**.

Even the thief on the cross next to Jesus knew nothing of the resurrection, but he believed Jesus was The King and in His eternal Kingdom.

Luke 23:42 And he was saying, “Jesus, remember me when You come in Your kingdom!” 43 And He said to him, “Truly I say to you today, you shall be with Me in Paradise.”

## Free Men

Genesis 1:26 Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness, so that they will have dominion 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.” 27 And God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. 28 God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that creeps on the earth.”

Genesis 2:15 Then Yahweh God took the man and set him in the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it.

Two things relevant in these verses are exclusive to human beings compared to all other created organisms: Man initially possessed the “imago Dei” [image of God] and that they were given a Dominion Mandate to steward creation by God.

When man forfeited his responsibilities to “dress and keep” his dominion, he lost it. Man ceased to reflect the Image and Sovereignty exemplified by his Godhead in losing the lawful stewardship granted by him.

Ecclesiastes 7:29 See, I have found only this, that God made men upright, but they have sought out many devices.”

Man was made in God’s image. A Person is now made in the image of a false god, until he is born again in God’s image.

The Gospel of God removes the evils of civil society by first removing the evils of men’s hearts. It restores every man to his family and property. Most of what is called civil

oppression happens by consent, both implicit through sloth and explicit through the covetousness of contract. But for those who endeavor to repent and seek the Kingdom of God, they can become free souls under God as God made them: upright and under his dominion. In doing so, they will rebuke the bastions of political authority that makes subject citizens out of Man, recognizing that making him a beast of burden out of taxation and heavy legal burdens is contrary to God's purpose for mankind.

Acts 4:13 Now as they observed the confidence of Peter and John and comprehended that they were "agrammatos" and "idiotes" men, they were marveling, and began to recognize them as having been with Jesus.

The Greek word "Agrammatos" means "not educated in rabbinic teaching."

The Greek word "idiotes" means private person.

These two words are most often translated as uneducated and ordinary, but this is poor transliteration. The fact that the Sanhedrin were marveling and saw Peter and John had been discipled by Jesus and made the case for salvation being through Christ alone had nothing to do with their education or i.q. it was the fact that they were now FREE MEN - They would no longer obey men instead of God.

## **Salvation**

Salvation, according to the Bible, is God's deliverance of humanity from sin, death, and the kingdoms/powers of darkness through Jesus Christ. It involves several key dimensions:

1. **Salvation from the Slavery of Sin:** Humans are born into sin (Romans 3:23), enslaved by its power.

Through Christ's sacrifice on the cross, believers are freed from this bondage, as "the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23). By faith in Christ, we are transformed and given new life through the Holy Spirit.

2. **Salvation from the Wrath of God:** Sin brings the righteous judgment of God, but in Christ, we are saved from this wrath.

Romans 5:9 says, "Therefore, since we have now been justified by His blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through Him!"

Christ's death satisfies God's justice, reconciling us to Him.

3. **Salvation from Death to Eternal Life:** Jesus' resurrection triumphs over death, offering believers the hope of eternal life.

John 3:16 For God so greatly loved and dearly prized the world, that He even gave His One and only begotten Son, so that whoever believes and trusts in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

Believers are assured eternal life in God's presence.

4. **Salvation from the Domains of Darkness:** Salvation is deliverance from the corrupt "political domains of men," or the kingdoms of this world dominated by sin and oppression.

Colossians 1:13 For He has rescued us and has drawn us to Himself from the dominion of darkness, and has transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son.

This is the transfer from the corrupt govts of men into the Kingdom of God, where Christ reigns as Lord.

In summary, salvation is deliverance from the slavery of sin, the wrath of God, the power of death, and a transfer from the dominions of darkness into the Kingdom of God.

## **Gospel**

Gospels are inherently and historically news of political messages. A gospel represents an exclusive platform of political campaign promises in order to win the hearts and minds of potential constituents in order to place their faith in the authority and persons of their representative politicians.

Gospels represent policy changes to be adopted by their believers, and the promise of their respective magistrates to fulfill those policies.



**The Real Gospel of The Kingdom of God**

**- Bible Politics -**

## God's word is ALL POLITICS - Genesis to Revelation

The word 'politics' originates from the Greek word 'politikos', which means 'of, for, or relating to citizens or a city'. The term 'politikos' is derived from 'polis', which means 'city', 'citizen', or 'community' in Greek.

### Genesis 4

16 So Cain went away from the [manifested] presence of the Lord, and lived in the land of Nod [wandering in exile], east of Eden.

17 Cain knew his wife and she conceived and gave birth to Enoch; and Cain **built a city** and named it Enoch, after the name of his son.

### Genesis 10

8 Cush became the father of Nimrod; he became a mighty one on the earth. 9 He was a mighty hunter before Yahweh; therefore it is said, "Like Nimrod a mighty tyrant in the face of Yahweh." 10 The beginning of **his kingdom** was Babel and Erech and Accad and Calneh, in the land of Shinar [in Babylonia]. 11 From that land Nimrod went to Assyria, and built Nineveh, and Rehoboth-Ir, and Calah, 12 and [Nimrod built] Resen, which is between Nineveh and Calah; all these [combined to form] the great city [Nineveh].

### Hebrews 11

8 By faith Abraham, when he was called [by God], obeyed by going to a place which he was to receive as an inheritance; and he went, not knowing where he was going. 9 By faith he lived as a foreigner in the promised land, as in a strange land, living in tents [as nomads] with Isaac and Jacob, who were fellow heirs of the same promise. 10 For he was [waiting expectantly and confidently] looking forward to **THE CITY** which has foundations, [an eternal, heavenly

city] whose architect and builder is God.

Revelation 21

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away (vanished), and there is no longer any sea. 2 And I saw the **holy city**, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, arrayed like **A BRIDE ADORNED FOR HER HUSBAND**;

9 Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls filled with the seven final plagues came and spoke with me, saying, "Come here, I will show you **THE BRIDE, THE WIFE OF THE LAMB**" 10 And he carried me away in the Spirit to a vast and lofty mountain, and showed me the holy (sanctified) city of Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God,

**GOD'S WORD IS NOTHING BUT POLITICS!!**

There is one main thread through the entire Bible...

The Kingdom of God, with The Glory of Jesus as King

Genesis to Revelation tells of the Glory of Jesus as THE King of The Kingdom of God, and how life should work in The Kingdom of God.

This thread through the Old Testament is seen in the "types and shadows" of God's people through Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and his 12 sons which make up the 12 tribes as a nation. The old covenant nation of Israel showed these "types and shadows" through their exodus from slavery in Egypt and into the Kingdom of God, and through their continued rebellion and adultery with their King.

This thread in the New Testament is the message of the gospels aka "good news" of The Kingdom of God, recorded in

Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. The “Gospel” is the revealing of those “types and shadows” in the REAL Christ (King) and How He saved His chosen remnant from the domains of darkness and into His eternal Kingdom!

Colossian 1

13 For He has rescued us and has drawn us to Himself from the dominion of darkness, and has transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, 14 in whom we have redemption [because of His sacrifice, resulting in] the forgiveness of our sins [and the cancellation of sins’ penalty].

### **What is A GOSPEL...??**

A gospel represents an exclusive platform of political campaign promises in order to win the hearts and minds of potential constituents in order to place their faith in the authority and persons of their representative politicians.

Gospels represented policy changes to be adopted by their believers, and the promise of their respective magistrates to fulfill those policies.

Were there other gospels prior to the four New Testament gospels of Christ?

An ancient inscription which bears the phrase "Gospel of Caesar Augustus" gives us understanding into what exactly the “Gospel of the Kingdom of God” is, and sheds light on the structure and content of the biblical “Gospels”, i.e. the books which tell the story of the life of Jesus of Nazareth.

In English, we have terms like “gospel-truth”, which means that something is absolutely true. However, in the Bible, the word “gospel” doesn’t mean truth.

“Gospel” is the English translation of the Greek word “euangelion” which means “news that brings great joy.”

When we hear this word today, our minds immediately tend to associate it with Christianity, but originally, this word was political in nature.

In the time of Greek philosophers there was The Gospel of Plato and Aristotle and Socrates. Each had a "gospel" according to their new philosophy.

In the Greco-Roman world, from the time of Alexander the Great and on into the Roman Empire, this word was used to refer to history-making, world-shaping reports of political, military, or societal victories and how that affected the people at large.

The Battle of Marathon is an ancient example...

The person who ran the first marathon ran 26.2 miles to deliver a message, and upon completing this run, he died.

The setting was a battle in 490 B.C. when Greece was invaded by Persia. Greece defeated Persia, and after the battle, Greece sent heralds (preachers) to take the euangelion (gospel - proclamation of good news) out into every town and village in the country, to tell the people what had happened, and declare to them that they were free! Those heralds were "evangelists" or "preachers".

The Emancipation Proclamation is a modern American example...

In the United States, when Abraham Lincoln signed the document which set the slaves in the southern states free, that news had to be taken and proclaimed in every city, town and farm in the South. Heralds were sent out who proclaimed to those slaves that something had happened, which would change their lives forever. They declared to them that they were set free!

## **The Gospel of Caesar Augustus**

An inscription found in Priene, modern-day Turkey, found on a government building dating from 6 B.C. gives us insight into how they understood the “gospel” concerning Caesar Augustus:

“The birthday of Augustus has been for the whole world the beginning of the euangelion (gospel) concerning him. The most divine Caesar . . . we should consider equal to the Beginning of all things . . . for when everything was falling into chaos and tending toward dissolution, he restored it once more and gave the whole world a new age; Caesar... the common good Fortune of all....The beginning of life and vitality...All the cities unanimously adopt the birthday of the divine Caesar as the new beginning of the year...Whereas the Providence which has regulated our whole existence...has brought our life to the climax of perfection in giving to us (the emperor) Augustus...who being sent to us and our descendants as Savior of Rome, has put an end to war and has set all things in order; and having become god manifest, Caesar has fulfilled all the hopes of earlier times.

The “gospel” of Caesar Augustus was what we call today the “Pax Romana” - the age of peace - in the Roman Empire which came just before Jesus was born.

Caesar Augustus in this inscription is declared to be: divine, savior, and the beginning of the good news for all people on Earth [the Roman empire].

## **The Gospel of Jesus Christ was a Direct Challenge to the Gospel of Rome**

When we understand this term “gospel” (euangelion), and how it was used in the ancient Greco-Roman world, we can

begin to better understand the specific way in which the Christian gospels of Jesus Christ were written.

The gospels were written in such a way as to present Jesus as the true divine King, who had come to bring an EXODUS - true salvation to His people and they were written as a direct challenge to the so-called "gospel" of Rome and its peace, which was enforced through brutality.

Interestingly, the word Apostle is not a "Christian" title either. Apostle was actually a Greco-Roman political title for one or a "pair" of ambassadors that would be "sent" into a city or province preceding the arrival of the new political victor to spread the "gospel" aka "good news" of the new ruler.

What "salvation" did the Gospel of Caesar Augustus bring?

The welfare of Rome.... The Pax Romana - Peace of Rome

### **What is THE gospel...?**

What exactly was the gospel that John the baptizer and his disciples as well as Jesus and His disciples preached **BEFORE** the death and resurrection..??

### **Hint...**

It wasn't "Jesus loves you and died on the cross for your sins and rose from the dead so that you can accept him into your heart by praying a prayer and have a personal relationship with him and avoid the eternal conscious torment of hell"

That is NOT in God's word... NOT ANYWHERE!

The vast majority of "churches" preach at best an impotent gospel and at worst a completely FALSE gospel... a gospel different then what Christ and His disciples preached.

The vast majority of "churches" today preach a gospel as

merely a “choosing” or signing up for fire insurance...

Being saved into a new kingdom is not something anyone chooses or signs up for...

Salvation is not something anyone seeks on their own...

Romans 3

9 Well then, are we [Jews] better off than they [Gentiles]? Not at all; for we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks (Gentiles) are slaves [under the control] of sin and subject to its power. 10 As it is written and forever remains written, “There is none righteous [none that meets God’s standard], not even one.

11 “There is none who understands,  
There is none who seeks for God.

12 “All have turned aside, together they have become useless;

There is none who does good, no, not one.”

13 “Their throat is an open grave;  
They [habitually] deceive with their tongues.”  
“The venom of asps is beneath their lips.”

14 “Their mouth is full of cursing and bitterness.”

15 “Their feet are swift to shed blood,

16 Destruction and misery are in their paths,

17 And they have not known the path of peace.”

18 “There is no fear of God [and His awesome power] before their eyes.”

If no one seeks God on their own then how does anyone come to faith in Christ?

Salvation requires a need to understand that one must be saved from something to something, This understanding only comes when one is “Born From Above” or “Born Again”

John 3:3 Jesus answered him, “I assure you *and* most

solemnly say to you, unless a person is born again [reborn from above—spiritually transformed, renewed, sanctified], he cannot [ever] see *and* experience the kingdom of God.”

John 6

44 No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him [giving him the desire to come to Me]; and I will raise him up [from the dead] on the last day.

Salvation is by faith alone...

Galatians 2:16 Yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified.

Romans 3:28 For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law.

Faith is a GIFT of God, bestowed upon someone by God’s grace.

Ephesians 2

8 For it is by grace [God’s remarkable compassion and favor drawing you to Christ] that you have been saved [actually delivered from judgment and given eternal life] through faith. And this [Faith] is not of yourselves [not through your own effort], but it is the [undeserved, gracious] gift of God; 9 not as a result of [your] works [nor your attempts to keep the Law], so that no one will [be able to] boast *or* take credit in any way [for his salvation].

**We are “SAVED” from 4 things...**

## **1. We are saved from the WRATH of God**

John 3:36 Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.

Romans 5:9 Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God.

## **2. We are saved from the slavery of sin**

Romans 6:22 But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life.

## **3. We are saved from DEATH to ETERNAL LIFE - Literally from being mortal to being IMMORTAL!**

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

1 Corinthians 15:42 So it is with the resurrection of the dead. The [human] body that is sown is perishable *and* mortal, it is raised imperishable *and* immortal.

53 For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality [which is freedom from death]. 54 And when this perishable puts on the imperishable, and this mortal puts on immortality, then the Scripture will be fulfilled that says, “Death is swallowed up in victory” (vanquished forever).

## **4. We are saved from the dominion [authority/jurisdiction] of darkness INTO the Kingdom of Christ.**

Colossians 1:13 For He has rescued us and has drawn us to Himself from the dominion of darkness, and has transferred

us to THE KINGDOM of His beloved Son, 14 in whom we have redemption [because of His sacrifice, resulting in] the forgiveness of our sins.

**The death and resurrection of Christ is NOT the gospel... It is PROOF Jesus is King and FIRST IMPORTANCE to the gospel...**

Acts 17:31 because He [God, The Father] has set a day when He will judge the inhabited world in righteousness by a Man [Jesus] whom He has appointed and destined for that task, and He has provided CREDIBLE PROOF to everyone by raising Him from the dead.”

1 Corinthians 15:3 For I passed on to you as of FIRST IMPORTANCE what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to [that which] the Scriptures [foretold], 4 and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to [that which] the Scriptures [foretold].

So, the death, burial, and resurrection is not THE gospel of the Kingdom of God... it is the FOUNDATIONAL PROOF that Christ is THE KING of The Kingdom of God.

When God opens the ears and eyes of someone by their new birth from above, giving them a new heart... THEN they can truly SEE the Kingdom of God..

John 3:3 Jesus answered him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

Ezekiel 36:26 Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you, and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.

Luke 23:42 And he said, “Jesus, remember me when

you come into your kingdom.” 43 And he said to him, “Truly, I say to you today, you will be with me in paradise.”

## **THE TRUE GOSPEL - Good News of a New Kingdom**

So... the GOOD NEWS of the Kingdom of God is that God saves from the slavery of sin and God's wrath so that you can repent - change your mind or worldview from committing the two greatest sins - and instead LIVE IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD...

Seeking God's Kingdom and right living according to God's law (righteousness) FIRST!! and ALL of life's necessities will be added to you... = living in a community of REAL Christians we take care of each other!!!  
You don't believe this..???

Luke 3:7 John said to the crowds coming out to be baptized by him, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? 8 Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ For I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. 9 The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.”

10 “What should we do then?” the crowd asked.

11 John answered, “Anyone who has two shirts should share with the one who has none, and anyone who has food should do the same.”

12 Even tax collectors came to be baptized. “Teacher,” they asked, “what should we do?”

13 “Don't collect any more than you are required to,” he told them.

14 Then some soldiers asked him, “And what should we do?”

He replied, “Don’t extort money and don’t accuse people falsely—be content with your pay.”

15 The people were waiting expectantly and were all wondering in their hearts if John might possibly be the Messiah. 16 John answered them all, “I baptize you with water. But one who is more powerful than I will come, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. 17 His winnowing fork is in his hand to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.” 18 And with many other words John exhorted the people and proclaimed the good news to them.

19 But when John rebuked Herod the tetrarch because of his marriage to Herodias, his brother’s wife, and all the other evil things he had done, 20 Herod added this to them all: He locked John up in prison.

Matthew 6

25 “Therefore I tell you, stop being worried or anxious (perpetually uneasy, distracted) about your life, as to what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, as to what you will wear. Is life not more than food, and the body more than clothing?

31 Therefore do not worry or be anxious, saying, ‘What are we going to eat?’ or ‘What are we going to drink?’ or ‘What are we going to wear?’ 32 For the [pagan] Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need them. 33 But first and most importantly seek His kingdom and His righteousness [right living according to God’s law/word], and all these things will be given to you

also.

## **The Gospel of The Kingdom of God**

WHERE is Christ's Kingdom?

WHO is in the Kingdom?

WHAT does the Kingdom provide?

HOW does the kingdom work?

### **The Kingdom of Christ is RIGHT HERE, RIGHT NOW AMONG THE WORLD.**

Luke 17:20 Now having been asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, He replied, “The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed or with inspection; 21 nor will people say, ‘Look! Here it is!’ or, ‘There it is!’ For the kingdom of God is among you [people living in your midst]

### **Only those who are BORN FROM ABOVE can see the Kingdom.**

John 3:3 Jesus answered him, “I assure you and most solemnly say to you, unless a person is born from above, he cannot [ever] see, perceive and experience the kingdom of God.”

### **Life in The Kingdom provides life's necessities...**

Matthew 6  
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**The Kingdom works by faith, hope and charity producing liberty according to God's word.**

Acts 2:41 So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. 42 And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. 43 And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. 44 And all who believed were together and had all things in common. 45 And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. 46 And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, 47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

Acts 4:32 Now the full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own, but they had everything in common. 33 And with great power the apostles were giving their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. 34 There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were owners of lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what

was sold 35 and laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need.

Acts 4:13 Now when the men of the Sanhedrin (Jewish High Court) saw the confidence and boldness of Peter and John, and grasped the fact that they were not following rabbinic teaching, and were private men, they were astounded, and began to recognize that they had been with Jesus.

### **And The Kingdom is led by servants NOT benefactors.**

A benefactor [politician] is someone who bestows promises and gifts for something in return, usually votes, power or esteem.

Luke 22

25 Jesus said to them, "The kings of the pagans are given absolute power and lord it over them; and those in authority over them are called 'Benefactors.' 26 But it is not to be this way with you; on the contrary, the one who is the greatest among you must become like the youngest [least privileged], and the [one who is the] leader, like the servant. 27 For who is the greater, the one who reclines at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at the table? But I am among you as the one who serves.

28 "You are those who have remained and have stood by Me in My trials; 29 and just as My Father has granted Me a kingdom, I grant you [the privilege of serving in my Kingdom] 30 that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom,

## **When did the Kingdom start? How long does Christ's Kingdom last for..??**

Daniel 2:44

And in the days of those kings [Rome's emperors] the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall NEVER be destroyed, nor shall the kingdom be left to another people. It shall BREAK IN PIECES all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand FOREVER,

Matthew 4:17

From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

Mark 1:14-15

Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."

"Repent" means to completely change your mind.

## **REPENT of what?? Breaking the two greatest commands of God, which encompass the WHOLE LAW of God.**

Matthew 22

36 "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" 37 And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your life [strength] and with all your mind. 38 This is the great and first commandment. 39 And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. 40 On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets."

## **The two greatest commands...**

1. Love God with all your heart, mind and strength.

2. Love your neighbor as yourself.

**These two commands are broken down into THE 10 commandments...** the first 4 are How to Love God... the last 6 are How to Love Your Neighbor.

Exodus 20

2 “I Yahweh your God, who has brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.

3 “You shall have no other elohim [gods, rulers, magistrates, judges] before Me.

4 “You shall not make for yourself any idol, or any likeness (form, manifestation) of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth [as an object to worship]. 5 You shall not worship them [elohim] nor serve them [elohim]; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous (impassioned) God [demanding what is rightfully and uniquely mine], visiting (avenging) the iniquity (sin, guilt) of the fathers on the children [that is, calling the children to account for the sins of their fathers], to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, 6 but showing graciousness and steadfast lovingkindness to thousands [of generations] of those who love Me and keep My commandments.

7 “You shall not take the name of Yahweh your God in vain [in false affirmations or in ways that impugn the character of God]; for Yaweh will not hold guiltless nor leave unpunished the one who takes His name in vain [disregarding its reverence and its power].

8 “Remember the Sabbath (seventh) day to keep it holy (set apart, dedicated to God). 9 Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 10 but the seventh day is a Sabbath [a day of rest dedicated] to Yaweh your God; on that day you shall not do any work, you or your son, or your daughter, or your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock or the temporary resident (foreigner) who stays within your [city] gates. 11 For in six days Yaweh made the heavens and the

earth, the sea and everything that is in them, and He rested (ceased) on the seventh day. That is why Yaweh blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy [that is, set it apart for His purposes].

12 “Honor (respect, obey, care for) your father and your mother, so that your days may be prolonged in the land the Lord your God gives you.

13 “You shall not commit murder. [unjustified, deliberate homicide]

14 “You shall not commit adultery. [fornication with anyone you are not married to]

15 “You shall not steal [secretly, openly, fraudulently, or through carelessness].

16 “You shall not testify falsely [that is, lie, withhold, or manipulate the truth] against your neighbor (any person).

17 “You shall not covet [selfishly desire and attempt to acquire] your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.”

Love Yaweh, THE God

**A god = elohim = a magistrate, judge, benefactor... provider... what or who you look to for any/all provisions and protection.**

First - Not loving Yahweh with all your mind, heart and strength because you are loving the false god’s [elohim, magistrates, benefactors, judges, etc.] who provide and protect through benefits like constitutional rights, welfare, public services etc. offered by satan's kingdoms (Herod, pharisees, Caesar, American govt. etc...etc.).

Second - not loving your neighbor as yourself by coveting the benefits and public services that come from theft of your neighbors money and property.

**In Hosea God condemns the nation of Israel for looking to false gods aka idols for their provisions and protection.**

Hosea 2

“[Hosea,] say to your brothers, ‘Ammi (you are my people),’ and to your sisters, ‘Ruhamah (you have been pitied and have obtained mercy).’

2 “Contend with your mother (nation); contend,  
For she is not my wife and I am not her husband;  
And have her remove her [marks of] prostitution from  
her face

And her adultery from between her breasts

3 Or I will strip her naked

And expose her as on the day she was born,

And make her like a wilderness

And make her like a parched land

And slay her with thirst.

4 “Also, I will have no mercy on her children,

Because they are the children of prostitution.

5 “For their mother [Israel] has played the prostitute;

She who conceived them has acted shamefully,

For she said, ‘I will pursue my lovers

Who give me my food and my water,

My wool and my flax, my oil and my [refreshing]  
drinks.’

6 “Therefore, behold, I [the Lord God] will hedge up  
her way with thorns;

And I will build a wall against her so that she cannot  
find her paths.

7 “She will [passionately] pursue her lovers, but she  
will not overtake them;

And she will seek them, but will not find them.

Then she will say, ‘Let me go and return to my first  
husband,

For it was better for me then than now!’

8 “For she (Israel) has not noticed nor understood nor  
realized that it was I [the Lord God] who gave her the  
grain and the new wine and the oil,

And lavished on her silver and gold,  
Which they used for Baal and made into his image.  
9 “Therefore, I will return and take back My grain at  
harvest time  
And My new wine in its season.  
I will also take away My wool and My flax  
Given to cover her nakedness.  
10 “And now I will uncover her lewdness and shame  
In the sight of her lovers,  
And no one will rescue her from My hand.  
11 “I will also put an end to all her rejoicing,  
Her feasts, her New Moons, her Sabbaths,  
And all her festivals.  
12 “I will destroy her vines and her fig trees  
Of which she has said, ‘These are my wages  
Which my lovers have given me.’  
And I will make them a forest,  
And the animals of the open country will devour  
them.  
13 “And I will punish her for the [feast] days of the  
Baals,  
When she used to offer sacrifices and burn incense to  
them  
And adorn herself with her earrings and nose rings  
and her jewelry,  
And follow her lovers, so that she forgot Me,” says the  
Lord.

**God tells Jeremiah that the people of Israel did evil  
by seeking their provision and protection from false  
elohim.**

Jeremiah 44

2 “Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: You  
have seen all the disaster that I brought upon  
Jerusalem and upon all the cities of Judah. Behold,  
this day they are a desolation, and no one dwells in  
them, 3 because of the evil that they committed,  
provoking me to anger, in that they went to make

offerings and serve other gods that they knew not, neither they, nor you, nor your fathers.

16 “As for the word that you have spoken to us in the name of the Lord, we will not listen to you. 17 But we will do everything that we have vowed, make offerings to the queen of heaven [astrology] and pour out drink offerings to her, as we did, both we and our fathers, our kings and our officials, in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem. For then we had plenty of food, and prospered, and saw no disaster. 18 But since we left off making offerings to the queen of heaven [astrology] and pouring out drink offerings to her, we have lacked everything and have been consumed by the sword and by famine.” 19 And the women said, “When we made offerings to the queen of heaven and poured out drink offerings to her, was it without our husbands' approval that we made cakes for her bearing her image and poured out drink offerings to her?”

**NOW.... THIS IS GOING TO HURT SOME OF YOU  
READING THIS... BUT PLEASE UNDERSTAND,  
THIS IS OUT OF LOVE AND CONCERN.**

Your god - elohim - magistrate, judge, benefactor - is what or who or Anything that you may be depending on for your peace, prosperity, provision, or protection.

For the VAST MAJORITY of you... this is THE American government and it's politicians - republicans or democrats.

Some of you will lie to yourselves and say, “Not at all! I rely on Yahweh alone for my peace, prosperity, provision and protection!”

Really??

Then you turn to govt. and politicians for all of your real needs and safety...

You vote (pray) for the benefactor / politician who will give you what you want and will protect you the best, who will protect your “constitutional rights” better than the other.

Many of you reading this actually get your livelihood from the pagan govt.

You literally work for, get your paycheck from, the pagan govt.

You literally send your children to the pagan govt for ALL their discipling, over 1500+ hours a year for 13 years = 19,500 hours - not including any extra curricular time and activities.

Many of you get all your medical attention paid for by the U.S. govt.

Many of you turn to the U.S. govt for welfare and unemployment insurance.

You vote for (pray to) who will meet your needs, and justify it by how conservative or liberal they may be.

But... You say this isn't what God's word means...

“God is my SPIRITUAL savior... we still have to be a part of govt. “

“God is my Lord and Saviour of my spiritual life...”

“Jesus is my Savior, XYZ is my President”

NO WHERE in God's word is there any delineation between a

“Spiritual savior” or any other “physical savior”

In fact, the VAST MAJORITY of Christians, including

pastors, hyper spiritualize Christianity.... Where God's word does not "spiritualize" anything!

1 Samuel 8

6 But their demand displeased Samuel when they said, **"Give us a king to judge and rule over us."** So Samuel prayed to Yahweh. 7 Yahweh said to Samuel, "Listen to the voice of the people in regard to all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but **they have rejected Me from being King over them.** 8 Like all the deeds which they have done since the day that I brought them up from Egypt even to this day—in that **they have abandoned (rejected) Me and served other gods [elohim - magistrates, judges, benefactors, gods]** —so they are doing to you also.

**But Jesus said His kingdom is not of this world...**

John 18

36 Jesus replied, "My kingdom is not of this world {kosmos/komizo - affairs, orderly arrangement, jurisdiction}. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would be fighting to keep Me from being handed over to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this world." 37 So Pilate said to Him, "Then You are a King?" Jesus answered, "You say [correctly] that I am a King. This is why I was born, and for this I have come into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth [who is a friend of the truth and belongs to the truth] hears and listens carefully to My voice." 38 Pilate said to Him, "What is truth?"

Jesus is speaking to Pilate... Roman governor... who lives in a "very different world" than Jesus and His disciples/followers do...

The Greek word used by Jesus with pilate is "kosmos" and is a jurisdictional term.

It is the same way we use the term...

Millionaire actors in hollywood... live in a very "different world" than me and my friends...

Or billionaires who meet in Davos at the World Economic Forum like globist Klaus Schwab... they live in a very different world...

If I was to be arrested and brought before Klaus in Davos Switzerland and he asked me if I was a leader... I would tell him that my leadership (my life and those I serve) are not in his world... we live in a totally "different world"

Another phrase we often use is "He runs in a different circle of friends"

Now... Matthew 6

Jesus is giving very practical teaching... Jesus's kingdom is made up of bodies of believers who have committed to living and fellowshiping together...

The Pharisees had a social welfare program they ran through the synagogues, and those who followed Jesus as the King (Christ) were excommunicated from the system!

John 9

18 The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight, until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight 19 and asked them, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How does he now see?" 20 His parents answered, "We know that this is our son and that he was born blind. 21 But how he now sees we do not know, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself." 22 (His parents said these things because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had already agreed that if anyone should confess Jesus to be Christ, he was to be put out

of the synagogue. 23 Therefore his parents said, "He is of age; ask him."

24 So for the second time they called the man who had been blind and said to him, "Give glory to God. We know that this man is a sinner." 25 He answered, "Whether he is a sinner I do not know. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see." 26 They said to him, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?" 27 He answered them, "I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?" 28 And they reviled him, saying, "You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. 29 We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from." 30 The man answered, "Why, this is an amazing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. 31 We know that God does not listen to sinners, but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does his will, God listens to him. 32 Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a man born blind. 33 If this man were not from God, he could do nothing." 34 They answered him, "You were born in utter sin, and would you teach us?" And they cast him out.

John 11

45 Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what he did [raising Lazarus from the dead), believed in him, 46 but some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done. 47 So the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered the council and said, "What are we to do? For this man performs many signs. 48 If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation."

Herod also had his own "gospel" or state that people could be a part of...

According to historian Barbara Thiering:

“Herod the Great had a grand scheme of a vast membership in a social welfare scheme called Corban. You joined with a ceremony of ritual baptism after filing an application for membership with the administering “scribe”. Payment of prescribed fees was required and annual accounting of what you paid or did not pay was made available to the proper authorities.

With annual contributions collected and recorded by the scribes this system of individual sacrifice to support the needy of society became popular with many people who were jealous and envious of the rich or just covetous of their neighbor’s goods. With guaranteed entitlements and forced contributions the apathy and avarice of the people flourished.

Members were given a white stone as a form of national ID and Herod was able to expand his hope of a kingdom on earth by this religious system of social security (Corban) which provided for a statutory enforcement and collection from membership in the form of a tax.” ( Jesus and the Riddle of the Dead Sea Scrolls)

Rome did the same...

This phrase "Bread and circuses" originates from Juvenal Satire X. It implies the erosion or ignorance of duty amongst the people which weakens society. Roman politicians devised a plan in 140 B.C. to win the votes of these new citizens: giving out cheap food and entertainment, "bread and circuses", would be the most effective way to rise to power. “The Bread” was distributed to members of the temple system of alimenta welfare which Christians called "things sacrificed to idols". To eat of those benefits from those systems is what the Apostles are talking about in Acts 15

## Acts 15

19 Therefore it is my judgment that we do not trouble and make it difficult for those who are turning to God among the Gentiles [by putting obstacles in their way], 20 but that we write to them that they are to abstain from anything that has been contaminated by idols and from sexual impurity and from [eating the meat of] what has been strangled and from [the consumption of] blood.

The Annona (grain dole) was administered through the government temples of Rome to make the people dependent and manageable by the despots who sought power over the people. The Cura Annonae ("care for the grain supply") begun under the instigation of the popular politician Gaius Sempronius Gracchus in 123 B.C. grew under the first Emperor Augustus and his son Tiberius who said that the Cura Annonae if neglected would be "the utter ruin of the state."

Marcus Tullius Cicero who was a Roman philosopher, politician, lawyer, orator, political theorist, consul, and constitutionalist said:

"The evil was not in the bread and circuses, per se, but in the willingness of the people to sell their rights as free men for full bellies and the excitement of the games which would serve to distract them from the other human hungers which bread and circuses can never appease."

John the Baptist and his disciples as well as Jesus and His disciples called for repentance - CHANGING WORLDVIEWS - BEING SEPARATED - from the kingdoms set up by men... with benefactors...

Christ's kingdom is run by faith, hope and charity and its leaders are servants.

Luke 22

25 Jesus said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles are given absolute power and lord it over them; and those in authority over them are called 'Benefactors.' 26 But it is not to be this way with you; on the contrary, the one who is the greatest among you must become like the youngest [and least privileged], and the [one who is the] leader, like the servant. 27 For who is the greater, the one who reclines at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at the table? But I am among you as the one who serves.

Back to Matthew 6

If one is to FIRST seek God's kingdom AND RIGHT LIVING...

ALL "THESE THINGS" will be provided...

By living in a community that bears one another's burdens...

Galatians 6

2 Carry one another's burdens and in this way you will fulfill the requirements of the law of Christ [that is, the law of Christian love].

and is run by faith, hope and charity... and led by servants...  
ALL YOUR NEEDS WILL BE PROVIDED FOR... THAT'S  
WHERE YOU SHOULD STORE UP WEALTH...

Matthew 6

19 "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. 20 But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in and steal; 21 for where

your treasure is, there your heart [your wishes, your desires; that on which your life centers] will be also.

What does this mean...???

Jesus tells us EXACTLY WHAT IT MEANS...

Matthew 25

34 “Then the King will say to those on His right, ‘Come, you blessed of My Father [you favored of God, appointed to eternal salvation], inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. 35 For I was hungry, and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me something to drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in; 36 I was naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me [with help and ministering care]; I was in prison, and you came to Me [ignoring personal danger].’ 37 Then the righteous will answer Him, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry, and feed You, or thirsty, and give You something to drink? 38 And when did we see You as a stranger, and invite You in, or naked, and clothe You? 39 And when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?’ 40 The King will answer and say to them, ‘I assure you and most solemnly say to you, to the extent that you did it for one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it for Me.’

The Gospel of The Kingdom of God is a call for EXODUS! Exodus OUT OF the kingdoms of men/darkness and INTO The Kingdom of Christ.

Acts 5

18 They arrested the apostles and put them in a public jail. 19 But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors, and leading them out, he said, 20 “Go, stand and continue to tell the people in the temple [courtyards] the whole message of THIS

LIFE.”

The Gospel of The Kingdom of Christ is the good news of “THIS LIFE” a NEW Kingdom where everyone’s needs are taken care of and people live in peace and harmony by faith, hope and charity... and leaders are servants... NOT politicians.. FOR ETERNITY!!!

The record of the spread of The Kingdom of Christ is told by Luke in the book of Acts.

Acts 28

28 Therefore let it be known to you that [this message of] the salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles; they indeed will listen!” 29 [And when he had said these things, the Jews left, arguing among themselves.]

30 And Paul lived there for two full years [at his own expense] in his own rented lodging and welcomed all who came to him, 31 preaching and proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all openness and boldness, unhindered and unrestrained.

And the character of The Gospel of The Kingdom of God is explained and amplified in the letters of Paul, Peter, and John, as well as the writings of James and Jude.

And the Triumph of The Gospel of The Kingdom of God is played out in the book of Revelation.

The dominant thread is the redemption of God’s chosen people into The Kingdom of God, and Christ is the main character... THE KING



# **How the Early Church Approached Politics**

The Apostles and early Christians taught that it was inappropriate for Christians to seek political power. The early Christians believed that their separation from the state was an important part of following the example of Jesus. By “early Christians” I mean prior to the year 313, the year Emperor Constantine ended the persecution of Christianity. When Christianity transitioned from an independent religion to a pagan government-endorsed religion, this led to a rapid change of perspective and practice on many issues.

Why Care What the Early Church leaders said?

They were not infallible yet they were dedicated disciples of Jesus, and they were knowledgeable students of Scripture with very strong convictions, convictions they were often willing to die for. They also lived in a time and culture stemming from the New Testament itself. However, this is not a full endorsement of all their teachings as many held some views that went against God’s word, but it is indicative of their lifestyle regardless of their writings.

Polycarp (69-155, Smyrna)

We get one of the earliest post-New Testament indications of the church’s relationship to government from “The Martyrdom of Polycarp.” Polycarp may have been an elder at the church in Smyrna.

As he faced martyrdom, he was given a simple request, “*Swear by the fortune of Caesar... Swear, and I will set thee at liberty!*”

Polycarp responded to this request in the following words: “*Eighty and six years have I served Him, and He never did me any injury: How then can I blaspheme my King and Savior?*”

According to Polycarp, to swear an oath of allegiance to the fortune of Caesar was to blaspheme against King Jesus.  
Justin Martyr (100-165, Rome)

Justin Martyr wrote a defense of Christianity to the emperor , explaining that while Christians do not encourage open rebellion against the emperor, there are limitations to what services they can offer.

“Whence to God alone we render worship, but in other things we gladly serve you...

But if you pay no regard to our prayers and frank explanations, we shall suffer no loss, since we believe (or rather, indeed, are persuaded) that every man will suffer punishment...according to the merit of his deed.”

***First Apology*** chapter 17

Tertullian (160-220, Carthage)

Tertullian wrote:

“For He [Jesus] would not have condemned things, except such as were not His; but things which are not God’s, can be no other’s but the devil’s. If you have forsworn the devil’s pomp, know that whatever you touch is idolatry. Let even this fact help to remind you that all the powers and dignities of this world are not only alien to, but enemies of God.”

***On Idolatry*** chapter 18

In another place, as Tertullian was writing a defense of Christianity, Tertullian observed that the testimony of Jesus was so convincing that even the Caesar’s themselves would have believed. The Caesars, however, were prevented from accepting Christianity because they understood that Christians cannot be Caesars.

“The Caesars too would have believed on Christ, if either the Caesars had not been necessary for the world, or if Christians could have been Caesars.”

***Apology***, chapter 21

Origen (184-253, Alexandria)

The most complete discussion of Christianity and politics in the early church can be found in the discussion between Celsus and Origen. Celsus was a pagan philosopher who wrote a serious attack against Christianity in his book "True Doctrine". Although his book has not been preserved in its entirety, a good portion of it is preserved through Origen's response, "Against Celsus". Origen was one of the most prolific writers in the early church.

One of Celsus' primary attacks against Christianity was the way they separated themselves from the state. He viewed Christianity as a "new state of things" that was caused by "rebellion against the state". Celsus believed that Rome's form of government had been preserved for the public advantage. Therefore, "it would be an act of impiety to get rid of the institutions established from the beginning in various places".

At the heart of Celsus' concern was his understanding that when one became a Christian, they withdrew themselves from participating in political powers.

"If everyone should do the same as you, nothing would prevent the emperor from being left alone and deserted, and the affairs of the earth would come into the hands of the most lawless and the wildest barbarians; and then there would no longer remain among men any of the glory of your religion or of the true wisdom."

Celsus was prejudiced against the Christians, but he was well informed of their way of life. And it seems that Celsus did not know of any Christians who had become involved in politics, and viewed the rejection of political powers as a matter of principle among them.

Origen's Response to Celsus

It is interesting to note that Origen did not respond to Celsus' attack by saying "You are wrong. Look, here are lots of Christians who have sought to reform, strengthen, and support the Roman Empire."

Rather Origen accepted the accuracy of Celsus' claim, and sought to justify Christians in their separation from the state. Origen pointed out that as a matter of principle, the duty of Christians should be devoted to the service of building up the Kingdom of God, rather than to be involved in politics.

"Celsus also urges us to take office in the government of the state, if that is required for the maintenance of the laws and the support of religion. But we recognize that in each state the existence of another Kingdom, founded by the Word of God, and we exhort those who are mighty in word and of blameless life to rule over Churches... And it is not for the purpose of escaping public duties that Christians decline public offices, but that they may reserve themselves for a diviner and more necessary service in the Kingdom of God – for the salvation of men."

Origen encouraged Celsus to think through his accusation to its logical conclusion. What would really happen if everyone became a Christian, and thus withdrew themselves from the political powers?

"For if, as Celsus says, 'everyone should do the same' as I, it is evident that even the barbarians, having come to the word of God, will be most law abiding and civilized, and every religion will be destroyed except that of the Christians, which will prevail."

According to Origen it was a "religious act" of Christians to turn people away from the laws and customs of the Romans and to turn them to the better laws enacted by Jesus. Origen's understanding of the Christian's relationship with the state in the early church could be summed up in these

words:

“We are to despise integrating ourselves with kings or any other men.”

What Can We Take Away From These Early Christians?

From the preserved writings of early Christian authors, it appears that the early church believed that there were two kingdoms: the kingdom of Rome and the kingdom of God. Since Christians are committed to imitating the example of Jesus, it would be inappropriate for Christians to seek political power in kingdoms that are juxtaposed and in total competition with the Kingdom of God.

**And the church grew.**

**Without any Christians in positions of political power, the church increased.**

**Without any “religious freedom” or “Christian principles” in government, the church triumphed.**

An early Christian named Speratus wrote:

The empire of this world I know not; but rather I serve God... Because I know my Lord, the King of kings and Emperor of all nations.

~Scillitan Martyrs

Speratus refused to give his allegiance to Rome.

Speratus, the Christians’ principal spokesman, claimed that he and his companions had lived quiet and moral lives, paid their dues, and did no wrong to their neighbors. But for refusing to deny their faith or swear by the “genius” of the emperor, they were executed on July 17, 180AD, by order of the Roman proconsul Saturninus under Caesar Marcus Aurelius.

As I said earlier, the writers of the early church are NOT infallible and their writings are NOT God's word. That being said, it is obvious that they believed and followed God's word to their death.

#### 2 Corinthians 6

14 Do not be unequally bound together with unbelievers [do not make mismatched alliances with them, inconsistent with your faith]. For what partnership can righteousness have with lawlessness? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? 15 What harmony can there be between Christ and Belial (Satan)? Or what does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? 16 What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said: "I will dwell among them and walk among them; And I will be their God, and they shall be My people. 17 "So come out from among unbelievers and be separate," says the Lord, "And do not touch what is unclean; And I will graciously receive you and welcome you [with favor], 18 And I will be a Father to you, And you will be My sons and daughters," Says the Lord Almighty.

#### James 1

27 Pure and unblemished religion [as it is expressed in outward acts] in the sight of our God and Father is this: to visit and look after the fatherless and the widows in their distress, and to keep oneself uncontaminated by the [pagan] world.

There is NO argument that can be made, using God's word, for those of us saved by Christ in His Kingdom to participate in the pagan kingdoms around us, democracies to be THE WORST of all pagan kingdoms, because they seek and rely on the whims of the evil hearts of the majority of people!

There is NO argument that can be made, in light of the lives of the early church, for those saved by Christ in His Kingdom to participate in the pagan kingdoms around us, regardless of democracy or constitutional republic!

### **The Early Church Would Be Dumbfounded by Allegiance to America or other modern pagan nations.**

The early church existed in a world dominated by pagan empires, particularly the Roman Empire, which demanded loyalty and often saw its emperors as divine figures. The thought that future Christians would shame or pressure someone for refusing to swear allegiance to such an empire would have been completely alien to the early believers—and even more, a betrayal of the gospel they lived and died for. The Kingdom of God, as preached by Jesus and the apostles, was radically separate from the kingdoms of this world. Any allegiance to a pagan empire was seen as contradictory to their calling as citizens of a heavenly kingdom.

#### The Radical Allegiance to Christ Alone

Philippians 3:20

"But our citizenship is in heaven, and we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ."

The early church was taught to view their true citizenship as being in the Kingdom of God not another nation or empire. For them, to be a Christian meant that their ultimate loyalty was to Christ and His Kingdom, not to Caesar or any other earthly ruler. This understanding formed the foundation of their identity as followers of Christ. The idea of aligning themselves with a worldly government, let alone swearing allegiance to it, would have been unthinkable.

John 18:36

"Jesus answered, 'My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would be fighting, so that I would not be handed over to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm.'"

Jesus made it clear that His kingdom was not tied to the political powers of the day. It existed independently of Rome, and His followers were called to pledge their allegiance to Him, not to earthly rulers. The early church would have understood this clearly and would have resisted any attempt to blur the lines between their loyalty to Christ and the demands of the empire.

### The Early Church's Stance on Empire

Acts 17:6-7

"And when they did not find them, they began dragging Jason and some brethren before the city authorities, shouting, 'These men who have upset the world have come here also; and Jason has welcomed them, and they all act contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, Jesus.'"

The Christians were accused of upsetting the social and political order by declaring allegiance to "another king, Jesus." Their very existence as a community was seen as subversive to the Roman state. Any notion that Christians would one day encourage allegiance to a pagan empire would have been a betrayal of everything they stood for.

Acts 5:29

"We must obey God rather than men."

This was the principle that guided the early church. Obedience to Christ took precedence over any obligation to the state, especially a state that demanded idolatry and worship of human leaders. The apostles' stance was clear:

when the commands of men conflicted with the commands of God, the latter always prevailed.

### The Early Martyrs: A Testament to Unwavering Allegiance to Christ

The early church was filled with martyrs who gave their lives rather than betray their allegiance to Christ. These early Christians would have been horrified by the idea that later generations would criticize fellow believers for refusing to pledge allegiance to an earthly empire.

#### Revelation 2:10-11

"Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, so that you will be tested, and you will have tribulation for ten days. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life. And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death."

The early church understood that their true victory came through loyalty to Christ, even unto death. This faithfulness was their testimony, and they stood apart from the powers of this world.

The blending of allegiance to Christ and allegiance to earthly powers is a betrayal of the distinct Kingdom identity given to the church. The early believers would be shocked to learn that Christians in later centuries would conflate national loyalty with Christian faithfulness.

#### James 4:4

"You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God."

The apostle James made it clear that aligning with the world's systems is fundamentally opposed to a life devoted to God. The early church recognized this danger and sought to live lives that were distinct from the political, economic, and social systems of their time.

Throughout the Bible, God's people are called to stand as a prophetic witness against corrupt powers and kingdoms. From the prophets of the Old Testament to the apostles of the New Testament, the call to resist worldly empires was consistent.

Revelation 18:2

"Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird!"

In the book of Revelation, Babylon, which represented pagan Israel, is condemned and ultimately destroyed by God. The early Christians understood that their allegiance was not to be with such empires, but rather to stand apart and resist their influence. To shame someone for not swearing allegiance to a pagan empire would have been seen as an act of betrayal to Christ and His kingdom.

### **The Early Church's Loyalty to Christ Alone**

The idea that future Christians would pressure or shame fellow believers for not pledging allegiance to an earthly kingdom would have been a betrayal of the radical loyalty to Christ that defined the early church. They lived with the understanding that their citizenship was in Christ's Kingdom, and their ultimate allegiance was to the King of Kings, not the rulers of this world. The early Christians would have been dumbfounded and heartbroken to see the church entwined with worldly kingdoms, especially when Christ Himself made it clear that His kingdom was "not of this world."

The challenge for us today is to return to the uncompromising faith of the early church, to reclaim our allegiance to Christ and Christ alone, and to resist any temptation to bow to the kingdoms of this world.

1 Timothy 1:17

"Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen."

**Christians Must Take Up Their Cross.**

## Mark 8

34 Jesus called the crowd together with His disciples, and said to them, “If anyone wishes to follow Me [as My disciple], he must deny himself [set aside selfish interests], and take up his cross and follow Me [believing in Me, conforming to My example in living and, if need be, suffering or perhaps dying because of faith in Me]. 35 For whoever wishes to save his life [in dominions of darkness] will [eventually] lose it [through death], but whoever loses his life [in the dominions of darkness] for My sake and the gospel’s will save it [from the dominions of darkness into the Kingdom of Christ]. 36 For what does it benefit a man to gain the whole world [dominions of darkness with all its pleasures], and forfeit his soul? 37 For what will a man give in exchange for his soul and eternal life [in God’s kingdom]? 38 For whoever is ashamed [here and now] of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.”

Take up his cross...

According to Britannica.com

“Crucifixion was most frequently used to punish political or religious agitators, traitors or those who had no civil rights.”

About 32 AD Pontius Pilate had Jesus of Nazareth put to death by crucifixion.

Make no mistake, Christ was crucified because of His political declaration of His Kingship. The entire purpose of His ministry is to show that He is THE Messiah a.k.a. Christ a.k.a. KING.

As I stated at the beginning of this book...

**There is one main thread through the entire Bible...**

## **The Kingdom of God, with The Glory of Jesus as King**

Genesis to Revelation tells of the Glory of Jesus as THE King of The Kingdom of God, and how life should work in The Kingdom of God.

Crosses were reserved primarily for traitors and POLITICAL AGITATORS...

Political Agitator

one that agitates: such as

1. one who stirs up public feeling on controversial issues

Acts 17

5 But the [unbelieving] Jews became jealous, and taking along some thugs from the market place, they formed a mob and set the city in an uproar; and then attacking Jason's house tried to bring Paul and Silas out to the people. 6 But when they failed to find them, they dragged Jason and some brothers before the city authorities, shouting, "These men who have turned the world upside down have come here too; 7 and Jason has welcomed them [into his house and protected them]! And they all are saying things contrary to the decrees of Caesar, [actually] claiming that there is another king, Jesus."

The Apostles and MANY of the early church were martyred because they were political agitators sharing The Gospel of The Kingdom of God - calling people OUT OF the kingdoms - political structures - of men/darkness and INTO The Kingdom of Christ.

Colossians 1

13 For He has rescued us and has drawn us to Himself

from the dominion of darkness, and has transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son,

How do you actually take up your cross.. ??

1. Share the Gospel of The Kingdom of God.

Psalm 2

Why are the nations in an uproar [in turmoil against God],

And why do the people devise a vain and hopeless plot?

2 The kings of the earth take their stand;

And the rulers take counsel together

Against the Lord and His Anointed (the Davidic King, the Messiah, the Christ), saying,

3 "Let us break apart their [divine] bands [of restraint]

And cast away their cords [of control] from us."

4 He who sits [enthroned] in the heavens laughs [at their rebellion];

The [Sovereign] Lord scoffs at them [and in supreme contempt He mocks them].

5 Then He will speak to them in His [profound] anger And terrify them with His displeasure, saying,

6 "Yet as for Me, I have anointed and firmly installed My King

Upon Zion, My holy mountain."

7 "I will declare the decree of the Lord:

He said to Me, 'You are My Son;

This day [I proclaim] I have begotten You.

8 'Ask of Me, and I will assuredly give [You] the nations as Your inheritance,

And the ends of the earth as Your possession.

9 'You shall break them with a rod of iron;

You shall shatter them [in pieces] like earthenware.'"

10 Now therefore, O kings, act wisely;

Be instructed and take warning, O leaders (judges, rulers) of the earth.

11 Worship the Lord and serve Him with reverence  
[with awe-inspired fear and submissive wonder];  
Rejoice [yet do so] with trembling.

12 Kiss (pay respect to) the Son, so that He does not  
become angry, and you perish in the way,  
For His wrath may soon be kindled and set aflame.  
How blessed [fortunate, prosperous, and favored by  
God] are all those who take refuge in Him!

## 2. HAVE NO OTHER ELOHIM BEFORE YaHWeH

LEAVE ALL entities of the pagan government

Public Education, Welfare, Unemployment, Govt.  
Employment, Politics, Police, Military, govt. education...

Romans 11

9 And David says,

“Let their table (provision/welfare) become a snare  
and a trap,

A stumbling block and a retribution to them.

10 “Let their eyes be darkened so that they do not see,  
And make their backs bend [under their burden]  
forever.”

11 So I say, have they stumbled so as to fall [to  
spiritual ruin]? Certainly not! But by their  
transgression [their rejection of the Messiah as  
provider and protector] salvation has come to the  
Gentiles, to make Israel jealous [when they realize  
what they have forfeited].

How does, what should be for your welfare, become a trap or  
a snare?

There are two types of welfare systems in society.

Those that are voluntary which depend on Faith, hope and  
charity offerings.

Those that are dependent on men who exercise authority one over the other but call themselves benefactors. - FORCED TAXES

To pray is to Appeal, apply or ask.

The word "to pray" is defined as "to address a solemn request or expression of thanks to a god [elohim] or other object of worship."

From the Latin precari 'entreat.' "ask someone earnestly or anxiously to do something".

In the New Testament we see the word "prayer" from proseuchomai - meaning to solemnly request something for an advantage from an authority which has the power to grant benefits.

An application is "a formal request to an authority for something."

Who should you be applying to, or appealing for aid from or asking for benefits from?

Should that be our Father in heaven or the Fathers of the earth?

Should we pray for our daily bread to the God of Creation or the "gods many" of the world?

There is another word we see translated pray which is "deomai" which we see in Luke 22:32. It comes from the word deo meaning "to bind, tie, fasten". Luke is the only gospel where this word appears...

Luke 22

31 "Simon, Simon (Peter), listen! Satan has demanded permission to sift you like grain; 32 but I have prayed [especially] for you [Peter], that your faith [and

confidence in Me] may not fail; and you, once you have turned back again [to Me], strengthen and support your brothers [in the faith].”

Luke also using proseuchomai.

Luke 22

40 When He arrived at the place [called Gethsemane], He said to them, “Pray continually that you may not fall into temptation.” 41 And He withdrew from them about a stone’s throw, and knelt down and prayed,

Basically a prayer is an application for help from God or gods. According to Paul, there are many gods.

1 Corinthians 8

5 For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth, as indeed there are many gods and many lords, 6 yet for us there is but one God,...

What is Paul talking about when he says there are “many gods”?

People today who believe in a superior being that has brought about creation use the term to reference the creator of mankind. Besides the New Testament we can see that in the Old Testament, ancient history, and even modern language the term god sometimes referred to a man.

Genesis 50

19 “And Joseph said unto them, Fear not: for [am] I in the place of god?”

Here in Genesis, Joseph asks if he is in the place of a god? He had the power of judgment, but left that judgment to God the Father and forgave his brothers.

In the Old Testament, the words “gods” and “God” are both translated from the single Hebrew word elohim, defined

“gods, rulers, judges” and “applied as deference to magistrates” according to the Strong's Concordance. Elohim is even translated “judges.”

Exodus 21

6 “if the servant shall plainly say, I love my master” and choose to serve him, “then his master will bring him unto the judges [elohim]”.

We also see in Exodus 22 that Moses uses it when he is talking about men judging matters of guilt and innocence in cases of robbery of personal property.

Exodus 22:8 If the thief is not caught, the owner of the house shall appear before the judges [elohim], to determine whether or not he had stolen his neighbor's goods.

The word was used by the Israelites to refer to men amongst their own people, men that had the right to judge certain matters of guilt and innocence.

Were other men called gods?

Joshua 24

15, “And if it seem evil unto you to serve Yahweh, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods [elohim] which your fathers served that [were] on the other side of the flood, or the gods [elohim] of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve Yahweh. 16 And the people answered and said, ‘Far be it from us that we should forsake Yahweh, to serve gods [elohim].’”

Even in 1st Samuel 2:25 we see the word elohim translated judge when speaking about men judging other men.

1 Samuel 2:25 If one man sin against another, the Judge [elohim] shall judge it: but if a man sin against

Yahweh, who will plead for him? Notwithstanding they obeyed not the voice of their father, because Yehweh would slay them.

Again, in 1 Samuel 8 we see the degenerate Israelites rejecting God as their King by asking for a man king instead.

1 Samuel 8

6 But their demand displeased Samuel when they said, "Give us a king to judge and rule over us." So Samuel prayed to Yehweh. 7 Yehweh said to Samuel, "Listen to the voice of the people in regard to all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me from being King over them. 8 Like all the deeds which they have done since the day that I brought them up from Egypt even to this day—in that they have abandoned (rejected) Me and served other gods—so they are doing to you also. 9 So now listen to their voice; only solemnly warn them and tell them the ways of the king who will reign over them."

You say, "But we don't have a monarchy, we have a Constitutional Republic and we vote for our leaders!" As if man came up with a better form of government than God.

According to the Etymology Dictionary

vote (n.)

mid-15c., "formal expression of one's wish or choice with regard to a proposal, candidate, etc.," from Latin *votum* "a vow, wish, promise to a god, solemn pledge, dedication," noun use of neuter of *votus*, past participle of *vovere* "to promise, dedicate" (see *vow* (n.)). The meaning "totality of voters of a certain class or type" is from 1888.

Matthew 23

9 Do not call anyone on earth your father [pater]; for One is your Father [Pater], He who is in heaven. 10 Neither be called instructors or teachers; for One is your Instructor or Teacher, the Christ. 11 But the greatest among you will be your servant.

We are to pray to our Father in Heaven and not the Fathers of the earth. We certainly should not be praying to the governments of the world for their benefits because they are Benefactors who exercise authority one over the other.

Luke 22

25 Jesus said to them, “The kings of the Gentiles have absolute power and lord it over them; and those in authority over them are called ‘Benefactors.’ 26 But it is not to be this way with you; on the contrary, the one who is the greatest among you must become like the youngest [and least privileged], and the [one who is the] leader, like the servant. 27 For who is the greater, the one who reclines at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at the table? But I am among you as the one who serves.

Even Thomas Jefferson knew this “The Republic will cease to exist when you take away from those who are willing to work and give to those who would not.”

The recklessness of Welfare is the covetous practice of desiring benefits at your neighbors' expense through men who exercise authority.

James 1

27 Pure and unblemished religion [as it is expressed in outward acts] in the sight of our God and Father is this: to visit and look after the fatherless and the widows in their distress, and to keep oneself uncontaminated by the [secular,public,pagan] world.

If religion was how you took care of the needy of society, which it was, then welfare through the state is public religion.

The first is a matter of mutual love and charity based on righteous and willingly giving and care.

The latter is a matter of force and covetousness.

The former leads to a free society in accordance with the prophets like Abraham, Moses, John the Baptist and, of course, Jesus Christ.

The latter leads to despotism and social slavery; while it weakens the people until they are a surety for debt and little more than merchandise, it also corrupts their leaders who become ruthless tyrants.

Of the two Welfare types one weakens the people and the other strengthens them.

Pure Religion is the result of Private welfare as opposed to Public religion.

Socialism brings about the roots of the welfare state. Welfare like food stamps, social security, and even public welfare weakens the poor which was the sin of Sodom. Welfare like Unemployment is destroying the character of the people and society.

3 John

5 Beloved, you are acting faithfully in what you are providing for the brothers, and especially when they are strangers; 6 and they have testified before the church of your love and friendship. You will do well to [assist them and] send them on their way in a manner worthy of God. 7 For these [traveling missionaries] went out for the sake of the Name [of Christ],

accepting nothing [in the way of assistance] from the pagans.

All the problems of the world are the result of rejecting the ways of God and seeking men to exercise authority one over the other by covetous means.

It is time to repent.

**But Romans 13 Says....**

Romans 13:1-7 “Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: or he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. For this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God’s ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor.”

This passage is probably one of the most commonly misunderstood portions of scripture and that is only owed to the treason of translators and the laziness of the vast majority of Christians who are hardly ever concerned with the pursuit of truth, but rather the justification of their own idolatry using twisted scripture to assuage the fact that they take Christ’s name in vain. In context with the rest of the message of Scripture however, this passage is probably one of the strongest in favor of an anarchist political science, and therefore of abolitionism.

The initial confusion hinges on the phrase “higher powers,” which is the most accurate translation in all of the english versions of the Koine, while “governing authorities” is the most antonymous because it is not just an oversimplification of the Greek phrase “exousiais hyperechousais,” it is an irresponsible subterfuge expressing the opposite of the intent of the passage.

“Hyperechousais” comes from the word “huperechó” which means “to hold above, to rise above, to be superior,” “to stand out, rise above, overtop,” “to excel, to be superior, better than.” According to Strong’s it is “from huper and echo; to hold oneself above, i.e. (figuratively) to excel; participle (as adjective, or neuter as noun) superior, superiority — better, excellency, higher, pass, supreme.”

There is a definition that means “to be above, be superior in rank, authority, power,” but this understanding is only applied in circular logic to Romans 13:1, or to a contradictory reference in 1 Peter 2:17, calling King Christ the “superior in rank, authority, power.” The most common place this word seems to be used in the New Testament is in Philippians, referring to the idea of esteeming others as better than ourselves, or of the peace of God that surpasses all understanding, or the excellence of the knowledge of Christ as one’s Lord. None of the times the word is used does it convey that human civil government is a “higher,” “excellent,” or “supreme” concept. In fact, it is the testament of scripture that authoritarian positions are, and the idea of going under them is, “lower,” “inferior,” and “reprobate,” as can be exemplified in the actions of Abraham, Moses, Nehemiah, John the Baptist, Jesus Christ, and the declarations of Gideon, and Samuel.

“Exousiais” comes from the word “exousia” which means “power of choice, liberty of doing as one pleases; leave or permission,” “physical and mental power; the ability or strength with which one is endued, which he either possesses or exercises,” “the power of authority (through influence) and of right,” and “the power of rule or government.”

Nowhere in scripture is this last definition qualified with the adjective of “higher,” because that concept exclusively refers to the things of God rather than man-made governments.

Exousia is a combination of two words: “Ex” meaning “of” or “from”, while “ousia” means “what one has, i.e. property, possessions, estate.” This simple description reveals a simple fact: whoever possesses the dominion retains the right, liberty, or power of choice in how to use it. That will be discussed shortly.

There are many words for “power” in the Koine Greek, from *Dunamis*, *dunamai*, *didomi*, *arche*, *ischus*, *ischuros*, *kratos*, and *energes*. Many of them could have been used to help convey the notion of human civil government in Romans 13:1, but the nature of the term *exousia* expresses a competing notion entirely, by both Scripture and history:

“We have an altar from which those who serve the tabernacle have no right [*exousia*] to eat.” (Hebrews 13:10)

“Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right [*exousia*] to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.”  
(Revelation 22:14)

“But take heed lest by any means this liberty [*exousia*] of yours become a stumbling block to them that are weak.” (1 Corinthians 8:9)

“After further analysis he defines the citizen as a person who has the right (*exousia*) to participate in deliberative or judicial office (1275b18–21). In Athens, for example, citizens had the right to attend the assembly, the council, and other bodies, or to sit on juries.” (Miller, Fred. “Aristotle’s Political Theory.” Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Stanford University, 7 Nov. 2017.)

“Aristotle says that... The right (*exousia*) to do anything one wishes...” (Paul Bullen: *Lawmakers and Ordinary People*. 1996.)

“Brancacci notices that the term used by Enomaos to refer to human freedom is not the typical Cynic one ἐλευθερία [eleutheria], but ἐξουσία [exousia], which expresses ‘the new concept of freedom in opposition to the already defunct and unhelpful ἐλευθερία [eleutheria]...’” (Boeri, Marcelo. *Bryn Mawr Classical Review*. 19 Aug. 2001.)

“This is implicit in Socrates’ observation that ‘where there is such an exousia, it is also [the case] that everyone would privately construct his own life for himself in a way that pleases him’ (577b). Shorey and Bloom translate exousia as ‘license,’ a term that seems appropriate in light of Plato’s presumed objections to democratic disorder. Yet exousia is surely one of democracy’s contested symbols, for it can also represent the capricious richness captured in the image of the multihued garment.” (Mara, Gerald M. *The Civic Conversations of Thucydides and Plato: Classical Political Philosophy and the Limits of Democracy*. State University of New York Press, 2009.)

In Romans 13:3, the word for “rulers” is “archon,” meaning “a ruler, commander, chief, leader...” which could have replaced the phrase “higher powers” if Paul had wanted to intimate “governing authorities” by that phrase. The same word is used by Jesus Christ in the context of appointing the Kingdom of God to his apostles, and barring his followers from holding civil office.

“But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes [archon] of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him

be your minister; And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant..." (Matthew 20:25-27)

Christ did not want the servant-ministers of his adhococratic government to be like the "public servants" and "prime ministers" of the bureaucratic governments of pagan nations because His Kingdom was one bound together in faith, hope, and charity rather than yoked in the unbelief of contracts, entitlements, and taxation. In fact, it was Christ's purpose to fulfill God's Law and, by the power of His Gospel, set man free from the dominion of man, making him a free soul under God alone, as is repeated all throughout scripture:

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

"And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout [all] the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubile unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family." (Leviticus 25:10)

In every case, subjecting ourselves to the higher law of God explicitly means that we retain our original liberty and rights to our property and relationships, because it is only when we have forfeited God's providential liberties and responsibilities to the arbiters of human civil government that we find ourselves under their lower powers to regulate our lives and bring us under tribute. When we give up our dominion, we deposit it into the centralized hands of rulers who bear dominion over us. God made man upright, in His image, with the natural responsibility to maintain a natural

family, work the land, enjoy the fruits of his labor, and to thereby obey the Dominion Mandate. Only when his wealth is his own, without the burdens of legal encumbrance or property and income tax, is he subject to the “more excellent liberty” of God. It is only when his family is his own, without the illusions of legal guardianship and marriage licensing, that he is subject to the “more excellent liberty” of God.

However, God also gives man the liberty to squander his liberty by establishing human civil governments and going under their lower powers, though without impunity. It is not God that institutes rulers, unless it is as a recompense for those who no longer desire to be ruled by Him. Men raise up rulers, which Scripture describes as false gods because they become the providers and protectors, and lawgivers and judges, and saviors and lords over the people who are within their jurisdiction.

“The people always have some champion whom they set over them and nurse into greatness.... This and no other is the root from which a tyrant springs; when he first appears he is a protector.” (Plato, *The Republic*, bk. 8, sct. 565)

As Romans 13:2 declares, the people receive to themselves damnation... because rulers are a terror to the wicked works that reject God in favor of human rulers. Those who do not give up their rights and liberty, and do good works to retain them, will not find themselves subject to human rulers, so their jurisdictions are not a terror to good works. In fact, because only sinners will find themselves trapped into the fleshpots of human rulers, they are a safeguard for the righteous who remain set apart from their encompassing black holes of covetous and slothful singularity that compresses their wicked citizens with their wakes of temptation and imprisoning mass.

Human civil government is an ouroboros of debt, destruction, and damnation for anyone who legitimizes it,

and the Bible says that all of the terrors and maladies contingent on man-made governments occur by consent of the people who partake in their citizenship.

“When thou sittest to eat with a ruler, consider diligently what [is] before thee: And put a knife to thy throat, if thou [be] a man given to appetite. Be not desirous of his dainties: for they [are] deceitful meat.” (Proverbs 23:1-3)

This temptation to yoke together with unbelievers and eat of their socialist provision makes one a surety for that provision.

“Let their table become a snare before them: and [that which should have been] for [their] welfare, [let it become] a trap.” (Psalm 69:22)

This is because governments are not ever interested in doing good by their subject slaves, unless of course it is to bait the hooks of temptation to acquire their wealth and rights through citizenship and consent to partake in socialism.

“The real destroyers of the liberties of the people is he who spreads among them bounties, donations, and benefits.” (Plutarch)

When the Israelites decided to go under the lower powers of Pharaoh, he did not bear his sword against them in vain. They gave up the rights to their property, including land and livestock, and gave up the rights to their labor through a twenty percent income tax. When they petitioned Samuel for a king of their own, they consented to God’s revenge and received the wrath of their “public servant” by having to give up their land and fruits of their labor, concentrating their wealth into the coffers of the king, having their sons drafted into a standing army, becoming employees of the government, and raising up men with legislative and judicial authority to bind them in legal burdens, under heavy

administrative yokes. In addition to all of that, their idolatry, paganism, and statism afforded them one more blow of God's wrath: God would no longer hear their prayers, or their cries of salvation from the just desserts of their rejection of Him.

“The LORD is far from the wicked: but he heareth the prayer of the righteous.” (Proverbs 15:29)

And he gives them over to a reprobate mind to continue in their self-destruction.

Even though Paul's letter to the Christians in Rome is a dissertational proof for the efficacy of the Christian worldview as a redemptive solution to the bondage of human civil government and the sins that lead people into that bondage, it is easy to forget that Paul often employs the first person or second person points of view, not as reflections of personal anecdotes, or as direct descriptions of his actual audience, but as rhetorical devices in technical writing. In the case of Romans 13 (and most of Romans), we are witnessing a second-person imperative mood directed at a hypothetically implied situation that might have applied to some of Paul's direct audience, and maybe even none of them, but are relevant only if the right conditions are met. Those conditions will be revealed in the following:

At Pentecost, those that followed Christ who previously had political affiliation with the social security administrations of Herod and the Pharisees, were kicked out of the temples and synagogues and were barred from receiving the socialist benefits afforded in subjecting themselves to their legislative authorities. These Jews were then free to bind themselves together in freewill congregations, to keep the weightier matters as free souls within Christ's Kingdom of Heaven. Instead of being baptized into Herod's citizenship, they were born again into God's adoptive society.

The early Christians had their own political structure, their own customs, their own laws, their own system of welfare and even their own (servant) government. This means that even though they were “in the world” of the Pax Romana as unregistered inhabitants and unenrolled residents, they were not “of the world” of the Pax Romana as civil citizens and numbered persons. It was Edward Gibbon in *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* who commended “the union and discipline of the Christian republic” which “gradually formed an independent and increasing state in the heart of the Roman Empire.”

Although the Christian faith promised civil liberty and delivered that liberty to thousands of Jews at Pentecost, as a sort of second Exodus, many who repented of their worldly civil citizenships after Pentecost, and sought to uphold the pure religion of the Christians and be counted in their networks of charity, still had debts and legal obligations to their former civil masters. In short, they still had political liabilities as consequences for the sins that had initially brought them under bondage.

“The hand of the diligent shall bear rule: but the slothful shall be under tribute.” (Proverbs 12:24)

This made the international Christian community an amalgam of freemen and slaves who bore each other’s burdens and had to navigate serving two masters until either they were freed of their debt or their old “marriage contracts” were nullified by the death of their “former husbands,” referring to the collapse of Rome’s civil and social structure, as is the end result of all socialist societies and unrighteous mammon.

So when Paul starts speaking in the second person imperative in Romans 13, from verse five through verse nine, he is talking to a mixed audience. If any of them were still slaves, then they should continue to pay taxes. For it is this wrath that makes human rulers the servants of God in spite

of themselves, punishing the wickedness of sloth, covetousness, and idolatry merely by existing and exercising authority. If tribute is owed, those punished should pay it. If custom is owed, those punished should pay it. If fear is owed, those punished should be afraid. If honor (obligations, burdens) is owed, those punished should pay (fulfill, bear) it. He goes on to explain the end result of this arrangement:

“Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.”  
(Romans 13:8)

Paul himself did not have civil obligations and professed himself to be subject to the original, higher liberty given to man by God, and expressed the inopportune and enslaving nature of discarding that liberty and going into bondage:

“All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.” (1 Corinthians 6:12)

It may still be the recourse of the multitude to appeal to the debate in the same way as most professing christian theologians as they take the conventional approach to dissecting this passage. If that is the case, then there is minimal debate on what this proof-text means, and how it is in favor of a statist interpretation. However, with a little thought, it would show that this is a conflict of interest.

501c3 churches and state-sanctioned seminaries can only ever produce scholars who sympathize with Balaam or the Nicolaitans to justify the worldview that legitimizes their authoritarian organizations. Just like the scholars and Pharisees of Christ's day appealed to generations of compounded dead tradition and adopted presuppositions through generations of “church history,” so do pharisaical scholars of today. Just like those pharisees said “no King but Caesar“, these pharisees legitimize political office through

democracy. Just like those pharisees ruled over the people with religious fervor and political enthusiasm, these pharisees are proud of their government-sponsored degrees and express their self-importance from their pulpits. These are blind guides leading the blind, and so any notion of true liberty, as repeated over and over throughout scripture, must be stricken from churchian dogma. It is necessary for institutionalists to have a conflict of interest that justifies an interpretation of Romans 13 which prescribes institutionalism. Pastors and presidents alike have podiums by which to croon lullabies over the people, making them compliant subjects under their own power. Most people beg for bedtime stories that remind them that they are ruled, because liberty is a fearful responsibility.

It should be expressed that the Koine Greek was developed during a similar time period of Greek history as most languages are established during their respective cultures: as Greece and Rome were moving from a period characterized by free republics to a time of more centralized, authoritarian, and even autocratic empires. Languages change along with those changing social conditions, and those empires were establishing the very same wrath over wicked works as the rulers described in Romans 13 were supposed to conduct: from heavy taxation, to wars, to food shortages, to oppression, to mass murder of their own citizens, to many other atrocities contingent upon Empire.

The Pharisees legitimized civil rulers then just like the Pharisees legitimize civil rulers today, under the same conditions. In every era, there will be scholars who presume to have the answers and deny any possibility of being in error. They are educated by the best professors and attend the best bastions of institutional education, and they all belong to an elite fraternity of historical pedigree and intellectual echo-chambers. Even Saul had belonged to this demographic while he was persecuting Christians for refusing to subject themselves under Caesar's dominion. It

was clear that he did not actually know the God he had prided himself on studying.

“But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty.” (1 Corinthians 1:27)

It is true that word meanings will change to be palatable to the sensitivities and political correctness that evolve with the “sophistication” of Empire, but God’s plan for humanity never changes. Since creation, man was always meant to be free souls under His sole authority, rather than property of the State as human resources for the Cains, Nimrods, Pharaohs, Caesars, or Constantines of the world. Anybody peddling a different message, usually for greedy gain and puffed up accolades, is invariably preaching a false gospel: “ever learning, never coming to the knowledge of the truth.” (2 Timothy 3:7)

But Romans 13 Says...

~ Michael Plaisted, Abolitionist

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<https://abolishhumanarchism.com/2020/07/13/but-romans-13-says/>



**When and How Did Christianity Go Off the Rails ?**

Christianity began with Jesus and His small group of followers, preaching the good news of the Kingdom of God. The early Ekklesia - The Kingdom of God - was marked by simplicity, a communal lifestyle, and a clear focus on the teachings of Christ. However, by the end of the first century AD, certain developments began to alter the course of this movement.

One of the most significant shifts occurred when clergy positions became professionalized, and Ekklesia/church leadership began to receive compensation. This shift moved the church away from its humble, servant-based roots and towards a hierarchical structure. The process was further intensified in the 4th century when Christianity became the official state religion under Constantine, blending the faith with political power.

The earliest followers of Jesus were a small and often persecuted group. Acts 2:42-47 describes the early Christian community:

#### Acts 2

42 And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. 43 And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. 44 And all who believed were together and had all things in common. 45 And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. 46 And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, 47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

This paints a picture of an Ekklesia/church/Kingdom focused on mutual care and voluntary service, not on professional leadership or institutional power.

During this time, the leadership of the church was based on personal maturity, not official titles or salaried positions.

Paul, writing to the Ekklesia/church in Corinth, made it clear that he did not demand payment for his ministry, even though he had the right to do so:

1 Corinthians 9

“If others share the right over you, do we not more? Nevertheless, we did not use this right, but we endure all things so that we will cause no hindrance to the gospel of Christ”

Paul’s approach reflects a spirit of voluntary service, not professionalized ministry.

### The Professionalization of the Clergy

By the late first century and into the second century, the church began to develop a more structured hierarchy, with bishops, elders, and deacons emerging as official titles.

Initially, these leaders served voluntarily and were selected based on their character and ability to teach. However, over time, the position of clergy became professionalized, with some leaders receiving compensation for their position. This shift signified a move away from the original spirit of service and towards an institutional model of leadership.

One early church historian, Eusebius, writing in the early 4th century, commented on this shift: “At that time bishops, presbyters, and deacons did not think of gaining their living from the Gospel. They preferred to spend their time in labors of love and charity.” However, as the church grew in size and influence, financial support for clergy became more

common, and the role of leadership began to attract individuals seeking prestige or financial gain.

The early church father Tertullian criticized this trend, noting in the early 3rd century: “For we ought to be ashamed, if we make a profit out of our poverty, and traffic in selling the gifts of God.” Tertullian saw the growing trend of paying clergy as a betrayal of the church’s original calling to be a community marked by simplicity and sacrificial service.

### The Corruption of Clergy as a Profession

The professionalization of the clergy not only changed the dynamic within local churches but also contributed to a growing divide between clergy and laity. As leadership positions became more formalized and compensated, the role of the clergy began to be seen as a profession rather than serving. This created a distinction between “holy” men of the cloth and ordinary believers, undermining the idea of the “priesthood of all believers”

#### 1 Peter 2

9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a consecrated nation, a [special] people for God’s own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies [the wonderful deeds and virtues and perfections] of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.

By the end of the second century, the distinction between clergy and laity was firmly established, and bishops were often viewed as regional authorities, wielding significant influence over church doctrine and practice. This professionalization was the first major step that took the church off course, creating a power dynamic that was foreign to the early Christian Kingdom.

## **Constantine and the Pagan State Church**

The next significant turning point in Christian history occurred in the 4th century, during the reign of Constantine the Great. Before Constantine's conversion, Christianity was a self-sustained Kingdom, often facing persecution from the Roman Empire. However, Constantine's Edict of Milan in AD 313 granted Christianity legal status and freedom from persecution. This was a monumental shift for the church, which had lived for centuries in opposition to the State and its pagan religions.

While the end of persecution was a relief for many Christians, Constantine's adoption of Christianity as the state religion had far-reaching consequences. The church moved from being a servant Kingdom married to Christ as its King to a favored institution married to the Roman Empire.

Constantine's influence on Christianity went beyond political protection; he instituted the political ideology known as Caesaropapism (the idea of combining the social and political power of secular government with religious power), he actively involved himself in theological debates, convening the Council of Nicaea in AD 325 to settle disputes within the church.

With Constantine's support, the church gained worldly (pagan) wealth, power, and influence, but at a great cost. Historian Edward Gibbon, in his work *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, famously wrote:

“The ruin of paganism, in the eyes of a rational observer, is perhaps the most important event in the history of the Roman Empire. But the Christians, who had so long fought and suffered in the cause of truth and freedom, insensibly relaxed their zeal.”

Gibbon recognized that while Constantine's conversion seemed to be a victory for Christianity, it actually marked the beginning of the church's entanglement with political power, leading to its decline.

### The Danger of State Power

As Christianity became the official religion of the Pagan Roman Empire under Theodosius I in AD 380, the church's identity became inseparable from pagan state authority. No longer was the church a countercultural force speaking truth to power; it had become part of the pagan political establishment. This entanglement with the pagan state brought immense wealth and privilege to church leaders but also corruption and compromise. The church, once persecuted for its radical allegiance to Christ, now enjoyed the backing of pagan imperial power.

Theologian Augustine of Hippo may have recognized the danger of this shift, writing in his seminal work *City of God*: "The earthly city glorifies in itself, the heavenly city glories in the Lord." Augustine warned that the church must never confuse the Kingdom of God with pagan power structures. Yet by aligning with the pagan Roman Empire, the church had, in effect, done just that.

### **The Long-Term Consequences**

The fusion of Ekklesia/The called out Kingdom of God to The State fundamentally changed the nature of Christianity. What had once been a servant Kingdom defined by love, sacrifice, and service became increasingly hierarchical and political. Church offices became positions of power and influence, and disputes over doctrine were often settled not by biblical argument but by imperial decree.

This blending of Christianity with the political machinery of Rome laid the foundation for centuries of corruption, from the medieval papacy to the Crusades. The institutional church, born from this union of faith and empire, became an

entity often more concerned with maintaining power than with advancing the teachings of Christ.

John Chrysostom, a 4th-century church father, lamented the corruption he saw in the church, saying, “The roads that once were crowded with monks are now teeming with riotous crowds of soldiers and secular officials. The church has changed into something different.” Chrysostom’s words reflect the profound transformation that had taken place by his time—Christianity, once a Kingdom of humble service, had become entangled with the powers of the pagan world.

The professionalization of the clergy and the church’s adoption as a pagan state religion marked two of the most significant moments when Christianity began to go off the rails. These shifts moved the church away from its humble beginnings and toward an institutionalized, hierarchical, and politically-entangled form of what it had always taught against. The teachings of Christ, which called for radical service, humility, and allegiance to God, became overshadowed by the pursuit of power, prestige, and influence.

If the Ekklesia is to reclaim its original identity, it must remember the words of Jesus: “My kingdom is not of this world” (John 18:36). The church must reject the entanglement with “the pagan world” and lure of political power and the temptation to turn ministry into a profession for personal gain. Only by returning to the simplicity and servant-heartedness of the early church/Kingdom can Christianity once again become the transformative force it was meant to be.

### The Rise and Transformation of Church Authority

Church authority has been a central topic of debate since the earliest days of Christianity. In its beginnings, the authority of the church was rooted in the teachings of Christ and the apostolic tradition, with leaders chosen based on their Biblical maturity and ability to serve the community.

However, over time, the nature and structure of church authority changed dramatically, leading to a hierarchical system that became increasingly institutionalized and centralized.

## **Early Church Authority: A Model of Servant Leadership**

In the New Testament, church leadership is portrayed as a form of servant leadership, modeled after Jesus' own example. Luke 22:25-27 captures this ethic:

Luke 22

25 And he said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those in authority over them are called benefactors. 26 But not so with you. Rather, let the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as one who serves. 27 For who is the greater, one who reclines at table or one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at table? But I am among you as the one who serves.

The early apostles and elders led through example, love, and humility, following Jesus' instructions. Peter, one of the chief apostles, instructed other leaders:

1 Peter 5

2 shepherd and guide and protect the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not [motivated] for shameful gain, but with wholehearted enthusiasm; 3 not lording it over those assigned to your care [do not be arrogant or overbearing], but be examples [of Christian living] to the flock.

The New Testament presents a model of shared leadership among elders, and deacons. Authority was decentralized, with each local congregation having its own leadership

structure, and decisions were made collectively. In Acts 15, for instance, the church in Jerusalem gathered the apostles and elders to discuss matters of doctrine, demonstrating a form of early church governance based on consensus and spiritual discernment, not coercive power.

## **The Shift Toward Hierarchy**

By the end of the first century, this early model of servant leadership began to change. As the church grew and faced increasing external threats—such as persecution and heresy—the role of bishops (overseers) gained more prominence. While originally bishops were seen as spiritual overseers, they gradually became figures of centralized authority. The writings of Ignatius of Antioch, an early church father, reflect this shift. Ignatius emphasized the role of bishops as key figures in maintaining unity and orthodoxy within the church, writing, “Let no one do anything of concern to the Church without the bishop” (Letter to the Smyrnaeans, 8:1).

Ignatius' emphasis on episcopal authority laid the groundwork for a more hierarchical church structure. By the second century, the bishop began to wield considerable power over both doctrine and discipline within the church, creating a divide between clergy and laity.

The emergence of monarchical bishops—those who governed single cities and regions—marked a significant departure from the Biblical model of shared, communal leadership. This shift was driven in part by the church's desire for stability and uniformity, but it also reflected a growing trend toward institutionalization.

## **The Institutionalization of Church Authority**

As Christianity became more organizational, the distinction between clergy and laity became sharper. The development of a formalized clergy class, with bishops at the top, changed

the way authority was exercised. Church offices became positions of power.

By the third century, the church began to mirror the Roman imperial system in its organization. Bishops in major cities—such as Rome, Antioch, and Alexandria—began to exert influence not only over their local congregations but over wider regions. Cyprian of Carthage, a prominent 3rd-century bishop, argued for a strong, unified episcopate, declaring that “The bishop is in the church and the church is in the bishop, and if anyone is not with the bishop, he is not in the church” (Letters, 66.8). Cyprian’s view reflected the growing centrality of bishops in church life and governance, further entrenching hierarchical authority.

By the time Constantine legalized Christianity in the early 4th century, the church was already moving towards a more formal and centralized authority structure. Constantine’s support for Christianity further accelerated this process, as the church now found itself closely aligned with the Roman state. Bishops, once spiritual overseers, now held political power, and the church’s authority began to reflect the bureaucratic and hierarchical structure of the Roman Empire.

### **The Rise of the Papacy: Ultimate Centralization of Authority**

The growing influence of bishops eventually led to the rise of the papacy. By the 5th century, the Bishop of Rome began to assert supremacy over other bishops, claiming a special status based on the apostolic succession from Peter. Leo I, who served as pope from AD 440 to 461, was instrumental in consolidating papal authority. He declared that the pope had supreme authority over the entire Christian church, writing, “The care of the universal Church should converge toward Peter’s one seat, and nothing anywhere should be separated from its Head” (Letter 10).

The papacy represented the ultimate centralization of church authority, and over time, popes wielded immense church and political power. This was a far cry from the decentralized, communal leadership model of the early church. The pope, as the supreme authority of Christendom, became a powerful political figure, more concerned with preserving his positional influence than with any servant leadership.

The centralization of authority in the papacy led to widespread abuses within the church, including the selling of indulgences, simony (the buying and selling of church offices), and the total corruption of church leaders. These abuses would eventually provoke reform movements, such as the Protestant Reformation in the 16th century, but by then, the damage had been done.

### **The Consequences of Hierarchical Authority**

The transformation of Ekklesia/church/Kingdom authority from a humble, service-based model to a hierarchical, centralized institution had profound consequences for the church and its mission. Instead of being a countercultural Kingdom dedicated to the teachings of Jesus, the church became an institution focused on maintaining power and influence in the state. The divide between clergy and laity grew wider, with the clergy often seen as a ruling class rather than servants of the people.

The centralization of authority also stifled theological diversity and debate. Church councils, often convened by political rulers, determined doctrine, and dissenting views were labeled heretical. This led to the suppression of Biblical theological perspectives and the marginalization of those who questioned the church's authority.

**Conclusion: Restoring the Original Vision of Church Authority**

If the church is to regain its vitality, it must return to its original model of leadership—one based on service, humility, faith and Charity and shared authority. Jesus' words still hold true today: "The greatest among you will be your servant" (Matthew 23:11). The church must reject the lure of institutional power and embrace a model of leadership that reflects Christ's call to serve, not to dominate.

The New Testament's vision of church authority was never about hierarchy or political power; it was about mutual care, spiritual maturity, and humble service. If the church can reclaim this vision, it will once again become a light to the world, not an institution seeking its own power and glory.

### **Paying Pastors and Church Leaders Is Not Just Unbiblical—It's Been Completely Detrimental to the Church!**

There is no solid biblical support for paying pastors or elders a salary. This realization hit me during my time working at a seminary, where I saw firsthand how many practices in the "traditional church" simply can't be justified by the Bible. So, I'm compelled to address one of the more glaring issues: paying church leaders. Not only is it unsupported by Scripture, but it's often detrimental to the church's maturity and growth.

Let's Look at the Commonly Misused Verses

1 Timothy 5:17-18 is one of the most frequently cited passages to justify pastoral salaries: "Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching. For the Scripture says, 'You shall not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain,' and, 'The laborer is worthy of his wages.'"

At first glance, it seems like a slam dunk for the "pay the pastor" argument. But here's the issue: what does "double

"honor" actually mean? Does it automatically refer to a wage? The idea that Paul is talking about financial compensation doesn't hold up. If it did, then by the same logic, elders should be getting paid in grain, like the ox! That's obviously not what Paul is saying. The "honor" mentioned here is respect, not a paycheck.

Look at how Paul uses the word "honor" earlier in the same letter: "Honor widows who are truly widows." (1 Timothy 5:3). No one is suggesting we pay widows a salary, yet the word "honor" is the same. This whole idea of paying elders doesn't come from the text; it's something we've imposed on it.

### What About Missionaries Like Paul?

Another verse often used is 1 Corinthians 9:14: "So also the Lord directed those who proclaim the gospel to get their living from the gospel."

Sure, on the surface, it looks like Paul's backing the idea of financial support. But if you read the whole passage, Paul's making a different point. He acknowledges that those who preach the gospel have the right to material support, but then immediately adds that he didn't use that right! He purposely avoided being a financial burden so that the gospel wouldn't be hindered. Plus, Paul wasn't a stationary pastor. He was a missionary, traveling from city to city. This has nothing to do with paying local church leaders a salary.

### Galatians 6:6—Weak Evidence

Galatians 6:6: "The one who is taught the word must share all good things with the one who teaches him."

Again, we need to consider context. This verse talks about reaping what you sow, and Paul's focus is on spiritual sowing, not money. "Sharing all good things" is about mutual support and blessings, not cutting a paycheck.

## Paul's Model of Ministry

2 Thessalonians 3:7-10: "For you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us, because we were not idle when we were with you, nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it, but with toil and labor we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you. It was not because we do not have that right, but to give you in ourselves an example to imitate. For even when we were with you, we would give you this command: If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat."

Paul was crystal clear—he worked to support himself, setting an example for others to follow. He didn't demand money for his ministry, and he discouraged idleness.

## The Old Testament Priesthood Argument Doesn't Hold Water

Some might argue that pastors are like Old Testament priests and should be paid like the Levites were. But under the New Covenant, we're all priests (1 Peter 2:9). The Old Covenant priesthood was fulfilled in Christ. We can't use that system to justify paying church leaders today.

Micah 3:11 hits the nail on the head when criticizing paid religious leaders:

Micah 3

11 "Her leaders pronounce judgment for a bribe, her priests teach for a fee, and her prophets divine for money. Yet they lean on the Lord saying, 'Is not the Lord in our midst? No harm will come to us.'"

The Bible consistently warns against turning ministry into a paid profession. When the church began paying pastors, it went down a road that has caused more harm than good.

## **Why Paying Pastors Hurts the Church**

Paying a salary to church leaders often stunts the church's growth. When you pay someone to do all the discipling, teaching, and serving, it encourages passivity among the congregation. People stop doing the work themselves because they assume the "professional" pastor will take care of it. It's not biblical, and it's not healthy for the church.

We're supposed to be a body of believers where everyone contributes. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 12:12-27 that the church is one body with many members, and each member has a role to play. But when we pay someone to do the heavy lifting, we rob ourselves of the opportunity to grow and mature spiritually.

Think about it, real spiritual growth happens when we serve others, sacrifice our own wants, and take responsibility for discipling one another. Paying a pastor to do all that for us undermines that growth.

## **A Better Way Forward**

The church doesn't need salaried leaders. What it needs is for each member to step up and share in the responsibility of ministry. We should all be teaching, serving, and caring for one another, not outsourcing those tasks to someone else. Elders should lead by example, voluntarily and without pay, just as 1 Peter 5:1-3 instructs:

"Shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock."

In the end, paying pastors is not only unbiblical but also harmful to the church. If we truly want to follow Christ's design for His church, we need to move away from the paid professional model and get back to a community where everyone participates in ministry. Only then can we experience the spiritual maturity and growth God intended for His people.

## **The Reformers Didn't Reform Enough!**

The Protestant Reformation of the 16th century was undoubtedly one of the most pivotal moments in Christian history. Men like Martin Luther, John Calvin, and Ulrich Zwingli courageously challenged the theological corruption that had become entrenched in the Catholic Church. The sale of indulgences, the doctrine of transubstantiation, and the concept of papal authority were rightly condemned. In this way, the Reformers did pull Christianity out of the theological cesspool it had fallen into under Rome.

However, for all the good that the Reformation achieved, it didn't go far enough. While it corrected many doctrinal abuses, it failed to restore the Kingdom of God to its original form as seen in the New Testament. Instead of returning to the simplicity and unity of the early Church, the Reformation gave birth to an explosion of Protestant denominations—each claiming to hold the correct interpretation of Scripture, while in many cases, splintering over issues of control and hierarchy. This fragmentation has done far more harm than good, creating confusion and division rather than fostering the unity and love that Jesus commanded His followers to display.

### **The Apostolic Church vs. Denominational Chaos**

The early Church, as described in the New Testament, was a model of unity and simplicity. The apostles and early believers didn't divide themselves into factions based on minor theological differences. Instead, they were devoted to the teaching of the apostles, the breaking of bread, fellowship, and prayer (Acts 2:42). Paul exhorted the church at Corinth: "I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment." (1 Corinthians 1:10)

Unfortunately, this vision of unity was shattered as soon as denominations began to form. Each group emphasized its own doctrines, traditions, and structures, often with little regard for the model of the early church. Rather than restoring the simple, organic nature of the apostolic church, Protestant denominations have replicated many of the institutional structures and hierarchies that the Reformers sought to leave behind. Luther himself lamented this tendency, writing in 1522, “There is nothing I fear more than sectarianism, for it rends asunder the body of Christ.”

### **The Failure of Protestant Ecclesiology**

At the heart of the problem is the fact that the Reformers, while rejecting the corrupt authority of the Pope, replaced it with other forms of man-made ecclesiastical authority. Whether it’s the bishop-led Anglican Church, the presbyterian model of governance, or the congregationalism of many Baptist churches, these structures are all human inventions. None of them reflect the organic, Spirit-led model of church life found in the New Testament.

In the apostolic church, leadership was a matter of servant-hearted oversight, not professionalized clergy with salaries and titles. Elders were to lead by example, not by lording it over the flock.

1 Peter 5

3 not lording it over those assigned to your care [do not be arrogant or overbearing], but be examples [of Christian living] to the flock.

The early church was a priesthood of all believers

1 Peter 2

9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a consecrated nation, a [special] people for God’s own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies [the wonderful deeds and virtues and perfections] of

Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.

The apostles never envisioned a class of professional ministers who would monopolize preaching, teaching, and leadership. Instead, they encouraged all believers to take part in building up the church:

1 Corinthians 14  
26 “What then, brothers? When you come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up.”

Yet, what emerged out of the Reformation was often a rigid system of church governance that closely resembled the Catholic model. Instead of bringing the church back to its biblical roots, the Reformers codified new traditions that became just as entrenched as the ones they had rejected. John Calvin himself, while providing an invaluable theological framework, ended up creating a system in Geneva that was as controlling and hierarchical as the Catholicism he opposed. Calvin’s Geneva became a theocratic state, with strict moral codes enforced by ecclesiastical authorities. Far from returning to the freedom and flexibility of the early church, the Reformed tradition became a new form of institutionalized religion.

## **The Tragedy of Denominationalism**

The most tragic outcome of the Reformation’s failure to fully restore the church to its apostolic roots is the rise of denominationalism. Rather than healing the wounds of division, the Reformation has contributed to them. Today, there are supposedly over 45,000 Protestant denominations worldwide, each claiming to represent the true interpretation of Scripture. This is the direct opposite of what Jesus prayed for in John 17:21

John 17

21 “That they may all be one, just as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me.”

Denominationalism has divided the body of Christ into warring factions. Instead of being known for their love and unity, Christians are often known for their theological disputes and denominational rivalries. The apostle Paul warned against this very danger when he wrote:

1 Corinthians 3

4 “For when one says, ‘I follow Paul,’ and another, ‘I follow Apollos,’ are you not being merely human?”

Yet, that’s exactly what the modern church has done. Whether it’s following Luther, Calvin, Wesley, or Zwingli, we’ve fragmented into camps rather than seeking the unity that Christ commanded.

A Call for Radical Reformation

So, where do we go from here? The Reformers didn’t reform enough. They corrected some theological errors but left the church mired in man-made traditions and structures that continue to hinder the full expression of the Kingdom of God. What’s needed now is not another reformation, but an EXODUS a radical return to the simple, Spirit-led model of church life found in the New Testament.

We need to reclaim the priesthood of all believers and abandon the professionalization of ministry. We need to reject denominationalism and work toward true unity in the body of Christ. We need to stop building empires and start building relationships. As Jesus said:

Matthew 20

25 “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority

over them. It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant.”

The Protestant Reformation was a step in the right direction, but it didn't go far enough. It successfully corrected many theological errors of Catholicism, but it didn't fully restore the church to its original, apostolic form. Instead of breaking free from the institutional model of church life, it created new structures and hierarchies that have often done more harm than good. The rise of denominationalism has divided the body of Christ and led to confusion and rivalry rather than unity and love.

It's time for a radical EXODUS. It's time to go back to the New Testament model of Ekklesia—a model where every believer is a priest, where leadership is servant-hearted and not professionalized, where the Ekklesia take care of their own in ALL areas of life and where the Ekklesia functions as a united body, not a collection of competing denominations. Only then will we fulfill Jesus' prayer for unity and truly be the light to the world that we were meant to be.

Denominations are the Result of Ferocious Wolves

The existence of Christian denominations is often seen as the inevitable outcome of theological diversity and differing interpretations of Scripture. Yet, from a biblical perspective, the proliferation of denominations can be understood as something far more troubling. In Acts 20:28-30, the Apostle Paul prophetically warned the leaders of the church in Ephesus that "ferocious wolves" would come from within the church itself, seeking to divide the flock for their own gain. These wolves would distort the truth and lead people away from the pure gospel of Jesus Christ, causing divisions and schisms. The formation of denominations is a direct result of this prophecy being fulfilled, as false teachers, driven by self-interest and pride, have divided the church into factions that follow their particular version of Christianity rather than the unified faith that the apostles preached.

Paul's Warning to the Ephesian Elders

Paul's words to the Ephesian elders in Acts 20:28-30 carry an urgent tone, as if he foresaw the future fractures that would plague the church. He told them:

Acts 20

28 "Take care and be on guard for yourselves and for the whole flock over which the Holy Spirit has appointed you as overseers, to shepherd (tend, feed, guide) the church of God which He bought with His own blood. I know that after I am gone, [false teachers like] ferocious wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; even from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse and distorted things, to draw away the disciples after themselves [as their followers]."

Paul warned that the church would face internal threats, and the wolves would not come from outside but from within the body of believers. This internal division is exactly what led to the creation of denominations. When individuals prioritize their own understanding, their own power, and their own influence over the unity of the church, the flock is divided, and different denominations emerge.

The Rise of Wolves in Sheep's Clothing

History shows that Paul's warning was tragically accurate. As early as the first century, false teachers began to arise within the church, distorting the gospel for personal gain or misguided ambition. These individuals introduced theological errors that would later solidify into distinct denominations. The apostle John faced similar issues when he wrote:

1 John 2

19 "They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, so that it would be shown that they all are not of us."

John's words reflect the very essence of how false teachers, or wolves, cause division. They create factions, pulling people away from the truth to follow after their own distorted teachings.

In the centuries that followed, these divisions became more formalized. Theological debates led to councils and creeds, but they also led to schisms, with groups separating from the main body of believers to follow their own interpretations. The Protestant Reformation, while necessary to correct abuses within the Catholic Church, also resulted in the formation of numerous Protestant denominations, each claiming to have the true interpretation of Scripture. This is exactly what Paul warned would happen when men would "arise, speaking perverse and distorted things, to draw away the disciples after themselves."

#### The Impact of Denominations on Unity

Denominations, far from being a sign of healthy diversity, are actually evidence of the church's failure to maintain the unity that Christ commanded. Jesus prayed for His followers in John 17:

John 17

20 "I am not asking on behalf of them alone, but also on behalf of those who will believe in Me through their message, that all of them may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I am in You. May they also be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me."

The very existence of denominations undermines this prayer for unity. How can the world believe in the truth of Christ when His followers are so divided? How can we reflect the unity of the Father and the Son when we are fractured into thousands of different sects and traditions, each claiming to represent the true church?

Paul echoed this call for unity when he wrote to the Corinthian church:

1 Corinthians 1

10 "I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another in what you say and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly united in mind and thought."

The formation of denominations has done the exact opposite of what Paul intended. Instead of being united in mind and thought, the church has splintered into countless factions, each promoting its own brand of Christianity. This division is not a natural consequence of human diversity; it is the direct result of the "ferocious wolves" that Paul warned about—those who distort the truth to draw followers after themselves.

### **The Self-Interest Behind Denominations**

At the heart of many denominational splits lies self-interest. Paul warned that these wolves would come "from among your own selves," meaning that even those who start with good intentions can fall into the trap of self-promotion and pride. In many cases, church leaders sought to establish their own authority, using theological debates as a way to gain followers and increase their influence. Instead of seeking the unity of the church, they sought to build their own kingdoms.

James, the brother of Jesus, addressed the dangers of selfish ambition within the church:

James 3

16 For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing.

Denominations often arise out of exactly this kind of disorder. Leaders with selfish ambition twist theological debates into reasons for division, causing disorder within the church and leading to the creation of new sects. What begins as a disagreement over doctrine often devolves into a battle for power and influence, with each side claiming to have the truth while seeking to gain followers.

The Devastating Effect on the Flock

Paul's warning that these wolves would "not spare the flock" has proven tragically true. The rise of denominations has led to confusion, division, and the weakening of the church's witness to the world. Rather than being a unified body, the church has become a collection of competing factions, each vying for followers. This not only damages the unity of the church but also causes harm to individual believers, who are often caught in the crossfire of denominational disputes.

The splintering of the church has created an environment where people are more likely to follow charismatic leaders or the latest theological trend than to seek the unity that Christ and the apostles commanded. This creates a cycle where more and more denominations are formed, each claiming to correct the errors of the others, but all contributing to the further fracturing of the body of Christ.

A Call to Return to Apostolic Unity

If we are to reverse the damage done by the rise of denominations, we must heed Paul's warning and return to the unity of the apostolic church. The church must reject the false teachers and "ferocious wolves" who seek to divide the flock for their own gain. We must return to the simple, unified faith that characterized the early church—a faith that was centered on Jesus Christ, not on human traditions, power structures, or theological disputes.

Paul's charge to the Ephesian elders is as relevant today as it was in the first century:

Acts 20

28“Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock.”

We must guard against the wolves who seek to distort the truth and divide the church. Instead of following human leaders who promote division, we must return to the model of the early church, where believers were united in their devotion to the apostles' teaching, fellowship, and prayer. In the end, the church must remember that our unity is not optional—it is a command from Christ Himself. We are called to be one, just as the Father and the Son are one. Denominations are not a reflection of the diversity of the body of Christ; they are a result of the very wolves that Paul warned would come to destroy the flock. It is time for the church to put aside its divisions and return to the unity that Christ prayed for and that the apostles fought to preserve. Only then will we truly be the church that God intended.

## **The Synagogue of Satan The Talmud, Kabbalah, and the Rise of Modern Mysticism: From Babylon to Zionism**

The Talmud is a vast body of rabbinical commentary and legal discussions, divided into the Mishnah (the written collection of Jewish oral traditions) and the Gemara (the commentary on the Mishnah). It was composed over centuries, with much of its early development occurring during and after the Babylonian captivity (circa 586 B.C.).

The Babylonian captivity marks a turning point in Jewish history. After the destruction of the First Temple, many Jews were exiled to Babylon. During this time, teachers and scribes began to systematize oral traditions and religious interpretations. These corrupt leaders started developing teachings that deviated from the straightforward commandments of the Torah and incorporated foreign elements into their interpretations.

While the Babylonian exile officially ended in 538 B.C. when Cyrus the Great allowed the Jews to return to Jerusalem, many Jewish communities remained in Babylon. Over time, the rabbinical class in Babylon grew in influence. They developed a legal and interpretative tradition distinct from the written Torah, formalized in what became known as the Babylonian Talmud.

The Talmud represents a significant shift in Jewish thought. While the Torah is the written law of God, the Talmud is a collection of human interpretations, discussions, and debates about that law and it introduces a man-centered approach to interpreting divine revelation, thereby deviating from the pure instructions of the Torah.

In His messages to the churches in the book of Revelation, Jesus Christ warned of a group that He referred to as the "Synagogue of Satan." These were individuals who claimed

to be Jews but were not, and they were accused of aligning themselves against God's true people.

In Revelation 2:9 and 3:9 Jesus gives a stern warning to two of the seven churches in Asia Minor:

Revelation 2:9: "I know your suffering and your poverty—but you are rich—and how you are blasphemed and slandered by those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan."

Revelation 3:9: "Take note, I will make those of the synagogue of Satan, who say that they are Jews and are not, but lie—I will make them come and bow down at your feet, and make them know that I have loved you."

Jesus' use of the term "synagogue of Satan" refers to those who claim to be the people of God but are, in fact, working against His purposes. These individuals or groups are accused of hypocrisy and deceit, aligning themselves not with God's truth, but with Satan's lies. Historically, this has been interpreted as a warning to those who sought to distort the true faith through false teachings, particularly those who twisted the Scriptures for their own purposes.

## **The Emergence of Kabbalah: Mysticism and Esotericism**

Kabbalah is a form of Jewish mysticism that began to emerge around the 12th century but traces its roots much earlier to secret knowledge passed down through generations as far back as the Hebrew captivity in Egypt. Kabbalah teaches that there is a hidden, mystical meaning behind the Torah and the universe, which can be unlocked through various esoteric practices. One of its central texts, the Zohar, is a mystical commentary on the Torah.

Moses de León, a Spanish-Jewish mystic living in the 13th century, is credited with bringing Kabbalah to prominence

by either composing or compiling the Zohar. De León's writings attributed the Zohar to the 2nd-century rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, although many scholars believe that de León himself was the primary author. Regardless, de León's work became the foundation for Jewish mysticism, encouraging seekers to interpret the Scriptures through mystical symbolism.

Isaac Luria, a 16th-century Kabbalist known as the "Ari," further developed Kabbalistic thought, creating a system of cosmology and theosophy that perverted the nature of God, creation, and humanity. Luria's teachings became known as Lurianic Kabbalah and introduced concepts like Tzimtzum (the contraction of God's presence to allow for the creation of the world) and the Shevirat HaKelim (the breaking of the vessels), which explain the presence of evil in the world and the need for its rectification.

Kabbalah thus developed into a mystical, symbolic interpretation of the Torah, with its adherents believing they could attain divine knowledge and enlightenment through these esoteric teachings. This mystical system greatly influenced not only Jewish thought but also many later occult and esoteric movements.

### **Maimonides: Philosophy and Rationalism**

While Kabbalah flourished as an esoteric perversion of the Torah, another figure, Maimonides (1138–1204), sought to reconcile Judaism with Greek philosophy. Maimonides wrote the *Guide for the Perplexed*, where he sought to harmonize Aristotelian philosophy with Jewish theology. Maimonides promoted rationalism and intellectual inquiry, but his efforts also laid the groundwork for a more philosophical approach to religious thought that could veer into speculative theology.

Maimonides' influence on Jewish thought can be seen as a parallel development to Kabbalah. While Kabbalah sought

mystical and supernatural insights, Maimonides focused on rational and philosophical explanations of the divine. Both schools of thought influenced later esoteric movements.

## **Ignatius of Loyola and the Jesuits: Mysticism and Control**

As Jewish mysticism developed, so too did Catholic mysticism and orders like the Jesuits, founded by Ignatius of Loyola in 1540. Ignatius, a “Crypto Jew”, deeply influenced by mystical experiences and visions, developed the Spiritual Exercises, a guide for meditation, prayer, and contemplation designed to bring individuals into closer communion with God. However, critics argue that Ignatius' mystical experiences, while wrapped in Christian terminology, mirrored the secretive and hierarchical nature of Kabbalah.

The Jesuits became known for their disciplined order, intellectual rigor, and commitment to the papacy. They often operated in political spheres and used their influence to shape educational and religious institutions. The Jesuits' emphasis on control, discipline, and secrecy reflects a kind of spiritual elitism akin to the esoteric nature of Kabbalistic teachings.

## **Zionism: The Political Expression of Mystical Thought**

The roots of modern Zionism, the movement for the establishment of a Jewish homeland, can be traced back to both religious and secular ideologies. The spiritual longing for the return to Zion (Jerusalem) has been a central theme in Jewish thought for millennia. However, Kabbalistic mysticism, with its focus on the cosmic significance of the Jewish people and their role in rectifying the world, played a significant role in fueling messianic and nationalistic hopes.

The political expression of Zionism in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, led by figures like Theodor Herzl, was primarily secular, but it was influenced by a deep-rooted religious and mystical desire for the Jewish people to return to their ancestral homeland. This movement culminated in the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948.

The composition of the Talmud and the development of Kabbalistic mysticism have had far-reaching consequences throughout history. From the Babylonian exile through the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D., the evolution of rabbinical teachings and esoteric traditions set the stage for a series of movements and ideologies that continue to influence the world today. Figures like Moses de León, Isaac Luria, and Maimonides contributed to a body of mystical and philosophical teachings that found their way into Christian mysticism, occult practices, and modern political movements like Zionism. Understanding these connections reveals the profound impact of esoteric and mystical traditions on both religious and political history, as well as the ongoing influence of these ideas in the modern world.

### **Zionism and Its Origins: From Sabbatai Zevi to Theodor Herzl**

Zionism, as a modern political movement, emerged in the late 19th century with the goal of establishing a homeland in Palestine, leading to the formation of the state of Israel in 1948. While Zionism is often framed as a fulfillment of biblical prophecy concerning the return of Jews to their ancestral homeland, its actual roots are intertwined with political, religious, and occult influences that extend far beyond the biblical narrative. The history of Zionism finds its origins from the false messiah Sabbatai Zevi to the revolutionary ideas of Jacob Frank, the Illuminist influence of Adam Weishaupt, and the financial power of the Rothschild and Rockefeller families, ultimately leading to Theodor Herzl, the father of modern Zionism.

The study of occultism, secret societies, and mystical teachings often reveals a deep interconnectedness between various ancient spiritual systems and modern esoteric traditions. These secret teachings, sometimes referred to as the mystery schools, form a web of influence that spans centuries and civilizations. The Kabbalah is the central teaching emanating from Babylonian and Egyptian occult schools, and finding its place in the Talmud and Jewish mysticism. One of the most significant figures to arise within this esoteric framework was Sabbatai Zevi (1626–1676), a Jewish mystic and self-proclaimed Messiah whose controversial teachings left a lasting imprint on occult and mystical traditions, especially through the heretical movement known as Sabbateanism.

Sabbatai Zevi (1626–1676) was a mystic from the Ottoman Empire who claimed to be the long-awaited Jewish Messiah and a teacher of Kabbalah. His two central, foundational teachings were 1. that redemption came through sin, the more sin the more redemption, and 2. The law of reversal. According to the Talmud, in the messianic age there would no longer be religious obligations. Fasting days became days of feasting and rejoicing. Sexual promiscuity, adultery, incest and religious orgies were encouraged and practiced by Sabbateans.

In 1666, his messianic claims attracted a large following, and many Jews believed that he would lead them back to the Promised Land and usher in the Messianic Age. Zevi's teachings were a radical departure from traditional Judaism, and his movement gained momentum as a result of widespread anticipation of a messianic redemption.

However, in a shocking turn of events, Sabbatai Zevi was arrested by the Ottoman authorities and given the choice to convert to Islam or face death. He chose conversion. Despite his conversion, Zevi's followers continued to believe in his messianic role. This event marked the beginning of a deeper schism in Jewish history, where mystical and messianic

ideas took hold among secret groups of believers who continued to propagate Zevi's teachings under a veneer of orthodox religious practice.

Zevi's legacy would influence later movements, notably the Frankists, who would adopt the radical, messianic ideologies and extend these teachings into revolutionary ideas about religion, society, and the political landscape of Europe.

### **Jacob Frank and the Radicalization of Sabbateanism**

Jacob Frank (1726–1791) was a controversial figure who carried on the legacy of Sabbatai Zevi but in an even more radical and unorthodox form. Frank declared himself the reincarnation of Zevi and presented himself as a messianic figure to his followers. His teachings were a fusion of Jewish Kabbalistic mysticism, Sabbatean ideas, and antinomianism (the belief that religious laws no longer applied). Frank believed that redemption could only be achieved through a complete destruction of the old order, including traditional religious and social structures.

Frank's followers, known as Frankists, embraced secretive, subversive practices and became involved in revolutionary activities across Europe. His movement laid the groundwork for a political and spiritual rebellion against traditional religious and social norms, and these ideas would later find resonance in the revolutionary movements that swept across Europe.

The Frankist movement's radical approach to societal transformation influenced not only Jewish but also European revolutionary thought. It is here that the seeds of modern political Zionism can be seen, as the movement began to focus on the transformation of the Jewish people's political and social status in Europe.

### **Adam Weishaupt and the Illuminist Connection**

One of the key figures in the development of revolutionary and subversive thought in Europe was Adam Weishaupt (1748–1830), the founder of the Illuminati in 1776. Weishaupt's Illuminati movement sought to overthrow established monarchies and religious institutions in favor of a new world order based on Enlightenment principles. The Illuminati operated in secret, promoting atheism, secularism, and revolutionary ideals aimed at transforming society.

The Illuminati and Frankists, both founded in Occult Sabbateanism, sought to dismantle the existing religious and political order and replace it with something new. Weishaupt's vision of a secular, revolutionary society resonated with the radical elements within Jewish society, particularly among the Frankists and their descendants, who saw political Zionism as a means of achieving redemption.

Weishaupt's ideas, particularly those concerning the need for secrecy, subversion, and the overthrow of traditional authority, would later influence key figures in the Zionist movement, many of whom were also engaged in broader revolutionary and socialist movements across Europe.

### **The Rothschild Influence: Financing the Zionist Dream**

The Rothschild family, one of the most powerful and influential banking dynasties in Europe, played a crucial role in the development and eventual success of the Zionist movement. The Rothschilds were deeply involved in European finance and politics, and their wealth allowed them to exert significant influence over various political causes, including Zionism.

Lord Lionel Rothschild, in particular, became a key patron of the early Zionist movement. The Rothschild family funded many of the early Jewish settlements in Palestine, including

agricultural colonies that would later become central to the Zionist project. While the Rothschilds' support for Zionism is often framed in humanitarian terms, their financial backing also had significant political implications, as it helped lay the groundwork for the eventual creation of the state of Israel.

Moreover, the Rothschild family's financial power allowed them to exert influence over international politics, particularly in Britain, where the Balfour Declaration of 1917 was issued. This declaration, which expressed British support for the establishment of a "national home for the Jewish people" in Palestine, was a significant milestone in the Zionist movement. The Rothschilds' connections and influence were instrumental in securing this political support for the Zionist cause.

Theodor Herzl: The Father of Modern Zionism

While the groundwork for modern Zionism was laid by the messianic movements of Sabbatai Zevi and Jacob Frank, and supported by the financial influence of the Rothschilds, it was Theodor Herzl (1860–1904) who transformed Zionism into a concrete political movement. Herzl, an Austrian journalist, is often credited as the father of modern Zionism. In his 1896 book "Der Judenstaat" ("The Jewish State"), Herzl argued that the Jewish people needed a sovereign nation-state of their own to escape persecution and secure their future.

Herzl's vision for a Zionist homeland in Palestine was not rooted in religious prophecy or genealogical connection to the ancient tribes of Israel but in the political realities of European antisemitism. He saw Zionism as a political solution to the "Jewish Question," rather than a religious or messianic fulfillment of biblical prophecy. Nevertheless, Herzl's Zionism was embraced by both secular and religious Jews, and his ideas laid the foundation for the eventual establishment of the state of Israel in 1948.

Herzl's Zionist movement gained momentum through the financial backing of the Rothschilds and the political support of influential figures in Europe. By the time of his death in 1904, Herzl had laid the groundwork for the Zionist Congresses, which would continue to push for the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine.

## **The Destruction of the Temple and the Loss of Tribal Records**

One of the key arguments against the claim that modern Zionism is a fulfillment of biblical prophecy is the fact that the genealogical records of the 12 tribes of Israel were destroyed in 70 AD when the Romans decimated Jerusalem and destroyed the Second Temple. These records were kept in the temple, and without them, it is impossible to trace any modern Jewish ancestry back to the biblical tribes.

This raises significant questions about the claim that modern Jews, are the direct descendants of the Israelites. Genetic studies have shown that modern Jewish communities have a mixture of Middle Eastern, European, and other ancestries, making it impossible to claim any genealogical connection to the 12 tribes. As such, the Zionist claim to the land of Israel as a biblical inheritance becomes impossible when viewed through the lens of genealogical continuity.

In conclusion, Zionism is a movement with roots that have nothing to do with the biblical narrative of the 12 tribes of Israel. From the messianic claims and occultism of Sabbatai Zevi to the occultic and revolutionary ideas of Jacob Frank and Adam Weishaupt, to the occultic and financial influence of the Rothschilds and the political vision of Theodor Herzl, Zionism has been shaped by a variety of occultic, political, religious, and ideological forces. While many Zionists view the creation of the state of Israel as the fulfillment of biblical prophecy, the destruction of the temple in 70 AD and the loss of genealogical records destroys this narrative.

Zionism is a political movement born out of the occult, social and political realities of 19th and 20th-century Europe and not remotely any sort of a biblical promise to the descendants of the 12 tribes of Israel.

## **The Rockefeller-Rothschild Nexus: Financing Zionism**

While the Rothschild family is more directly linked to the financial backing of the Zionist movement, particularly through their support of Jewish settlements in Palestine, there were intersections between the Rockefeller and Rothschild families, as well as others, in various philanthropic and political ventures. The Rothschilds provided the Zionist movement with significant financial backing in its early stages, funding agricultural colonies and settlement projects that laid the groundwork for the future state of Israel.

The Rockefellers, by contrast, were more involved in the broader geopolitical framework that enabled Zionism to succeed. Their control over American and international policy, particularly through their connections to the UN and their influence over educational and philanthropic organizations, helped create a favorable environment for the establishment of Israel. The Balfour Declaration of 1917, which expressed British support for a Jewish homeland in Palestine, was facilitated in part by the influence of Zionist leaders who had connections to both the Rothschilds and the broader international elite, including figures within the Rockefeller orbit.

In this sense, the Rockefeller-Rothschild nexus can be seen as a powerful convergence of financial, political, and ideological forces that shaped the course of Zionism in the 20th century. Both families, though operating in different spheres, contributed to the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine, with the Rothschilds providing the material

support and the Rockefellers helping to create the international conditions necessary for Zionist success.

### **Theosophy and Madam Blavatsky: Esoteric Syncretism**

In the 19th century, Helena Petrovna Blavatsky (1831–1891) founded Theosophy, an esoteric spiritual movement that drew from Kabbalistic, Eastern, and Western occult traditions. Blavatsky was heavily influenced by Kabbalah, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Gnosticism. Her teachings promoted the idea of hidden, ancient wisdom that could be accessed by spiritual elites, reflecting the secretive nature of Kabbalistic thought.

Blavatsky's Theosophy laid the groundwork for many modern occult and New Age movements, blending mystical teachings from various traditions into a syncretic whole. Theosophy's influence extended into the 20th century, impacting figures like Alice Bailey, founder of Lucis Publishing and Lucis Trust - the publishing and funding of the U.N., and others who would shape modern spiritual and esoteric practices.

## **The Rise of Liberal Modernist Theology: Henry Fosdick, Rockefeller, and the Infiltration of Seminaries**

The mainstream acceptance of liberal modernism within Christianity, especially in the United States, can be traced back to influential figures and financial backing that pushed a progressive theological agenda. One such key figure was Henry Emerson Fosdick, a preacher who championed liberal theology, and whose rise to prominence was significantly aided by the financial support and strategic influence of the Rockefeller family. Through the Rockefellers' philanthropic endeavors, liberal modernism found its way into the heart of American Christianity, especially through the seminaries that were crucial in shaping the next generation of pastors and theologians.

### **The Rise of Henry Emerson Fosdick**

Henry Emerson Fosdick (1878–1969) was one of the most prominent voices of liberal Christianity in the early 20th century. He was a Baptist pastor who gained national attention with his sermons, which sought to reconcile Christianity with modern scientific, historical, and philosophical developments. Fosdick rejected much of traditional Christian doctrine, including the authority of Scripture, the virgin birth, and the literal resurrection of Jesus.

Fosdick's most famous sermon, "Shall the Fundamentalists Win?" (1922), became a manifesto for liberal theology. In this sermon, he argued that Christianity needed to adapt to the modern world and embrace a more "progressive" understanding of the faith. Fundamentalists, who held to the inerrancy of Scripture and other core doctrines, were characterized by Fosdick as backward-looking and out of touch with the modern world.

What made Fosdick's ideas so influential, however, was not just the content of his preaching, but the platform from which he preached—and behind that platform stood the financial power of the Rockefeller family.

### The Rockefeller Connection: Funding Liberal Theology

John D. Rockefeller Jr., son of the oil tycoon John D. Rockefeller Sr., played a crucial role in promoting liberal modernism in American Christianity. The Rockefellers were known for their vast philanthropic efforts, funding universities, cultural institutions, and churches. However, their involvement in religious institutions went beyond mere charity—they had a particular theological vision in mind.

Rockefeller Jr. was deeply influenced by Fosdick's preaching and was committed to supporting the spread of liberal theology. In 1925, after Fosdick's controversial views led to tension within his Baptist denomination, he was asked to step down from his position at First Presbyterian Church in New York City. Rockefeller stepped in, offering financial backing to build a new church where Fosdick could preach freely. This church became Riverside Church in New York City, an iconic symbol of liberal Christianity.

Riverside Church was not only lavishly funded by Rockefeller—costing \$10 million to build, a massive sum at the time—but it was also intended as a national platform for liberal theology. With Fosdick as its pastor and Rockefeller's backing, Riverside became a hub for liberal Protestantism, where modernist theology was not only preached but institutionalized.

### Rockefeller Philanthropy and the Infiltration of Seminaries

While Riverside Church was a key part of spreading liberal theology, the Rockefellers had an even more strategic and far-reaching influence through their funding of seminaries. Seminaries are the primary institution where future pastors, theologians, and church leaders are trained, and by

controlling theological education, one can shape the future of the church.

The Rockefellers were heavily involved in funding many seminaries and universities. Among the institutions that received significant Rockefeller funding were Union Theological Seminary in New York, Yale Divinity School, Harvard Divinity School, and Dallas Theological Seminary just to name a few. These seminaries became breeding grounds for liberal theology, largely due to their financial dependence on Rockefeller philanthropy.

By funding seminaries, the Rockefellers could influence who was hired, what was taught, and what direction theological education would take. Board positions at these seminaries were often filled with individuals connected to the Rockefeller Foundation, later changing its name to the Sealantic Fund, ensuring that modernist and liberal theology would have a foothold in these institutions. As these seminaries became more aligned with the modernist vision, the pastors they trained went out into churches across America, spreading the liberal theology they had been taught.

In essence, the Rockefellers' financial power allowed them to infiltrate the seminaries and influence the future of American Christianity, often steering it away from biblical orthodoxy and toward the liberal modernism championed by men like Fosdick.

### The Impact of Liberal Modernism

The rise of liberal modernism, largely funded and promoted by the Rockefellers and preached by figures like Fosdick, had a profound effect on American Christianity. Several key doctrines and practices were significantly altered or undermined:

**Scriptural Authority:** Liberal modernism rejected the inerrancy of Scripture. The Bible was no longer seen as the

divinely inspired, authoritative Word of God but rather as a human document full of myths, legends, and moral lessons that could be interpreted according to modern sensibilities.

**Christology:** The person and work of Jesus Christ were reinterpreted. Fosdick and others denied the virgin birth, the miracles of Jesus, and even the resurrection. Instead, Jesus was portrayed primarily as a moral teacher, and the focus of Christianity shifted from salvation through faith in Christ into The Kingdom of God, to social justice and moral reform through govt policies.

**The Church's Mission:** Rather than focusing on proclaiming The Gospel of The Kingdom of God, the liberal church became more concerned with acceptance and tolerance of social issues through government and politics like women's rights and eugenics leading to Planned Parenthood and modern feminism.

### **The Long-Term Effects on the Church**

The liberalization of American seminaries and churches under the influence of Fosdick, Rockefeller, and others had devastating effects as the message they preached became indistinguishable from secular moralism. Without a strong belief in the Gospel of The Kingdom of God, the authority of Scripture, or the exclusivity of the gospel, these churches lost their spiritual vitality.

The infiltration of seminaries by liberal modernism also created lasting divisions within denominations. Mainline Protestant denominations, in particular, experienced significant splits, with more conservative factions breaking away to form their own denominations or independent churches.

## **The Hyper-Spiritualization of God's Word and the True Biblical Dichotomy**

In many modern churches, there is a tendency to hyper-spiritualize God's Word. This approach often creates an artificial separation between the "spiritual" and the "physical," reducing the tangible and practical implications of the Bible in daily life to vague, mystical ideas. From a biblical perspective, however, this distinction is not found in Scripture. Instead, when the Bible speaks of the "spiritual," it refers to the supernatural reality of God's work, which encompasses all aspects of life—both the visible and the invisible, the natural and the supernatural.

The church today often misinterprets the biblical concepts of spiritual and physical, and what the Bible really says about these terms, and demonstrates how the work of the Holy Spirit applies to all areas of life, making the spiritual real and tangible, not abstract.

### **The False Dichotomy Between Spiritual and Physical**

One of the most common errors in contemporary Christian thought is the creation of a dualistic mindset that separates the "spiritual" from the "physical." This stems from a misunderstanding of what the Bible means by "spiritual." In popular Christian parlance, "spiritual" often refers to something non-material or otherworldly, disconnected from the physical realm. However, Scripture does not support this kind of dualism. Nowhere does the Bible teach that there is a fundamental divide between spiritual things and physical things.

The Bible consistently presents reality as unified under the sovereign rule of God.

Genesis 1:1 "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth."

There is no indication that the spiritual realm was separate from the physical in any sense that would suggest a divide. In fact, throughout Scripture, God interacts with His creation in both visible, physical ways and invisible, spiritual ways. The created order is one whole, and God is sovereign over every aspect of it—both seen and unseen.

### **What the Bible Actually Means by "Spiritual"**

When the Bible uses the term "spiritual," it often refers to what is supernatural—what is of God, what is from the Holy Spirit, and what pertains to the realm of the divine. The term "spiritual" is not synonymous with "immaterial" or "invisible," nor does it imply a separation from the physical world. Rather, it points to something being under the influence of, or in alignment with, the Holy Spirit.

The Apostle Paul gives us a clear understanding of the biblical dichotomy

1 Corinthians 2:14-15 "But the natural, unbelieving man does not accept the things—the teachings and revelations—of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness—absurd and illogical—to him; and he is incapable of understanding them, because they are spiritually discerned and appreciated, and he is unqualified to judge spiritual matters. But the spiritual man—the spiritually mature Christian—judges all things—questions, examines and applies what the Holy Spirit reveals—yet is himself judged by no one."

Paul is not making a distinction between the "spiritual" and the "physical," but between the spiritual—those led by the Holy Spirit—and the natural or carnal, those who are

governed by their sinful nature. The difference is between those who have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit and those who remain in their fleshly, unregenerate state. This is a moral and spiritual distinction, not a division between two realms of existence.

Romans 8:6 "Now the mind of the flesh is death—both now and forever—because it pursues sin; but the mind of the Spirit is life and peace—the spiritual well-being that comes from walking with God—both now and forever."

Here, the contrast is again between the flesh (the sinful, carnal nature) and the Spirit (the work of the Holy Spirit), not between the spiritual and the physical. Paul is concerned with one's orientation—whether a person is oriented toward sin and death or toward life and peace through the Holy Spirit. This has very real, tangible consequences in a person's life, and it affects both spiritual and physical actions and outcomes.

## **The Dichotomy Between Spiritual and Carnal**

What the Bible truly presents is not a separation between spiritual and physical but a dichotomy between spiritual and carnal. The spiritual person is one who is governed by the Holy Spirit, who has been born again, and whose actions and thoughts are aligned with the will of God. The carnal person is one who is governed by the flesh—the sinful, fallen nature.

Galatians 5:16-17 "But I say, walk habitually in the Holy Spirit—seek Him and be responsive to His guidance—and then you will certainly not carry out the desire of the sinful nature—which responds impulsively without regard for God and His precepts. For the sinful nature has its desire which is opposed to the Spirit, and the desire of the Spirit opposes the

sinful nature; for these two, the sinful nature and the Spirit, are in direct opposition to each other—continually in conflict—so that you as believers do not always do whatever good things you want to do."

The carnal person is not merely someone who engages in sinful physical acts; rather, it is someone whose entire being—spiritual, mental, and physical—is corrupted by sin. In contrast, the spiritual person is someone whose entire being has been renewed by the power of the Holy Spirit. This renewal affects every aspect of life, not just a "spiritual" component disconnected from the physical world.

### **The Work of the Holy Spirit: Real in All Aspects of Life**

To view the spiritual life as merely an abstract or mystical experience diminishes the fullness of the work of the Holy Spirit. Scripture shows that the Holy Spirit's work is deeply real and practical, touching every area of life, from the inward renewal of the heart to the outward expression of that renewal in daily living.

Romans 12:1 "Therefore I urge you, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies—dedicating all of yourselves, set apart—as a living sacrifice, holy and well-pleasing to God, which is your rational (logical, intelligent) act of worship."

Here, Paul connects the spiritual act of worship with the physical presentation of the body. The work of the Holy Spirit is not confined to the inner life or to some ethereal realm but is expressed in the physical world through our actions, thoughts, and behaviors. The spiritual and the physical are not separate realms but are intertwined in the life of the believer, as the Holy Spirit works to conform us to the image of Christ.

Romans 8:29

For those whom He foreknew [and loved and chose beforehand], He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son [and ultimately share in His complete sanctification], so that He would be the firstborn [the most beloved and honored] among many believers.

### **The Biblical Perspective: Holistic and Sovereign**

From a Biblical perspective, there is no separation between the spiritual and the physical in God's sovereign plan. The work of salvation involves the whole person—mind, body, and spirit. God created the physical world and declared it "very good"

Genesis 1:31 God saw everything that He had made, and behold, it was very good and He validated it completely. And there was evening and there was morning, a sixth day.

and while sin has corrupted it, the redemption found in Christ applies to every aspect of life.

The tendency in modern Christianity to hyper-spiritualize God's Word and create a divide between the spiritual and the physical is not biblical. Scripture does not present a dualism between two separate realms but rather a dichotomy between the spiritual, led by the Holy Spirit, and the carnal, led by the sinful nature. This understanding deepens our appreciation of the work of the Holy Spirit, not as something abstract or mystical, but as a transformative force that touches every aspect of our lives—both seen and unseen.

The Bible teaches that the Holy Spirit's work is real, tangible, and all-encompassing. There is no area of life that is untouched by God's grace, no aspect of reality that is exempt from His sovereign rule. Whether physical or spiritual, all things are under the lordship of Christ, who is making all things new.

Revelation 21:5 And He who sits on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.” Also He said, “Write, for these words are faithful and true.

Therefore, to hyper-spiritualize Scripture is to miss the fullness of God’s redemptive plan, which unites the physical and the spiritual in Christ.

# **The Unbiblical Roots of the Modern-Day Altar Call**

The altar call is a staple in many evangelical churches today, where individuals are invited to come forward to publicly declare their faith or "make a decision for Christ." It is often regarded as the climax of a worship service or revival meeting. However, when examined closely, the modern altar call has no Biblical basis. Instead, its origins can be traced back to 19th-century revivalist movements and the theological innovations of figures like Charles Finney, D.L. Moody, and later, Billy Graham. These practices have roots in a theological framework that emphasizes human free will and the individual's ability to choose salvation—a concept that contradicts the biblical doctrine of God's sovereign election.

## **The Origins of the Altar Call**

The altar call is a relatively modern invention, with its origins traced back to the 19th century during the Second Great Awakening in the United States. The practice was pioneered by Charles Finney, an influential revivalist preacher and theologian who is often referred to as the father of modern revivalism. Finney's theology was deeply rooted in unbiblical teachings which emphasized human ability and decision in salvation, in contrast to the Biblical view that salvation is entirely a work of God's sovereign grace.

## **Charles Finney and the "Anxious Bench"**

Finney introduced the "anxious bench", a precursor to the modern altar call, as part of his "new measures" for revival. The anxious bench was a designated area at the front of a meeting hall where individuals under conviction of sin could sit to receive prayer and encouragement to make a decision for Christ. Finney believed that sinners had the ability to

repent and believe the gospel at any given moment and that it was the preacher's duty to stir them into making that decision.

In his Lectures on Revivals of Religion, Finney wrote:

“A revival is not a miracle, nor dependent on a miracle, in any sense. It is a purely philosophical result of the right use of the constituted means.”

Finney rejected the Biblical view of conversion as a supernatural act of God in which the sinner is regenerated by the Holy Spirit. Instead, he believed that human effort and will were decisive in the process of salvation. The anxious bench was designed to put individuals in a position where they could, by an act of their own will, decide to accept Christ.

However, this focus on human decision-making runs contrary to biblical teaching. Scripture emphasizes that salvation is a sovereign work of God.

Ephesians 2:8-9 “For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.”

Salvation is a divine gift, not a result of human action or decision, and no amount of external prompting can produce true conversion without the Holy Spirit.

### **D.L. Moody and the Institutionalization of the Altar Call**

Dwight L. Moody, a later 19th-century evangelist, was heavily influenced by Finney's revival techniques, including the use of the altar call. Moody, though a dynamic preacher who reached millions, followed Finney's model of urging immediate decisions for Christ at the end of his services.

Moody institutionalized the practice, making it a central feature of his evangelistic campaigns.

While Moody was less radical in his unbiblical theology than Finney, he nonetheless embraced the idea that individuals could make a decision to accept Christ at any moment. This is evident in his frequent call for listeners to come forward at the close of his sermons.

Moody's altar calls, though influential, lacked any biblical foundation. In the New Testament, there are no examples of altar calls or anxious benches. Instead, the biblical pattern of conversion involves repentance, belief in the gospel of The Kingdom of God, and baptism, which are works of the Holy Spirit, not orchestrated by human methods.

Acts 2:38 provides a clear example of the apostolic approach to conversion:

Acts 2:38 "Peter said to them, 'Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.'"

The focus is on repentance and faith as works of God in the heart of the believer, not on external actions under pressure like coming forward during a sermon.

### **Billy Graham and the Globalization of the Altar Call**

Perhaps no one is more associated with the modern altar call than Billy Graham. Throughout his global evangelistic crusades, Graham invited millions of people to come forward at the close of his sermons to make a "decision for Christ." This practice became the hallmark of his ministry, with Graham often pointing to the large numbers of people responding to his calls as evidence of the success of his evangelism.

However, despite the apparent success of these altar calls, there is a significant issue with the theology behind them. The idea of making a "decision" for Christ at a specific moment in time shifts the focus of salvation from the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit to human effort.

The New Testament is clear that conversion is the work of God, not man.

John 6:44 “No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day.”

It is God who draws people to Christ, not the persuasive techniques of a preacher or the emotional atmosphere of a service. The altar call often manipulates emotions and pressures individuals into making a public response, which may or may not reflect genuine conversion.

### **The Problem with the Altar Call: Shallow Conversions and Emotionalism**

The primary issue with the altar call is that it often leads to shallow conversions. Many people who come forward during an altar call are responding to an emotional moment rather than a deep conviction of sin and a genuine work of the Holy Spirit. The emotional high of the service can lead to a temporary decision that does not result in lasting faith.

This problem is not new. In the parable of the sower, Jesus warns that some who hear the word will respond with joy but will fall away when trials come because they have no root.

Luke 8:13 “Those on the rocky soil are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no firm root; they believe for a while, and in time of temptation fall away.”

The altar call encourages immediate decisions, often without giving individuals time to consider the cost of following Christ. Jesus, however, emphasized counting the cost of discipleship.

Luke 14:28 “For which one of you, when he wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost, to see if he has enough to complete it?”

True conversion involves deep, lasting change, and this cannot be accomplished through the simple act of walking down an aisle or praying a prayer.

### **The Biblical Alternative: Preaching, Repentance, and Discipleship**

Instead of relying on the altar call, we should return to the biblical model of conversion. The Bible teaches that salvation comes through the preaching of the gospel of The Kingdom of God, the work of the Holy Spirit, repentance, and faith.

Romans 10:17 “So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.”

The faithful preaching of the gospel is what leads to genuine conversion, not emotional manipulation or public displays. When the gospel is faithfully proclaimed, the Holy Spirit works in the hearts of those who are called to believe.

The New Testament model emphasizes discipleship rather than decisions. Jesus commanded His followers to “make disciples of all nations” (Matthew 28:19), not to elicit quick, emotional decisions. Discipleship involves teaching, nurturing, and guiding believers in their faith over time, leading to lasting growth and maturity.

## **A Return to Biblical Evangelism**

The altar call, as popularized by Charles Finney, D.L. Moody, and Billy Graham, is not a biblical practice but a modern invention rooted in Arminian theology and emotional manipulation. It shifts the focus of salvation from the sovereign work of God to the human act of decision-making. The Bible teaches that salvation is a work of God's grace, brought about through the faithful preaching of the gospel and the inner working of the Holy Spirit.

Rather than relying on altar calls, we should return to the biblical model of evangelism, emphasizing repentance, faith, baptism, and lifelong discipleship. This is the pattern set forth in Scripture, and it is the only means by which true, lasting conversions can take place.

# **The False Teachings of Dispensationalism: From John Nelson Darby to Zionism to the Modern Futurist Eschatology Movement**

Dispensationalism, a theology that divides God's work with humanity into distinct "dispensations" or periods, has had a profound and controversial impact on modern Christian theology. It emerged in the 19th century through the teachings of John Nelson Darby and was later popularized by Cyrus Scofield and Clarence Larkin, spreading rapidly within American evangelical circles. Over time, the teachings of dispensationalism became inseparably linked with Zionism, the movement supporting the establishment of a Jewish state, and became widely propagated through well-funded networks, including the support of influential families like the Rothschilds and Rockefellers.

Dispensationalism is tied to Zionist Israel, and how it shaped modern American evangelicalism, particularly through influential figures like Chuck Smith, Greg Laurie, Jack Hibbs, David Jeremiah, and Robert Jeffress. This theology continues to perpetuate a false futurist eschatology, which distracts from the true message of the Kingdom of God and instead places undue emphasis on the modern political state of Israel and speculative end-times scenarios.

## **The Origins of Dispensationalism: John Nelson Darby and Futurism**

John Nelson Darby (1800–1882) was an Irish Anglican minister who is often credited as the father of modern dispensationalism. Darby introduced a new eschatological framework that broke from traditional Christian understandings of prophecy and the end times. He divided human history into distinct dispensations in which God interacted with humanity in different ways. The most

controversial aspect of Darby's teaching was his promotion of a futurist eschatology, the idea that many of the prophetic passages in Scripture, particularly in Daniel and Revelation, were not yet fulfilled and would take place in a future, end-time scenario.

Central to Darby's eschatology was the idea of the pre-tribulation rapture, a concept virtually unknown in church history before his time. According to Darby, Christ would return secretly to "rapture" or remove His church before a seven-year period of tribulation, after which He would return again to establish a literal, earthly millennium in which Israel would reign with Him. This radical re-interpretation of eschatology was a stark departure from the historic Christian belief that Christ's return would mark the immediate establishment of His eternal Kingdom.

Darby's dispensationalism spread quickly among certain segments of evangelicalism, thanks in part to his strong ties to influential families like the Rothschilds, who had a vested interest in promoting Zionism. This theological innovation supported the idea that the modern state of Israel was a necessary fulfillment of biblical prophecy, which further aligned Darby's theology with the political goals of Zionist leaders.

## **The Rise of Scofield and the Spread of Dispensationalism**

Cyrus Ingerson Scofield (1843–1921) played a critical role in popularizing Darby's dispensationalism in the United States. His Scofield Reference Bible, first published in 1909, incorporated Darby's dispensational framework directly into the study notes. This Bible became immensely popular, particularly among American evangelicals, and helped solidify dispensationalism as a dominant interpretive method for reading Scripture. In fact, many of the eschatological concepts that were marginal or entirely absent

in Biblical Christianity became mainstream through Scofield's work.

It is important to note that Scofield himself had financial backing from wealthy and influential figures, including those with Zionist connections. Some historical accounts suggest that Samuel Untermyer, a prominent Jewish attorney and Zionist, helped fund the Scofield Bible project, as it aligned with Zionist goals. Through the Scofield Bible, dispensationalism was not just a theology but became a tool for promoting the political idea that the establishment of a Jewish state was necessary for the fulfillment of biblical prophecy.

### **Clarence Larkin and the Visual Spread of Dispensationalism**

Another key figure in the spread of dispensationalism was Clarence Larkin (1850–1924), who is best known for his intricate charts and diagrams that visually outlined the dispensational framework. Larkin's books, such as "Dispensational Truth", were widely distributed and became popular teaching tools in evangelical circles. His work made dispensationalism accessible and easy to understand for laypeople, further embedding it into the fabric of American Christianity.

Larkin's visual approach to Scripture reinforced the futurist eschatology that Darby had introduced. His charts depicted a sharp division between the "church age" and the future "millennial kingdom," portraying modern political events—particularly the re-establishment of Israel—as a key to unlocking the end-times timeline.

### **The Role of the Rockefellers and the Infiltration of American Seminaries**

The Rockefeller family played a crucial role in the propagation of dispensationalism in the United States. Their

philanthropic efforts extended into religious institutions, including seminaries and Christian colleges. Much like their influence in promoting liberal modernism in other religious circles, the Rockefellers used their financial power to steer dispensational theology into the mainstream of American evangelicalism.

The Rockefellers funded organizations and institutions that supported both Zionism and dispensational theology, which conveniently aligned with their political and financial interests in the Middle East. Through these efforts, dispensationalism gained an institutional foothold in American seminaries and Bible colleges, ensuring that future pastors and leaders were indoctrinated with this eschatological perspective.

### **Dispensationalism and Zionist Israel: The Convergence of Theology and Zionist Politics**

One of the most dangerous aspects of dispensationalism is its uncritical support for modern political Israel. According to dispensationalist theology, the re-establishment of Israel in 1948 was a direct fulfillment of biblical prophecy, and many evangelicals believe that the survival and prosperity of Israel are necessary for the fulfillment of God's eschatological plan.

This false theological position has had profound political consequences. Evangelical support for Israel has shaped American foreign policy, particularly in the Middle East. Dispensationalists often view Israel as "God's timepiece," and any conflict involving Israel is seen through the lens of apocalyptic prophecy.

The Rothschild family, who had a vested interest in establishing and supporting the modern state of Israel, found a powerful ally in dispensationalist theology. This convergence of theology and politics helped Zionist leaders gain evangelical support for the establishment and defense of the state of Israel.

Another early Darby disciple, William E. Blackstone, brought dispensationalism to millions of Americans through his best seller, *Jesus Is Coming* (1882)." By 1927, Blackstone's book had been translated into thirty-six languages. The book took a premillennial dispensational view of the Second Coming, emphasizing that the Jews had a biblical right to Palestine and would soon be restored there. Blackstone became one of the first Christian Zionists in America to actively lobby for the Zionist cause. Blackstone took the Zionist movement to be a "sign" of the imminent return of Christ.

Blackstone organized the first Zionist lobbying effort in the U.S. in 1891 when he enlisted J. P. Morgan, John D. Rockefeller, Charles B. Scribner and other financiers to underwrite a massive newspaper campaign requesting President Benjamin Harrison to support the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine.

Similar efforts were under way in England, led by the social reformer Lord Shaftesbury, who, like Blackstone, was so taken with Darby's eschatology that he translated it into a political agenda. These seeds of the Christian Zionist movement preceded Jewish Zionism by several years. Loni Shaftesbury is also credited with coining an early version of the slogan adopted by Jewish Zionist fathers Max Nordau and Theodor Herzl: "A land of no people for a people with no land." Both Lord Arthur Balfour, author of the famous 1917 Balfour Declaration, and Prime Minister David Lloyd George, the two most powerful men in British foreign policy at the close of World War I, were raised in dispensationalist churches and were publicly committed to the Zionist agenda for 'biblical' and colonialist reasons.

# **Pentecostal / Charismatic / Word of Faith Movements**

## **The Montanists**

In the late 2nd century, the Montanists emerged as a heretical charismatic prophetic movement led by Montanus and his followers. Emphasizing ecstatic new revelations from God, speaking in unknown “tongues” and an imminent new era of spiritual renewal, Montanism challenged the Biblical teachings of the early Church. Eventually it was deemed heretical because its insistence on ongoing, new revelation and its pagan influenced charisma.

After Montanism, charismatic expressions virtually disappeared within Christianity. Centuries later, however, two new movements would capture similar revolutionary zeal.

The Shakers, emerging in the 18th century, practiced ecstatic worship with shaking (hence the name), utterances of unknown languages (gibberish), communal living, and celibacy. Their distinctive rituals and claims of direct, inspired experience set them apart from Biblical Christianity.

The Latter-day Saints (Mormons), founded by Joseph Smith in 1830, introduced new scriptural texts and a prophetic leadership model. Although not Pentecostal in the modern sense, the Mormons shared with earlier groups a reliance on ongoing “new” revelation and a charismatic, transformative vision that led them outside the bounds of Christianity.

The second Great Awakening reintroduced covert charismatic practices into Christianity with the Methodists and Wesleyans instituting the altar call, and started the teaching of “a second outpouring of grace” that resulted in being able to not sin also known as the “Holiness Movement”, And about the same time John Darby, Clarence Larkin and C.I. Schofield were making up their dispensational false teachings.

Over a short time, many leaders emerged whose overt teachings centered on psychosomatic healing, speaking in gibberish, and other tricks seen as supernatural phenomena.

## **The Pioneers**

A Methodist named Charles Parham started conducting church services in 1888 at the age of 15. Parham then attended Southwestern College in Winfield, Kansas, a Methodist affiliated school before dropping out because he came to believe education would prevent him from ministering effectively. He established his own itinerant evangelistic ministry, which preached the ideas of the Holiness movement. In 1898 he moved to Topeka KS and established the Bethel Healing Home and Prophecy school and “Apostolic Faith” magazine.

Parham decided to take a vacation from his work in Topeka in 1900 and "visited various movements". His time was spent at the ministry of Frank Sandford in Maine called Shiloh. Frank Sandford was a charismatic cult leader, After supposedly performing an exorcism and claiming to hear the voice of God warn him of "Armageddon", he established a commune called "Shiloh" in Durham, Maine. He declared himself the incarnation of the prophet Elijah and King

David. Besides propagating speaking in gibberish tongues and psychosomatic healings, he regularly starved his followers, which resulted in deadly outbreaks of smallpox, diphtheria, and other infectious diseases. The death of 14-year-old Leander Bartlett led to his conviction for manslaughter and cruelty to children in 1904. In 1911, he knowingly sailed from Africa to Greenland with insufficient food and supplies, causing six crew members to be stricken with scurvy and die on his return to Portland. Sandford was detained by authorities and sentenced to seven years in prison. In 1918, Sandford was released on good behavior and returned to the "Shiloh", resuming his responsibilities as leader. Two years later, the death of another commune member led his sect to be forcibly dispersed in what he called "the Scattering".

Charles Parham incorporated the ideas he observed at Shiloh into his teachings at his Bible schools. Parham started Bethel Bible College in Topeka, KS in October 1900. The school was modeled on Sandford's "Holy Ghost and Us Bible School", The only text book was the Bible, and the teacher was supposedly the Holy Spirit with Parham as mouthpiece.

Parham heard in Shiloh people speaking in tongues and had reported the incident in his magazine. He had also come to the conclusion that there was more to a "full baptism" than others acknowledged at the time. In December 1900, At the end of the semester students had several days of prayer and worship, and held a worship service at Bethel College January 1, 1901, and it was that evening that Agnes Ozman felt impressed to ask to be prayed for to receive the fullness of the Holy Spirit. Immediately after being prayed for, she began to speak what they referred to as "in tongues", speaking in what was believed to be a known language.

Supposedly Ozman was now speaking in Chinese, and Parham sent her and several others to China where they found that they were not actually speaking Chinese, they were actually not speaking any known language. Parham also propagated unbiblical teachings like; a “third outpouring of grace” that resulted in speaking in tongues and healing, Job suffered because he was living in sin, preachers who do not preach the gospel of healing will face utter condemnation before God, and he derided Christians who went to doctors. He was also arrested for sodomy.

One man influenced heavily by Parham's teachings was William J. Seymour. In 1906 Parham sent Lucy Farrow, a cook at his school, who had received "the Spirit's Baptism" and felt "a burden for Los Angeles", to Los Angeles, California, Seymour followed along.

Seymour started his ministry at an invitation to speak at a church but was immediately dismissed because of his views of “baptism of the Holy Ghost”. He continued his ministry in the homes of sympathetic parishioners, and on April 9, 1906, several people in his meeting began to speak in tongues, shake violently and shout out loud praising God, so loudly that the police were called. The news quickly spread and crowds gathered. The services were moved outside to accommodate the crowds who came from all around; people fell down as they approached, and attributed it to God; people were baptized in the Holy Spirit and the sick were said to be healed. The crowds grew and Seymour discovered an available building at 312 Azusa Street in downtown Los Angeles.

In October 1906, Charles Parham was invited to speak for a series of meetings at Azusa Street. Arriving at Azusa Street,

Parham recoiled in disgust at the racial intermingling. He was aghast that black people were not in their "place," and simply could not abide "white people imitating unintelligent, crude negroisms of the Southland, and laying it on the Holy Ghost." Parham made his way through the crowd, stood at the pulpit, and delivered a stinging rebuke: "God is sick at his stomach!" He proceeded to explain that God would not stand for such "animalism." When it was clear that the majority of the Azusa Street Mission would not accept Parham's leadership, Parham left with an estimated two to three hundred followers and opened a rival campaign at a nearby Women's Christian Temperance Union building.

John Alexander Dowie and John G. Lake advanced psychosomatic healing ministries and revivalist campaigns in the early Pentecostal era.

Smith Wigglesworth, a British evangelist, became renowned for his uncompromising approach to psychosomatic healing and charismatic power, influencing countless revivalists.

Amy Semple McPherson captured public attention in the 1920s and 1930s with her dramatic, theatrical style and claims of miraculous signs.

William Branham led a post–World War II healing revival, with his ministry marked by prophetic pronouncements and claims of supernatural interventions.

Kathryn Kuhlman continued this charismatic emphasis on psychosomatic healing and divine manifestation, paving the way for later televangelist figures like Oral Roberts, whose pioneering use of television extended these messages to a mass audience.

The latter half of the 20th century saw the rise of movements emphasizing not only psychosomatic healing but also prosperity and the power of positive confession.

Kenneth Hagin became a central figure in what is now known as the Word of Faith movement, stressing that faith could unlock both healing and material blessing. Kenneth Copeland and Benny Hinn expanded these ideas through expansive media ministries that linked divine health and wealth with charismatic manifestations.

In more recent decades, a range of figures has emerged who continue to promote revivalist and charismatic teachings.

These include:

Andrew Womack, Mike Bickel, Bill Johnson and Chris Vollaton (of Bethel Church in Redding, California), Shawn Bolz, Todd White and Todd Bentley, and Paula White, among others, whose televangelism and close association with political figures have kept her in the public eye.

From the fervent experiences and heresies of the Montanists through the radical communal experiments of the Shakers and Mormons, and into the explosive charismatic movements of the 20th and 21st centuries, charismatic expression has constantly been outside of Biblical doctrine. Modern Pentecostal/charismatic/Word of Faith movements—with leaders ranging from early pioneers like Parham and Seymour to later figures such as Branham, Roberts, Hagin, Copeland, and Hinn—continue to push experience over what God’s word actually says.

# **The Jesus Movement, Calvary Chapel, and the Modern Spread of Dispensational Eschatology**

In the 1960s and 1970s, the Jesus Movement helped spread dispensational eschatology to a new generation of believers. At the forefront of this movement was Chuck Smith, the founder of Calvary Chapel. Smith was an ardent futurist who frequently preached about the imminent rapture and the role of Israel in biblical prophecy. His teachings, along with those of his protégé Greg Laurie, were deeply rooted in the dispensational futurist framework established by Darby, Scofield, and Larkin.

Calvary Chapel, through its widespread network of churches, became one of the most influential vehicles for spreading dispensationalism in America. Its teaching often presented dispensational futurist eschatology as the default or "obvious" interpretation of Scripture, leaving little room for other eschatological perspectives.

## **Modern Dispensationalists: Greg Laurie, Jack Hibbs, David Jeremiah, and Robert Jeffress and MANY MANY more**

Today, prominent pastors like Greg Laurie, Jack Hibbs, David Jeremiah, and Robert Jeffress and the vast majority of prominent "pastors" continue to preach the dispensational futurist gospel. They focus heavily on the future fulfillment of biblical prophecy, the rapture, and the role of Israel in God's eschatological plan. Their sermons are filled with speculative predictions about the future, often tied to current events in the Middle East.

These pastors, like their dispensationalist predecessors, maintain a strong focus on the pre-tribulation rapture and the impending return of Christ. Their teachings are broadcasted on national and international platforms,

reaching millions of people. Dispensational futurism, once a fringe theology, has now become mainstream within much of American evangelicalism.

## **The Futurist Eschatology of Dispensationalism: A Dangerous Distraction**

The futurist eschatology at the heart of dispensationalism has several troubling implications. First, it shifts the focus of Christianity away from the present reality of the Kingdom of God to a speculative future event. Jesus clearly taught that the Kingdom of God is here and now (Luke 17:21). By focusing so much on the rapture and a future millennial kingdom, dispensationalists often neglect the real gospel of the Kingdom instead preaching a gospel of “accepting Jesus as a personal savior to avoid being left behind.”

Second, dispensationalism fosters an unhealthy obsession with Israel as a political entity, rather than recognizing that the church is the true Israel of God, where there is neither Jew nor Gentile (Galatians 6:16, Ephesians 2:14-16). The idea that Israel plays a central role in God’s prophetic timetable is not supported by a holistic reading of Scripture.

Finally, the pre-tribulation rapture creates a sense of escapism, where believers are encouraged to look forward to being taken out of the world rather than engaging in it and enduring suffering as Christ and the apostles taught (John 16:33, 1 Peter 4:12-13). This mentality can lead to complacency and a lack of focus on the pressing needs of the world around us.

## **Dispensationalism’s Legacy and the Call to Return to Biblical Truth**

The rise of dispensationalism, from John Nelson Darby to modern-day preachers like Jack Hibbs, David Jeremiah and Robert Jeffress, has had a profound impact on American evangelicalism. However, its theological innovations,

particularly its futurist eschatology and focus on the political state of Israel, represent a dangerous departure from biblical truth.

As believers, we must return to a sound understanding of Scripture, recognizing that the Kingdom of God is not a future political reality centered on Zionism, but a present spiritual reality in the hearts of those who follow Christ. We must reject the speculative futurism of dispensationalism and instead focus on living out the gospel in the here and now. By doing so, we can reclaim the true message of the Kingdom of God and the centrality of Christ's reign in the lives of His people today.

## **Conclusion: When and How Christianity Went Off the Rails**

Christianity began as a dynamic, Spirit-led community of believers who followed the teachings of Jesus Christ and His apostles. This early church understood itself to be under the lordship of Christ, a counter-cultural kingdom, not aligned with the political powers of the world. However, over time, various deviations from biblical teachings took root, leading Christianity away from its apostolic foundations. These deviations include the rise of the professional clergy, the state-sponsored church under Constantine, the creation of hierarchical authority structures, the formation of denominations, the influence of Zionism, dispensational futurism, the modern altar call, and the Calvary Chapel Jesus movement. These movements and ideas have profoundly altered the essence of Christianity, diluting the purity of the gospel and creating division within the body of Christ.

### **1. The Rise of the Professional Clergy**

The early Christian community functioned with a decentralized leadership structure, where elders and overseers were chosen to serve the local body of believers. The notion of a professional clergy—where a distinct class of priests or pastors ruled over the laity—emerged gradually as

the church expanded, eventually formalizing into a rigid hierarchy.

This professionalization of the clergy ran contrary to Jesus' warning in Matthew 23:8-9, where He said:

“But you are not to be called ‘Rabbi,’ for you have one Teacher, and you are all brothers. And do not call anyone on earth ‘father,’ for you have one Father, and He is in heaven.”

Yet, by the 3rd and 4th centuries, church leadership began to model itself after pagan religious structures, where priests held special authority over the people. Men like Cyprian of Carthage championed this clerical system, reinforcing the division between clergy and laity. The result was a loss of the priesthood of all believers (1 Peter 2:9), leading to a passive, spectator-based Christianity where the congregation relied on "experts" for spiritual guidance rather than seeking a direct relationship with God.

## 2. Constantine and the State Church

The second great derailment occurred with Constantine and the establishment of Christianity as the official religion of the Roman Empire. Constantine's supposed conversion to Christianity in 312 AD and the subsequent Edict of Milan (313 AD) granted Christians newfound freedom, but at a significant spiritual cost. The once persecuted and marginalized faith became entwined with Roman political power, and the church was quickly absorbed into the machinery of empire.

Constantine's influence on the church can be seen most clearly in the Council of Nicaea (325 AD), where the emperor presided over church matters, setting a precedent for state interference in theological decisions. This development represented a stark departure from Jesus' words in John 18:36: "My kingdom is not of this world [jurisdiction, ordered arrangement]."

Under Constantine, the church became a tool of the state, and the gospel of Christ was compromised by political expediency. This paved the way for future rulers to use Christianity to further their own political agendas, blending pagan and Kingdom of God authority.

### 3. Hierarchical Authority and Denominationalism

As Christianity grew and spread throughout the Roman Empire, it became increasingly institutionalized. The creation of hierarchical structures—such as the elevation of bishops and patriarchs—led to an imbalance of power within the church. Leaders like Ignatius of Antioch and Augustine of Hippo further entrenched the hierarchical model, centralizing church authority in ways that were never sanctioned by the New Testament.

The Protestant Reformation of the 16th century sought to challenge the abuses of the Catholic hierarchy, but it inadvertently gave birth to denominationalism. The reformers—men like Martin Luther, John Calvin, and Ulrich Zwingli—broke away from the Catholic Church, but their movements resulted in endless divisions within Christianity. Each theological disagreement led to the formation of new denominations, fragmenting the body of Christ into thousands of splinter groups.

Paul's warning in 1 Corinthians 1:10-13 against divisions was largely ignored: "I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another... so that there may be no divisions among you."

Denominations have created barriers between Christians, often based on minor theological differences rather than a shared commitment to the essentials of the faith.

### 4. The Altar Call and Emotionalism

In the 19th century, Charles Finney introduced the practice of the "anxious bench", which evolved into the modern-day

altar call. This method, later adopted by revivalists like D.L. Moody, Billy Sunday, and Billy Graham, encouraged individuals to make a public decision for Christ by walking forward during a service.

The altar call has been effective in drawing emotional responses, but it misrepresents the biblical doctrine of conversion, making it seem as though salvation is merely the result of a human decision rather than a work of the Holy Spirit. Ephesians 2:8-9 reminds us: "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast."

True conversion is a divine act, not something that can be manufactured through emotional appeals or public gestures.

#### 5. Zionism and Dispensational Futurism

Perhaps one of the most significant modern deviations from apostolic Christianity is the rise of Zionism and Dispensational futurism, both of which distort biblical eschatology. Modern Zionism emerged in the 19th century, championed by figures like Theodor Herzl and supported by powerful financial interests, such as the Rothschild family. Many Christians, influenced by John Nelson Darby and Cyrus Scofield, embraced the belief that the modern state of Israel is a fulfillment of biblical prophecy, a key tenet of dispensationalism.

Dispensational futurism teaches that God has separate plans for the church and Israel, leading to a misplaced focus on geopolitical events in the Middle East. This view was popularized by figures such as Clarence Larkin, D.L. Moody, and later by televangelists like Hal Lindsey and John Hagee.

However, the New Testament teaches that all believers—Jew and Gentile alike—are part of the one people of God (Galatians 3:28-29). Zionism and dispensationalism distract from the true mission of the Kingdom of God, replacing the

gospel of the Kingdom with a focus on political Israel and future speculations.

#### 6. Pentecostalism

Spurred off of Methodists and dispensationalism, pentecostalism also has its roots in the fanatical cults of the Shakers and Frank Sanford and centers around charismatic leaders

#### 7. The Calvary Chapel Jesus Movement

In the late 1960s and 70s, the Jesus Movement emerged as a reaction against the traditional church and as part of the broader countercultural revolution. One of the primary leaders of this movement was Chuck Smith, the founder of Calvary Chapel. The movement sought to reach young people disillusioned with institutional Christianity, but in doing so, it adopted many false practices and teachings.

Calvary Chapel, along with other offshoots like Greg Laurie's Harvest Ministries, became known for its embrace of dispensational futurism, emotional altar calls, and the promotion of Zionism. While the movement succeeded in drawing in large numbers of people, it perpetuated the same errors of dispensational eschatology and emotional decisionism that had already taken Christianity off course.

### **A Call to Return to Apostolic Christianity**

Christianity has gone off the rails at multiple points in its history, departing from the teachings of Jesus and the apostles. The rise of the professional clergy, the fusion of church and state under Constantine, the creation of hierarchical authority structures, the endless fragmentation of denominations, the embrace of Zionism and dispensational futurism, the emotionalism of the altar call, and the errors of the Calvary Chapel Jesus Movement—all represent significant deviations from the original gospel of The Kingdom of God message.

Christianity must return to a biblical model, one that rejects man-made hierarchies and political alliances, embraces the priesthood of all believers, and focuses on Christ's reign rather than pagan politics, human institutions or speculative eschatologies. Only by returning to the simple, radical faith of the early church can Christians hope to reclaim the purity and power of the gospel of The Kingdom of God message.



# **Sovereignty of God - Pagan Myth of Free Will**

## **The Pagan Myth of Free Will**

The concept of free will, often assumed as fundamental to human nature, is not rooted in Scripture. Instead, its origins lie in pagan philosophy, particularly among Greek thinkers who developed the idea of human autonomy. The Greek philosophers taught that humans possess the capacity to make decisions entirely free from external influence— "unimpeded" by any power, divine or otherwise. This notion of free will has deeply influenced Western thought, including some branches of Christian theology, but when we turn to Scripture, we find a very different reality. The Bible presents human beings as profoundly affected by two major forces: God's sovereign will and human slavery to sin.

The notion of free will as humans making entirely autonomous, unimpeded choices originated not in the Bible, but in Greek philosophy. The philosopher Aristotle, for example, argued that human beings possess the rational capacity to choose between different courses of action and are responsible for their choices. He writes in his *Nicomachean Ethics*, "What is chosen is voluntarily chosen, and free will determines our actions."

Similarly, Epicurus, a Greek materialist philosopher, argued that humans must have free will in order to be morally responsible. He rejected the idea that the gods or fate determined human actions, emphasizing instead the autonomy of human choice: "It is not necessity, but free will, that is the cause of actions."

But this concept of free will—humans being capable of making truly independent choices—was not aligned with the biblical worldview. Rather, it was a philosophical attempt to exclude divine influence and ultimate authority. By presenting human beings as autonomous moral agents, the Greeks laid the foundation for a worldview that diminishes or denies God's sovereignty.

## **The Myth of Free Will and Luciferian Rebellion**

The idea of unimpeded human will is not just a pagan invention, but it plays a central role in what can be called "Luciferian" rebellion. In essence, free will—understood as the ability to do whatever one pleases—aligns with Satan's own rebellion against God. Satan's motto, according to many occult systems, can be summed up in the phrase: "Do as thou wilt."

This notion echoes the serpent's lie to Eve in the Garden of Eden:

Genesis 3:5 "You will be like God, knowing good and evil".

In other words, the serpent's promise was that humans could act as their own gods, determining right and wrong for themselves—autonomously and without submission to God's will. The idea of humans having "free will" that is unencumbered by divine authority is, at its root, the very lie of Satan that led to the Fall.

Luciferian philosophy promotes the idea that each person is his or her own ultimate authority, free to pursue desires and make choices without submitting to God's will. The result is a life driven by self-will rather than God's sovereign plan. But as Christians, we reject this. Our choices are not "free" in this sense; they are either aligned with God's will or in rebellion against Him.

## **The Biblical View: God's Sovereignty and Human Slavery to Sin**

Contrary to the pagan concept of free will, the Bible presents two truths that govern all human actions: God's sovereign will and humanity's slavery to sin. The idea that human beings possess absolute autonomy to choose between moral options is completely absent from Scripture. Instead, the

Bible teaches that all human decisions are influenced—either by God's guiding hand or by the corrupting power of sin.

## **God's Sovereign Will**

The Bible is replete with passages that emphasize God's control over all things, including human decisions.

Proverbs 16:9 "The heart of man plans his way, but the Lord establishes his steps."

This verse clearly shows that while humans may "make plans" or "choices," the final outcome is always determined by God's sovereign will. We are not autonomous beings charting our own courses; rather, we are subject to God's overarching plan.

Paul underscores this truth

Ephesians 1:11, "[God] works all things according to the counsel of His will."

Not only does God's will encompass all of creation, but it specifically governs human history and individual lives. There is no such thing as an independent human decision that falls outside of God's will.

## **Human Slavery to Sin**

The second biblical truth that contradicts the myth of free will is the notion of human slavery to sin, Jesus states this very clearly in John 8:34.

John 8:34, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin."

Human beings, in their natural state, are not free moral agents. Rather, they are enslaved by sin, which corrupts their desires, actions, and choices. The fallen human will is bound

by sin's power, and as a result, people are incapable of choosing righteousness on their own.

Paul elaborates on this in Romans 6:20,

Romans 6:20 "For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness."

This statement underscores that, apart from Christ, people are bound to sin and cannot freely choose to obey God. Sinful humanity does not possess the moral autonomy to choose good; instead, our wills are corrupted and we are inclined to evil.

### **Can Humans Make Choices?**

The Bible does not deny that humans make choices; rather, it denies that these choices are truly "free" in the sense that Greek philosophers understood. Human choices are always influenced—either by sin or by the grace of God. When people are unregenerate, their choices are enslaved to sinful desires, and when they are born again, their choices are influenced by the Holy Spirit.

Romans 7:18-19: "For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing."

Even Paul, in his struggle with sin, recognized that his ability to choose the good, apart from being born of the Spirit, is compromised by the sinful nature. Human choice, far from being "free," is bound by sinful impulses until the power of God intervenes.

## **Irresistible Grace: God's Sovereign Choice**

If human beings are enslaved to sin and cannot freely choose God, how does anyone come to faith? The answer lies in God's sovereign grace, which is irresistible and effectual. Jesus Himself declared in John 6:44,

John 6:44 "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him."

This is an essential truth in understanding the limits of human will: we do not "choose" God of our own accord. Instead, He draws us to Himself, overcoming our sinful nature and inclining our hearts toward Him.

Romans 9:16 "So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy."

Salvation is not a matter of human choice, but of divine election and mercy. God's grace works irresistibly on the hearts of those He has chosen, and they come to faith not through their own free will, but through His sovereign power.

The Bible emphasizes God's sovereignty, grace, and election in salvation, the idea that human beings have the innate power to choose or reject God freely has become a dominant narrative in the vast majority of the church today. This belief not only has roots in pagan Greek philosophy, but it also profoundly distorts the gospel message of salvation by grace alone, leading to a misunderstanding of how one is reconciled to God.

While many of the early Church Fathers fought to preserve the purity of the gospel, certain ideas from pagan philosophy—particularly regarding free will—began to influence the way salvation was understood. The emphasis on human choice became intertwined with the doctrine of

salvation, shifting the focus from God's sovereign grace to man's decision-making ability.

This development is evident in the rise of Pelagianism, a heresy that surfaced in the 4th century. Pelagius rejected the doctrine of original sin and taught that humans could choose to obey God's commands without the need for divine grace. His theology, rooted in a belief in human autonomy, stood in direct opposition to the biblical teaching that "there is none righteous, not even one" (Romans 3:10) and that no one can come to Christ unless the Father draws him (John 6:44).

Although Pelagianism was condemned as heresy, the seeds of its philosophy—particularly the belief in the ability of humans to choose or reject God—continued to influence Christian thought. This influence is most evident in the modern evangelical message that emphasizes the idea of accepting Jesus as one's "personal Savior" as a voluntary decision, often to avoid eternal conscious torment in hell.

The modern presentation of the gospel in many Christian contexts is often framed around the notion of "making a decision for Christ." People are told that they have the power to accept or reject Jesus, and that their eternal destiny is based on their personal choice. This gospel is frequently accompanied by emotional appeals, warnings about the horrors of hell, and a focus on avoiding eternal conscious torment. The framing of salvation as a "get out of hell" decision reduces the gospel to a transaction, rather than the transformational work of God's grace.

This emphasis on human choice distorts the biblical teaching of salvation. In Ephesians 2:8-9, Paul clearly states, "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast." Salvation is a gift from God, not something that can be achieved or chosen by human willpower. The Bible consistently teaches that humanity is in bondage to sin

Romans 6:20 When you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness [you had no desire to conform to God's will]. 21 So what benefit did you get at that time from the things of which you are now ashamed? [None!] For the outcome of those things is death! 22 But now since you have been set free from sin and have become [willing] slaves to God, you have your benefit, resulting in sanctification [being made holy and set apart for God's purpose], and the outcome [of this] is eternal life. 23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

...and that it is God who initiates and completes the work of salvation in the believer

John 3:3 Jesus answered him, "I assure you and most solemnly say to you, unless a person is born again [reborn from above— transformed, renewed], he cannot see and experience the kingdom of God."

By placing the emphasis on human free will, the false gospel of decisionism teaches that individuals have the power to "accept Jesus" and thereby avoid eternal punishment. This reduces Jesus' sacrifice to a mere option among many, and diminishes the magnitude of God's sovereign grace. Instead of viewing salvation as the unmerited favor of a holy and sovereign God, this false gospel presents it as a reward for making the right choice.

### **The Biblical View of Salvation: Grace Alone, Not Human Choice**

Scripture offers a clear and consistent testimony: salvation is the work of God from start to finish. Jesus declares in John 6:65, "No one can come to Me unless it has been granted him from the Father." This truth shatters the illusion of human

free will in the matter of salvation. Fallen humans are spiritually dead

Ephesians 2:1 And you were dead and separated from Him because of your transgressions and sins,

...and unable to come to God on their own. It is God who must regenerate the heart, grant faith, and draw the sinner to Himself.

The Apostle Paul, writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, emphasizes this in Romans 9:16: "So then it does not depend on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy." Salvation is not a matter of human willing or effort, but entirely dependent on the mercy of God. This doctrine of grace ensures that all glory for salvation belongs to God alone, and that no one can boast in their decision to "accept" Christ (1 Corinthians 1:29-31).

When the gospel is presented as a choice that man must make, it places the power of salvation in the hands of the creature rather than the Creator. This leads to a man-centered theology that obscures the beauty of God's grace and reduces the gospel to a mere escape from hell.

The consequences of adopting a free will theology distorts the character of God. The God of the Bible is sovereign and all-powerful, not contingent upon human decisions. A theology that places human choice at the center of salvation turns God into a passive observer who is merely reacting to human choices, rather than the active Redeemer who calls, justifies, and glorifies His people

Romans 8:28 And we know [with great confidence] that God causes all things to work together [as a plan] for good for those who love God, to those who are called according to His plan and purpose. 29 For those whom He foreknew [chose beforehand], He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son

[and share in His complete sanctification], so that He would be the firstborn [the most beloved and honored] among many believers. 30 And those whom He predestined, He also called; and those whom He called, He also justified [declared free of the guilt of sin]; and those whom He justified, He also glorified.

Finally, the free will gospel diminishes the radical nature of the new birth. Jesus taught that one must be "born again" to see the kingdom of God (John 3:3). This new birth is not something a person chooses; it is a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit. The free will gospel, by contrast, turns this into a simple decision rather than a miraculous transformation.

The concept of "free will" as it pertains to salvation is a remnant of pagan Greek philosophy, and it has led many to adopt a false gospel that emphasizes human choice over divine grace. This theology, which presents salvation as a decision one makes to avoid hell, distorts the biblical message of God's sovereign grace in salvation. True salvation is not a matter of human will, but of God's merciful and gracious intervention in the lives of spiritually dead sinners.

In recognizing this, we return to the true gospel of The Kingdom of God: that salvation from sin, God's wrath, and into His eternal Kingdom is by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone—God's work from beginning to end. Only by understanding this can we appreciate the fullness of the gospel and the glorious, sovereign grace of God that alone can save.

### **Rejecting the Myth of Free Will**

Free will, as understood by pagan philosophers and much of modern thought, is a myth. The Bible teaches that human beings are subject to the will of God and bound by the slavery of sin. True freedom is found not in human autonomy but in submission to God's sovereign will.

The idea that we are free to do whatever we please—“Do as thou wilt”—is not just a philosophical mistake but a Luciferian deception. It is a lie that encourages rebellion against God’s authority and sovereignty. As Christians, we are called to reject this pagan notion of free will and embrace the biblical truth that our wills are always influenced—either by sin or by God’s grace.

Instead of trusting in our own autonomy, let us trust in God’s sovereign control, knowing that He directs our steps and His grace is sufficient to bring us into His Kingdom. The true freedom we seek is not in the power to choose, but in being chosen by Him.



# **Fulfilled Eschatology**

C.S. Lewis, one of the most respected Christian thinkers and the beloved author of *The Chronicles of Narnia*, shocked many with a bold and unsettling assertion: Jesus failed as a prophet. In his book *The World's Last Night*, Lewis wrote:

“But there is worse to come. ‘Say what you like,’ we shall be told, ‘the apocalyptic beliefs of the first Christians have been proved to be false. It is clear from the New Testament that they all expected the Second Coming in their own lifetime. And, worse still, they had a reason, and one which you will find very embarrassing. Their Master had told them so. He shared, and indeed created, their delusion. He said in so many words, “This generation shall not pass till all these things be done.” And he was wrong. He clearly knew no more about the end of the world than anyone else.’ It is certainly the most embarrassing verse in the Bible.”

Lewis was referring to verses like Matthew 24:34, where Jesus declares that “this generation will not pass away until all these things take place,” a statement that many Christians today interpret as relating to a future Second Coming. Lewis understood this passage as referring to Christ’s return within the lifetime of his apostles, but seeing that it had not happened in the way traditionally understood, Lewis concluded that Jesus must have been mistaken.

At first glance, this quote from Lewis seems baffling. How could a devoted apologist like Lewis—a man whose faith shaped much of his writing—suggest that Jesus failed? Wasn't he supposed to believe in a yet-future return of Christ, like most Christians do? The answer lies in Lewis’s honest wrestling with the plain language of the Bible. He recognized the tension in Jesus' words about the timing of his return and refused to gloss over it.

In traditional Christianity, it’s commonly accepted that Jesus will return at some point in the future. But if we carefully

examine the Bible itself, rather than centuries of human tradition, a different picture emerges. According to Biblical Christianity, Jesus didn't fail as a prophet. He was entirely accurate in his predictions and did return, as promised, within the timeframe he gave—specifically in AD 70, with the fall of Jerusalem.

## **Jesus' Time Statements**

Lewis understood that Jesus made very specific time-related prophecies to his disciples, and these predictions were self-evident. Jesus didn't speak vaguely about a far-off return; he clearly stated that his return would happen within the lifetime of his contemporaries. Verses like Matthew 10:23, Matthew 16:27-28, and Matthew 24:34 all reflect Jesus telling his apostles that he would come back before their generation passed away.

Lewis, in his intellectual honesty, recognized these time statements for what they were: clear promises from Jesus to his first-century followers. Where Lewis went astray was in his conclusion. Faced with these time-bound prophecies and the fact that mainstream Christianity taught a yet-future return of Christ, Lewis assumed Jesus had been mistaken. He reasoned that if Jesus hadn't returned within the apostles' generation, as he promised, then the fault must lie with Jesus himself.

But this is where Lewis missed the mark. Jesus didn't fail—the problem is with the modern misunderstanding of his words. Jesus did return, just as he said, in the events surrounding the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70.

## **The Return of Christ in AD 70**

Those who adhere to the idea of a future Second Coming often overlook the significance of the fall of Jerusalem in biblical prophecy. This catastrophic event was not just a political upheaval but the fulfillment of Jesus' warnings and

prophecies. When Jesus spoke of his coming in judgment, he wasn't referring to the end of the world but the end of an era—the destruction of the temple and the old covenant system.

The siege of Jerusalem in AD 70 by the Roman armies fulfilled everything Jesus predicted in Matthew 24, including the great tribulation and the signs leading up to it. It marked the visible judgment of God on a faithless generation, just as Jesus had said. In this context, the statements about his return make perfect sense: he did come in power and judgment, within the lifetime of those first-century believers.

Jesus was clear when he said, "There are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom" (Matthew 16:28). That prophecy was fulfilled in AD 70, when the judgment Jesus warned about came to pass. Even Revelation 1:7, which speaks of "those who pierced him" seeing him, refers to that generation experiencing the consequences of rejecting Christ.

### **Lewis' Struggle with Tradition**

Lewis was half right. He was perceptive enough to see the force of Jesus' words and to understand that they couldn't be easily reinterpreted to refer to a far-off future event. Where he went wrong was in assuming Jesus had failed. Instead, it was the traditional understanding of the Second Coming that had failed to grasp the full scope of Jesus' predictions.

Since the late 1800s, and more specifically the last 50 years, people have been waiting for an event that has already happened. The ongoing expectation of a future return is based on a misunderstanding of Jesus' prophecies. By holding to a futuristic interpretation, Christians today unintentionally paint Jesus as a failed prophet. But if we recognize that his return occurred in the first century, as he said, we see his words fulfilled to the letter.

C.S. Lewis was closer to the truth than many are willing to admit. Though he didn't believe Jesus returned in AD 70, he had the honesty to take Jesus' words seriously. Instead of twisting them to fit a preconceived narrative, he acknowledged their plain meaning. In doing so, he opened the door to a deeper understanding—one that sees Jesus as entirely faithful to his promises and fully vindicated as the true and accurate prophet.

## **WHAT Actually happened in 70AD ??**

Old Covenant Israel faced divine judgment. Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed. The kingdom was taken from the Jews and given to another group, obviously Christ's Ecclesia.

## **WHY WAS ISRAEL JUDGED?**

For their rejection of God and exceeding sinfulness, For refusing to accept Jesus as Messiah For persecuting Jesus' followers, For pushing the Romans to crucify Jesus.

Matthew 23:34 “Therefore, take notice, I am sending you prophets and wise men [interpreters, teachers] and scribes; some of them you will kill and even crucify, and some you will flog in your synagogues, and pursue and persecute from city to city, 35 so that on you will come the guilt of all the blood of the righteous shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah [the priest], the son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. 36 I assure you and most solemnly say to you, [the judgment for] all these things [these vile and murderous deeds] will come on this generation.

Matthew 24:9 “Then they will hand you over to [endure] tribulation, and will put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of My name.

Revelation 18:24 And in Babylon was found the blood of prophets and of saints (God's people) and of all those who have been slaughtered on the earth."

Matthew 21:43 Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to [another] people who will produce the fruit of it. 45 When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard His parables, they understood that He was talking about them.

Luke 21:20 "But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by [hostile] armies, then understand [with confident assurance] that her complete destruction is near. 21 At that time, those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains, and those who are inside the city (Jerusalem) must get out, and those who are [out] in the country must not enter the city; 22 for these are days of vengeance [of rendering full justice or satisfaction], so that all things which are written will be fulfilled.

Matthew 3:7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the [divine] wrath and judgment to come? 8 So produce fruit that is consistent with repentance [demonstrating new behavior that proves a change of heart, and a conscious decision to turn away from sin]; 9 and do not presume to say to yourselves [as a defense], 'We have Abraham for our father [so our inheritance assures us of salvation]'; for I say to you that from these stones God is able to raise up children (descendants) for Abraham. 10 And already the axe [of God's judgment] is swinging toward the root of the trees; therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

Matthew 16:27 For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory and majesty of His Father with His angels, and then He will repay each one in accordance with what he has done.<sup>28</sup> “I assure you and most solemnly say to you, there are some of those standing here who will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom.”

Hebrews 8:7 For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion for a second one or an attempt to institute another one [the new covenant].<sup>8</sup> However, God finds fault with them [showing its inadequacy] when He says, “Behold, the days will come, says the Lord, When I will make and ratify a new covenant

With the house of Israel and with the house of Judah;

<sup>9</sup> Not like the covenant that I made with their fathers

On the day when I took them by the hand

To lead them out of the land of Egypt;

For they did not abide in My covenant,

And so I withdrew My favor and disregarded them,

says the Lord. <sup>10</sup> “For this is the covenant that I will

make with the house of Israel

After those days, says the Lord: I will imprint My laws

upon their minds [even upon their innermost

thoughts and understanding], And engrave them

upon their hearts. And I will be their God, And they

shall be My people. <sup>11</sup> “And it will not be [necessary]

for each one to teach his fellow citizen, Or each one

his brother, saying, ‘Know [by experience, have

knowledge of] the Lord,’

For all will know [Me by experience and have

knowledge of] Me,

From the least to the greatest of them.<sup>12</sup> “For I will be

merciful and gracious toward their wickedness, And I

will remember their sins no more.”<sup>13</sup> When God

speaks of “A new covenant,” He makes the first one

obsolete. And whatever is becoming obsolete (out of

use, annulled) and growing old is ready to disappear.

John 19:15 “They cried out, ‘Away with Him, crucify Him!’ Pilate said to them, ‘Shall I crucify your King?’ The chief priests answered ‘We have no king but Caesar.’”

## **WHO JUDGED ISRAEL?**

**ANSWER: Jesus**

Matthew 26:63 But Jesus kept silent. And the high priest said to Him, “I call on You to swear a binding oath by the living God, that you tell us whether You are the Christ, the Son of God.” 64 Jesus said to him, “You have [in fact] said it; but more than that I tell you [regardless of what you do with Me now], in the future you will see [Me revealed as] the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven.”

John 5:22 For the Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son [placing it entirely into His hands], 23 so that all will give honor (reverence, homage) to the Son just as they give honor to the Father. [In fact] the one who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who has sent Him.

Revelation 6:15 Then the kings of the earth and the great men and the military commanders and the wealthy and the strong and everyone, [whether] slave or free, hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains; 16 and they called to the mountains and the rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne, and from the [righteous] wrath and indignation of the Lamb; 17 for the great day of their wrath and vengeance and retribution has come, and who is able to [face God and] stand [before the wrath of the Lamb]?”

## Why the 70 AD Return of Christ?

Understanding that Jesus returned in 70 AD centers on the scriptures that his prophecies about his "coming" and the destruction of Jerusalem were fulfilled during the Roman siege of the city, culminating in the destruction of the Jewish Temple. This view, often referred to as preterism (from the Latin *praeter*, meaning "past"), asserts that the events traditionally interpreted as describing a yet-future Second Coming actually took place in the first century, particularly in 70 AD.

### Here are the key reasons behind this interpretation:

#### 1. Jesus' Clear Time Statements

Throughout the Gospels, Jesus repeatedly made statements that placed the timing of his return within the lifetime of his first-century audience. There are over 100 time statements by Jesus and the apostles as to when the Kingdom would be fully established and when Christ would appear in judgment. Here are just a few:

Matthew 24:34: "Truly, I say to you, **this generation** will not pass away until all these things take place."

Matthew 16:27-28: "For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what they have done. Truly I tell **you, some who are standing here** will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom."

Matthew 10:23: "When **you** are persecuted in one place, flee to another. Truly I tell you, **you** will not finish going through the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes."

Matthew 5: 18 For I assure **you** and most solemnly say to **you**, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke [of the pen] will pass from the Law until all things [which it foreshadows] are accomplished.

Matthew 3:7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said **to them**, “You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath and judgment **about to come?**”

Matthew 3:10 And **already** the axe [of God’s judgment] is at the root of the trees;

Mark 13:30 I assure you and most solemnly say to you, **this generation** will not pass away until all these things take place.

Matthew. 16:28; Markk. 9:1; Luke 9:27 “There are **some of those who are standing here** who shall not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom.”

These verses state that Jesus expected his coming in some form to occur before the end of the generation that heard him speak—within the lifespan of his apostles.

The Destruction of the Temple as Fulfillment of Prophecy

In Matthew 24:1-3, Jesus’ disciples asked him when the destruction of the temple (which he predicted in verse 2) would happen, and what would be the sign of his coming and the "end of the age." Jesus then launched into what is called the Olivet Discourse, where he describes events such as wars, famines, earthquakes, and the "abomination of desolation" that would signal the impending destruction of Jerusalem.

The destruction of the Temple in 70 AD by Roman armies was the exact fulfillment of these prophecies. The Jewish historian Josephus, who lived through the siege, provides

detailed descriptions of the events that align completely with Jesus' predictions, including the severe suffering, the desecration of the Temple, and the total devastation of Jerusalem.

The destruction of the Temple was a monumental event in Jewish history and marked the end of the Old Covenant system centered on temple sacrifices. This was the "end of the age" Jesus spoke of—not the end of the world, but the end of the old covenantal order.

The Judgment of Jesus' "Coming"

The "appearing" of Jesus in 70 AD is properly understood as a coming in judgment. Jesus' prophecy about his return was fulfilled when God brought judgment upon Jerusalem and the temple through the Roman armies. This idea of "coming in judgment" is consistent with Old Testament language, where God is described as "coming" in various ways—often using military forces or natural events to judge nations (e.g., Isaiah 19:1, where God "comes" to Egypt via an invading army).

Thus, the 70 AD destruction of Jerusalem is seen as the fulfillment of Jesus' warnings to the Jewish people that their rejection of him would result in judgment (see Matthew 23:37-38). The fall of Jerusalem also vindicated Jesus as a prophet, showing that his predictions were accurate.

### **The Book of Revelation and the Events of 70 AD**

The imagery in the Book of Revelation refers to the events surrounding the fall of Jerusalem in 70 AD. For instance:

Revelation 1:7 Behold, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him, **even those who pierced Him**; and all the tribes (nations) of the earth will mourn over Him [realizing their sin and guilt, and anticipating the coming wrath]. So it is to be. Amen.

Revelation 11:8 And their dead bodies will lie exposed in the open street of the great city (Jerusalem), which in a spiritual sense is called [by the symbolic and allegorical names of] Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified.

The book of Revelation, written in apocalyptic language filled with symbolic imagery, was not meant to be a prophecy of the distant future but a dramatic depiction of the impending judgment on Jerusalem.

### Historical Context and Theological Significance

The destruction of Jerusalem and its temple was an event of immense theological significance. It marked the end of the Jewish nation and levitical system, which had been the center of religious life for centuries. For early Christians, it was the definitive sign that the old covenant had passed away and that the new covenant, which started at Christ's death and resurrection, was fully inaugurated.

This was not just a political or military event but a covenantal turning point, confirming the transition from the old to the new. The first-century Christians saw it as the fulfillment of Jesus' prophecies about judgment on Israel and the full establishment of his kingdom. By 70 AD, the gospel had spread throughout the Roman Empire, fulfilling Jesus' prediction that the gospel would be preached "to all nations" before the end came

Matthew 24:14 This good news of the kingdom [the gospel] **will be preached throughout the whole world** as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end [of the age] will come.

Was the Good News of the Kingdom preached throughout the whole world?

Romans 1:8 First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith [your trust and

confidence in His power, wisdom, and goodness] is being proclaimed in **all the world**.

Romans 10: 18 But I say, did they not hear? Indeed they have;

“Their voice [that of creation bearing God’s message] has gone out to all the earth, And **their words to the [farthest] ends of the world.**”

Romans 16:25 Now to Him who is able to establish and strengthen you [in the faith] according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery [of the plan of salvation] which has been kept secret for long ages past, 26 but now has been disclosed and through the prophetic Scriptures **has been made known to all the nations**, according to the commandment of the eternal God,

Colossians 1:5 ...You previously heard of this hope in the message of truth, the gospel [regarding salvation] 6 which has come to you. Indeed, just as in **the whole world** the gospel is constantly bearing fruit and spreading [by God’s power], just as it has been doing among you ever since the day you first heard of it and understood the grace of God in truth.

Colossians 1:23 if you continue in the faith, well-grounded and steadfast, and not shifting away from the [confident] hope [that is a result] of the gospel that you have heard, which **was proclaimed in all creation under heaven**, and of which [gospel] I, Paul, was made a minister.

2 Timothy 4:17 But the Lord stood by me and strengthened and empowered me, so that through me the [gospel] message might be fully proclaimed, and that **all the Gentiles** might hear it;

## **Rejection of a Yet-Future Return**

In light of the fulfillment of these prophecies in 70 AD, there is no biblical basis for expecting a future physical return of Christ. The kingdom of God was started during Jesus' earthly ministry and confirmed and fully established through the judgment on Jerusalem.

Rather than waiting for a future apocalyptic event, Christ's reign is ongoing, and his kingdom continues to grow and spread throughout the world through the work of the church.

The idea of a 70 AD return emphasizes that Jesus' prophecies were not about a distant future event but were fulfilled in the first century, within the timeframe he specified. Far from being a failed prophet, Jesus accurately predicted the events leading up to the fall of Jerusalem, vindicating his authority and confirming the transition from the old covenant to the new.

For preterists, the 70 AD return is the key to understanding the fulfillment of Jesus' words and the inauguration of his reign as king, not in the far-off future, but in the present reality of His kingdom.

**But was Revelation written much later than 70AD, possibly 96AD ??**

## **EVIDENCES THAT THE BOOK OF REVELATION WAS WRITTEN BEFORE AD 70**

The primary reason some Bible teachers claim the Book of Revelation was written around AD 96 is because John noted in Revelation 1:9 that he was on the island of Patmos at the time he received the Revelation. Some have argued that John was exiled to Patmos under the reign of Domitian between AD 81 and AD 96. therefore, the book might have been written during that time. In reality, there are historical

documents that tell us John was exiled to Patmos at a much earlier date.

## **The Syriac**

We have the witness of one of the most ancient versions of the New Testament, called The Syriac. The second-century Syriac Version, called the Peshitto, says the following on the title page of the Book of Revelation:

“Again the revelation, which was upon the holy John the Evangelist from God when he was on the island of Patmos where he was thrown by the emperor Nero.”

Nero Caesar ruled over the Roman Empire from AD 54 to AD 68. Therefore, John had to have been on the island of Patmos during this earlier period. One of the oldest versions of the Bible tells us when Revelation was written! That alone is a very compelling argument.

### Revelation 17:10

When we look at the internal evidence, we find a very clear indicator of the date of authorship in Revelation 17:10:

Revelation 17: 10 They are also seven kings. Five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come; but when he does come, he must remain for only a little while.

This passage, which speaks of the line of rulers in Rome, tells us exactly how many rulers had already come, which one was currently in power, and that the next one would only last a short while. Take a look at how perfectly it fits with Nero and the Roman Empire of the first century.

The rule of the first seven Roman Emperors is as follows:

“Five have fallen...”

Julius Caesar (49–44 BC)  
Augustus (27 BC–AD 14)  
Tiberius (AD 14–37)  
Caligula (AD 37–41)  
Claudius (AD 41–54)

“One is...”  
Nero (AD 54–68)

“the other has not yet come; but when he does come, he must remain for only a little while.”

Galba (June AD 68–January AD 69, a six month ruler-ship)

Of the first seven kings, five had come (Julius Caesar, Augustus, Tiberius, Gaius, and Claudius), one was currently in power (Nero), and one had not yet come (Galba), but would only remain a little time (six months). The current Caesar at the time of John’s writing was the sixth Caesar, Nero.

### **Those Who Pierced Him**

As mentioned earlier, The Hebrew idiom “coming on clouds” speaks of God coming to bring judgment on a city or nation. That is what Jesus came to do in AD 70. Revelation 1:7 tells us who His judgment is against:

Revelation 1:7 Behold, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes (nations) of the earth will mourn over Him [realizing their sin and guilt, and anticipating the coming wrath]. So it is to be. Amen.

Here, the phrase “those who pierced him” refers to the people of the first century. According to this passage, they were expected to be alive at the time of Revelation’s fulfillment. The fact that “those who did pierce him” were not alive in AD 96, because they were killed in the slaughter

of AD 70, is a clear indicator that Revelation was written before AD 70.

## **Jewish Persecution of Christians**

The Jewish persecution of Christianity in Revelation 6 and 11 indicates a pre-AD 70 authorship. After the slaughter of AD 70, the Jews were not in a position to persecute the early Church. In fact, since AD 70, the Jews have never been in a position to be able to persecute Christians.

## **Judaizing Heretics in the Church**

The activity of the Judaizing heretics in the Church (see Rev. 2:6,9,15; 3:9) is emphasized in the letters to the churches in Revelation. This tells us something about the dating of the letter, because the Judaizing heretics lost a great deal of influence after Paul's epistles were circulated. Also, it makes sense that the heresy would have been a much smaller issue after so many Jews were slaughtered in AD 70. Only an early date of authorship allows for the heretics to be a significant problem.

## **Existence of Jerusalem and the Temple**

The existence of Jerusalem and the Temple (see Rev. 11) suggest a date before the destruction of AD 70. If the Book of Revelation was written in AD 96, only twenty-six years after the destruction of the Temple and the Holy City, it is shocking John didn't mention the recent massacre of the city and Temple.

## **Time-related Passages**

The internal time-related portions of Revelation indicate that the events it foretells will come to pass shortly (see Rev. 1:1,3; 22:10,20). If this is read with an unbiased perspective, we can easily conclude Revelation was not written about

events 2,000 years in the future. The time texts are bookends, which frame the content of the book.

### **Timetable Comparison with Daniel**

In Daniel, the author was told to “seal up the vision, for it is a long way off” (Dan. 12:4)—which referred to a 483-year wait until Jesus came to fulfill the prophecy. By contrast, in Revelation, John was told to “not seal up the vision because it concerns things which must shortly come to pass” (Rev 22:10). If 483 years was considered a long way off, meaning that the vision should be sealed, it makes no sense that 2,000 plus years would be considered “shortly to come to pass” and not to be sealed up. Clearly, the obvious answer is Revelation shouldn’t be sealed because it was about to happen at the AD 70 destruction of Jerusalem.

Those who believe in the later date of authorship for the Book of Revelation only have a claim that Irenaeus the Bishop of Lyons (AD 120–202) claimed John wrote while on Patmos under Domitian’s reign. Irenaeus is noted for making mistakes in recording dates and times in his writings. Irenaeus is the same Church father who claimed Jesus’ ministry lasted nearly twenty years, from the age of thirty until the age of fifty.

Because Revelation contains no internal evidence for a later date of authorship, proponents of the later date must lean only upon external evidence to force this conclusion. Even the external evidence of Irenaeus is not a reliable source, and scholars have even picked apart Irenaeus’ quote about the date of authorship as being a very misunderstood quotation.

Kenneth Gentry has written a book under the title: **Before Jerusalem Fell** in which he proves Revelation was written before 70AD in more detail.

John A.T. Robinson in his book, **Redating the New Testament**, in which he proves all the books of the New Testament were written before AD 70.

Considering these strong proofs for an early date of writing alongside the very poor evidence in favor of a later date, the writing of Revelation prior to AD 70 is obvious.

How Does Revelation 1:7 Fit with the 70 AD View?

Revelation 1:7 says:

"Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of him. Even so. Amen."

### **"He is coming with the clouds"**

This language of "coming with the clouds" is a common biblical metaphor for judgment. In the Old Testament, God "comes" on the clouds when he brings judgment upon nations. For example:

Isaiah 19:1: "Behold, the LORD is riding on a swift cloud and comes to Egypt."

Psalm 104:3: God makes the clouds his chariot.

In these passages, God did not literally descend in a visible form on clouds, but his "coming" was manifested through judgment upon nations. This same symbolic language is used in Revelation to describe Jesus coming in judgment upon Jerusalem in 70 AD. Jesus' "coming" in this sense refers to his role as the divine judge, using the Roman army to execute judgment on the unbelieving Jews, just as God had used other nations (like Babylon or Assyria) to judge Israel in the Old Testament. In Isaiah 19:1 as quoted above the judgment is explained in Isaiah 20:1

Isaiah 20:4 in the same way the king of Assyria will lead away the Egyptian captives and the Cushite exiles, young and old, stripped and barefoot, even with buttocks uncovered—to the shame of Egypt.

### **"Every eye will see him"**

This phrase is not a literal, physical sight by all people across the world, but is a metaphor for widespread recognition of judgment, "seeing" refers to comprehending or understanding the significance of the event. This becomes obvious when we compare Matthew 24:26 which shows that not everyone literally will see it, just as when lightning flashes most miss it if they are not focused on looking for the lightning.

Matthew 24:26 So if they say to you, 'Look! He is in the wilderness,' do not go out there, or, 'Look! He is in the inner rooms [of a house],' do not believe it. 27 For just as the lightning comes from the east and flashes as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.

In 70 AD, the destruction of Jerusalem was a catastrophic and well-known event, both for the Jewish people and the surrounding nations. The Roman Empire and Jewish diaspora would have been aware of the calamity that befell Jerusalem, and for Christians, this would have been understood as a fulfillment of Jesus' warnings in the Gospels. Thus, "every eye will see him" means that the significance of Jesus' judgment on Jerusalem became evident to many people, especially those familiar with his prophecies.

### **"Even those who pierced him"**

This is a direct reference to those responsible for Jesus' crucifixion, namely the Jewish leadership and the Roman authorities of the time.

In Matthew 26:64, during Jesus' trial, he tells the high priest and the Jewish council: "From now on, you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven." This implies that the very people responsible for condemning Jesus (those who "pierced him") would witness his coming in judgment.

"those who pierced him" refers to the first-century Jewish people who rejected and crucified Jesus. By the time of the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD, many of those same people would still be alive to witness the devastation, recognizing it as a form of divine judgment for their rejection of Christ.

**"All tribes of the earth will wail on account of him"**

The term "tribes of the earth" (or "tribes of the land" as it could be translated from the Greek word *ge*, which means both "earth" and "land") refers specifically to the tribes of Israel. In the context of the book of Revelation, which is steeped in Old Testament imagery, this phrase is referring to the Jewish people or inhabitants of the land of Israel.

Thus, the "wailing" refers to the mourning and despair of the Jewish people as they experience the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple. This wailing is seen as the result of recognizing that the judgment they are experiencing is due to their rejection of their Messiah.

When considering that Jesus' prophecies of his return were fulfilled in 70 AD—there are several other verses that come into focus. Many of these passages are traditionally interpreted as references to a future Second Coming, but these verses are better understood as pointing to the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the Jewish age. Let's explore how these verses fit into the 70 AD framework.

Matthew 16:27-28

"For the Son of Man is going to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay each person according to what he has done. Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom."

"some standing here will not taste death" until they witness his coming in the kingdom. This suggests that this "coming" was to happen within the lifetime of Jesus' first-century audience.

70 AD Fulfillment: This "coming" occurred with the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD. Jesus "coming in his kingdom" refers to his vindication as the Messiah and the establishment of his authority through judgment upon the unbelieving nation of Israel. This fulfilled his promise that some of his disciples would live to see this event.

Matthew 24:1-3, 34

"As Jesus left the temple and was walking away, his disciples came up to him to call his attention to its buildings. 'Do you see all these things?' he asked.

'Truly I tell you, not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down.' As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately. 'Tell us,' they said, 'when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?' ... 'Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place.'"

In Matthew 24, Jesus is asked about the destruction of the temple, which he explicitly predicted. His disciples link this to "the sign of your coming" and "the end of the age."

"This generation will not pass away": Jesus was speaking about events that would happen within the lifetime of his

contemporaries, i.e., "this generation". The "coming" he describes here is his coming in judgment on Jerusalem, culminating in the destruction of the temple in 70 AD.

"End of the age": This is understood not as the end of the world, but the end of the Jewish age—the old covenant order, marked by the temple and its sacrifices.

Matthew 10:23

"When they persecute you in one town, flee to the next, for truly, I say to you, you will not have gone through all the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes."

This passage speaks to the immediacy of Jesus' coming, telling his disciples that they would not finish evangelizing the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes.

70 AD Fulfillment: Again, this coming refers to Jesus' coming in judgment against Jerusalem. This verse implies that the coming of the Son of Man was to happen soon, within the time of the disciples' ministry, culminating in 70 AD.

Luke 21:20-24

"But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation has come near. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, and let those who are inside the city depart, and let not those who are out in the country enter it, for these are days of vengeance, to fulfill all that is written."

This passage directly connects to the events of 70 AD, when the Roman armies surrounded Jerusalem and eventually destroyed it.

70 AD Fulfillment: This is one of the clearest predictions of the destruction of Jerusalem. Jesus warns his followers to flee when they see these signs, which many did in the years

leading up to 70 AD, escaping the devastation. This "day of vengeance" refers to God's judgment on Israel for rejecting the Messiah.

Mark 14:62

"And Jesus said, 'I am, and you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven.'"

Jesus spoke these words to the high priest and the Jewish council during his trial. He tells them that they will witness the Son of Man "coming with the clouds of heaven."

70 AD Fulfillment: Jesus was referring to his coming in judgment upon Israel. The Jewish leaders, who played a role in Jesus' crucifixion, would witness the fulfillment of his prophecy when Jerusalem was destroyed. This is another example of cloud-coming language that represents divine judgment.

Many New Testament passages traditionally associated with the Second Coming as references to Christ's coming in judgment on Jerusalem in 70 AD. These emphasize the immediacy of Jesus' prophecies and the direct fulfillment within the first-century context, particularly the destruction of the temple and the end of the old covenant age.

Key themes, such as Jesus' coming with the clouds, the warnings to flee Jerusalem, and the specific time statements (e.g., "this generation will not pass away"), fit within the historical events surrounding 70 AD. Jesus' predictions were fulfilled, and Christ's return in judgment validated his prophecies and established his kingdom, not in a distant, future event, but in the historical reality of first-century Jerusalem's fall.

### **Does Paul support Christ's return in 70ad?**

Paul's teachings are better understood in light of Jesus'

return in judgment in 70 AD, particularly the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the Old Covenant age.

1 Thessalonians 4:15-17 – The “Coming” of the Lord  
"For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord."

"the coming of the Lord" is a judgment event related to 70 AD. The greek word "catching up" is "harpazo" is often considered a rapture. The word is better understood as "seized" and is explained in 1 Corinthians 15:51

Listen very carefully, I tell you a mystery [a secret truth decreed by God and previously hidden, but now revealed]; we will not all sleep [in death], but we will all be **[completely] changed [wondrously transformed], 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye**, at [the sound of] the last trumpet call. For a trumpet will sound, and the dead [who believed in Christ] will be raised imperishable, and we will be [completely] changed [wondrously transformed].

1 Corinthians 7:29-31 – The “Short Time”

"This is what I mean, brothers: the appointed time has grown very short. From now on, let those who have wives live as though they had none, and those who mourn as though they were not mourning, and those who rejoice as though they were not rejoicing, and those who buy as though they had no goods, and those who deal with the world as though they had no dealings with it. For the present form of this world is passing away."

Paul's sense of urgency ("the appointed time has grown very short") aligns with the imminence of the 70 AD judgment. The "present form of this world" refers to the Old Covenant age, symbolized by the temple and the sacrificial system, which was on the verge of passing away. This aligns with the collapse of the old Jewish order in 70 AD and the establishment of the new covenant.

2 Thessalonians 2:1-4 – The “Man of Lawlessness”

"Now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered together to him... Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God."

The "man of lawlessness" refers to first-century figure the Roman general Titus. The reference to taking a seat in the temple of God is significant: since the temple was destroyed in 70 AD, this as a prophecy fulfilled within that historical context. Paul's reference to being "gathered to him" refers to the gathering of believers to Christ through the new covenant.

Romans 13:11-12 – The “Nearness” of Salvation

"Besides this you know the time, that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed. The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light."

Paul's language of nearness ("the day is at hand") was consistent with the imminent judgment coming in 70 AD. The destruction of Jerusalem marked the end of the old order and the full establishment of the new covenant, which brought about "salvation" for the early Christian community,

vindicating their faith and delivering them from the persecution of Jewish authorities.

Philippians 4:5 – “The Lord is Near”

"Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand."

Another indication of the imminent judgment in 70 AD. The phrase "the Lord is at hand" could refer to the coming judgment on Jerusalem, where Christ would be vindicated as the true Lord, ending the old covenant system and establishing the new covenant in fullness.

Paul expresses an imminent expectation of significant events. Paul, like Jesus, was referring to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD and the end of the old covenant age, not a distant, future return of Christ.

In summary:

Imminent language: Phrases like "the time is short," "salvation is nearer now," and "the Lord is at hand" suggest that Paul expected significant fulfillment of prophecy within the lifetime of his contemporaries.

Judgment and vindication: Paul's emphasis on judgment and deliverance fits with the idea of Christ's coming in judgment in 70 AD, when Jerusalem was destroyed and the early church was vindicated.

Symbolic fulfillment: Many of Paul's eschatological passages, such as the "coming of the Lord" in 1 Thessalonians and the "man of lawlessness" in 2 Thessalonians, can be understood symbolically, pointing to events surrounding the fall of Jerusalem rather than a future apocalyptic scenario.

## **What about the rapture?**

The concept of the rapture is a future, apocalyptic scenario where believers are "caught up" to meet Christ in the air before a period of tribulation or final judgment. This view is based on 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17, which describes believers being caught up to meet the Lord.

In Paul's writings about being "caught up" in 1 Thessalonians 4 the focus is on Christ's judgment in 70 AD and the establishment of His kingdom. Paul was not describing a distant future event but rather encouraging the first-century believers to be watchful and ready for the imminent judgment that would vindicate their faith. The language of clouds and trumpets is seen as symbolic, reflecting common Old Testament imagery of divine judgment and deliverance. Paul's teaching about the "rapture" is not about a future event in our time, but something that has already been fulfilled in the past, with the fall of Jerusalem and the end of the old covenant order in 70 AD.

## **What about tribulation?**

The concept of the tribulation is linked to end of the old covenant age events, often described as a period of great suffering, persecution, and upheaval preceding the Second Coming of Christ. The tribulation is not a future event but one that was fulfilled in the first century, culminating in the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD.

Matthew 24:21: "For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be."

This "great tribulation" refers to the events surrounding the siege of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple in 70 AD. The Roman-Jewish War (66–70 AD) brought immense suffering, death, and destruction upon the Jewish people, particularly in Jerusalem. Historical accounts, such as those

from Josephus, detail the horrific conditions during the siege, including famine, civil war, and mass crucifixions and even cannibalism.

Jesus' warnings in Matthew 24 about fleeing to the mountains (Matthew 24:16-20) were directed specifically to His disciples, urging them to escape the coming destruction of Jerusalem. Many early Christians heeded this warning and fled to Pella in modern-day Jordan, escaping the calamity.

Luke 21:20-22 – The Days of Vengeance

Luke's version of the Olivet Discourse includes this passage:

Luke 21:20 "But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation has come near. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.... For these are days of vengeance, to fulfill all that is written."

This passage is a direct prophecy of the Roman siege of Jerusalem. The "days of vengeance" refers to God's judgment on Israel for rejecting the Messiah, leading to the catastrophic events of 70 AD. The tribulation, in this view, is tied specifically to the fall of Jerusalem and the end of the Jewish temple system.

## **Revelation and the Tribulation**

The book of Revelation describes a period of tribulation in apocalyptic terms, including wars, plagues, and persecution of believers. The events of Revelation, especially chapters 6-18, refer to the first-century persecution of Christians, the Roman-Jewish War, and the destruction of Jerusalem.

The Beast and the Roman Empire: The Beast coming out of the sea of Revelation 13 is Nero and the Roman Empire, which persecuted Christians during the first century. Nero's

brutal persecution of Christians, starting around AD 64, is seen as part of this tribulation period.

Seven Churches of Asia: Revelation was written to seven churches in Asia Minor (modern-day Turkey), addressing their real historical struggles under Jewish and Roman oppression. The tribulation described in Revelation was relevant to them, as they were experiencing persecution and turmoil during that period.

### **Historical Context of the Tribulation (70 AD)**

The events leading up to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD provide the historical backdrop for the tribulation. The Roman Empire, under the command of Titus, laid siege to Jerusalem in 70 AD, after years of escalating tensions and revolts in Judea. During the siege, Jerusalem's inhabitants suffered famine, violence, and internal strife to the degree that cannibalism and even parents eating their children was rampant. According to Josephus, over a million Jews were killed, and the city and temple were completely destroyed.

The Jewish temple, which had been central to Jewish worship and identity, was razed to the ground, symbolizing the end of the Old Covenant.

### **Paul's View of Tribulation**

Paul's writings often refer to suffering and persecution experienced by the early Christian community. In Romans 8:18, Paul speaks of the sufferings of this present time, indicating that early Christians were already experiencing tribulation.

1 Thessalonians 2:14 For you, brothers and sisters, became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus that are in Judea, because you too suffered the same [kind of] persecution from your own countrymen, as they did from the Jews, 15 who killed

both the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and harassed and drove us out; and [they] continue to be highly displeasing to God and [to show themselves] hostile to all people, 16 forbidding us from speaking to the Gentiles (non-Jews) so that they may be saved. So, as always, they fill up [to the brim] the measure of their sins [allotted to them by God]. But [God's] wrath has come upon them at last

Paul refers to the persecution of Christians by both Jews and Gentiles. Paul's warnings about coming tribulation and suffering were not pointing to a distant future but to the increasing persecution that would culminate in the events of 70 AD.

2 Thessalonians 1:6 For after all it is only just for God to repay with distress those who distress you, 7 and to give relief to you who are so distressed and to us as well when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in a flame of fire, 8 dealing out [full and complete] vengeance to those who do not [seek to] know God and to those who ignore and refuse to obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus [by choosing not to respond to Him]. 9 These people will pay the penalty and endure the punishment of everlasting destruction, banished from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, 10 when He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day [that is, glorified through the changed lives of those who have accepted Him as Savior and have been set apart for His purpose], and to be marveled at among all who have believed, because our testimony to you was believed and trusted [and confirmed in your lives].

Paul writes about God repaying those who afflict Thessalonian Christians and bringing relief to them "when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven." This is a reference

to Christ's judgment on Jerusalem, which brought relief to the early Christian community from Jewish persecution.

### **What about The Antichrist?**

The concept of the Antichrist is a key part of Christian eschatology, prophecies about the Antichrist are considered fulfilled in the first century. The term "Antichrist" is not applied to one future individual but is seen as a symbol of forces opposing Christ during the early church, especially in the context of the Roman Empire and Jewish persecution. Antichrist as a Symbol of Roman Emperors or Jewish Leaders: figures like Nero or other Roman leaders embody the Antichrist because of their role in persecuting Christians and defying God. Nero, in particular, is the fulfillment of the "beast" in Revelation 13 and Titus is the "Man of Lawlessness" in 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4. 1 John 2:18, where John says, "even now many antichrists have come," is evidence that the term does not necessarily refer to one person but rather to many individuals or movements that are against Christ.

### **Don't Heaven and Earth cease to exist?**

God tells us in His word that the literal physical world will not end....

Genesis 8

21 The Lord smelled the pleasing aroma [a soothing, satisfying scent] and the Lord said to Himself, "I will never again curse the ground because of man, for the intent (strong inclination, desire) of man's heart is wicked from his youth; and I will never again destroy every living thing, as I have done.

Psalms 104

5 He established the earth on its foundations,  
So that it will not be moved forever and ever.

Ecclesiastes 1

4 One generation goes and another generation comes,  
But the earth remains forever.

Yet, Jesus says....

Matthew 24

35 Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words  
will not pass away.

So... is there a contradiction??

Matthew 5

18 For I assure you and most solemnly say to you,  
until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest  
letter or stroke [of the pen] will pass from the Law  
until all things [which it foreshadows] are  
accomplished.

Is ALL of the law still in effect? If so, where do you go to  
make sacrifices? Obviously the Levitical law (covenant) is  
not in effect... it passed away... when?

When Israel/Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed  
in 70 AD.

So.... Does God tell us what is meant by "heaven and earth"  
in His word? And the "new heaven and new earth" ???

### **The Hebrew idiom of "Heaven and Earth"**

The Abrahamic covenant involves two key promises that  
define the biblical "heaven and earth" in terms of God's  
covenant people. God promised Abraham:

Genesis 13:16

I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth,

so that if anyone could count the dust, then your offspring could be counted.

Gen. 15:4 Then the word of the Lord came to him: “This man will not be your heir, but a son coming from your own body will be your heir.” He took him outside and said, “Look up at the Heavens and count the stars—if indeed you can count them.’ Then he said to him, “So shall your offspring be” Abram believed the Lorp, and he credited it to him as righteousness.

Note how the imagery of these promises, taken together, is drawn from the earth and the heavens. Abraham's descendants were to be as numerous as the dust of the earth and the stars of the sky (Heb. 11:12).

Abraham's posterity was to grow into a great nation, and this nation is “heaven and earth.”

The connection between God’s people and “heaven and earth” reappears later in the book of Genesis. Joseph had two dreams that follow the pattern of God's promises to Abraham:

Gen. 37:6 He said to them, “Listen to this dream I had: We were binding sheaves of grain out in the field when suddenly my sheaf rose and stood upright, while your sheaves gathered around mine and bowed down to it.” His brothers said to him, “Do you intend to reign over us? Will you actually rule us?” And they hated him all the more because of his dream and what he had said. Then he had another dream, and he told it to his brothers. “Listen,’ he said, “I had another dream, and this time the sun and moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me. When he told his father as well as his brothers, his father rebuked him and said, “What is this dream you had? Will your mother and I and your brothers actually come and bow down to the ground before you?” His brothers

were jealous of him, but his father kept the matter in mind.

Joseph's first dream involved wheat, which grows up from the soil. His second dream involved the sun, moon, and stars which are all heavenly bodies. The children of Abraham through Isaac are associated with "heaven and earth" in the images of sheaves of wheat from the soil (earth) and celestial bodies of the sky (heaven).

Is. 51:15-16 But I am the Lord your God, Who divided the sea whose waves roared—The Lord of hosts is His name. And I have put My words in your mouth; I have covered you with the shadow of My hand, That I may plant the heavens, Lay the foundations of the earth, And say to Zion, "You are My people.'

The prophet refers to the historical events of the exodus from Egypt and the giving of the Law at Sinai. This formed Israel into a new nation, the heavens and earth, the work of God's hands.

Even the historical account of the exodus offers a subtle allusion to the creation week:

Exodus 14:19-22 Then the angel of God, who had been traveling in front of Israel's army, withdrew and went behind them. The pillar of cloud also moved from in front and stood behind them, coming between the armies of Egypt and Israel. Throughout the night the cloud brought darkness to the one side and light to the other side; so neither went near the other all night long. Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and all that night the Lord drove the sea back with a strong east wind and turned it into dry land. The waters were divided, and the Israelites went through the sea on dry ground, with a wall of water on their right and on their left.

Does this look familiar in terms of the creation account in Genesis 1? Note the elements of creation: (1) separation of light from darkness, (2) division of the waters, and (3) forming of dry land by which Israel crossed the sea. This is a veiled reference to Days 1-3 of the creation week in perfect order! three days and the entire family of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are raised to new life from bondage in the land of Egypt.

Moses also utilized unique terms and phrases from Genesis 1 in his farewell address to Israel. Note how Moses addresses Israel:

Jeremiah 4:22-23 "For my people are foolish, they have not known me. They are silly children, and they have no understanding. They are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge. I behold the Earth and indeed it was without form, and void; and the heavens, they had no light."

Isaiah 49:13 "Shout for joy, oh heavens; rejoice, oh earth; burst into song, oh mountains! For the Lord Comforts his people and will have compassion on his afflicted ones."

Deuteronomy 32

1 "Listen, **O heavens**, and I will speak;

5 And let **the earth** hear the words of my mouth.

"They (Israel) have acted corruptly toward Him.

They are not His children, because of their [moral] defect;

But are a perverse and crooked generation.

6 "Do you thus repay the Lord,

O foolish and unwise people?

Is not He your Father who has acquired you [as His own]?

He has made you and established you [as a nation].

Isaiah 51

14 The [captive] exile will soon be set free, and will not die in the dungeon, nor will his food be lacking. 15 For I am the Lord your God, who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar—the Lord of hosts is His name. 16 I have put My words in your mouth and have covered you with the shadow of My hand, to establish **the heavens and lay the foundations of the earth**, and to say to Zion (Jerusalem), ‘You are My people.’”

Haggai 2

20 And again the word of the Lord came to Haggai on the twenty-fourth day of the month (Dec 18, 520 b.c.), saying, 21 “Speak to Zerubbabel governor of Judah, saying, ‘I am going to shake **the heavens and the earth**. 22 I will overthrow the thrones of kingdoms and destroy the power of the kingdoms of the [ungodly] nations; and I will overthrow the chariots and those who ride in them, and the horses and their riders will go down, every one by the sword of his brother [annihilating one another]. 23 On that day,’ declares the Lord of hosts, ‘I will take you, Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, My servant,’ declares the Lord, ‘and I will make you [through the Messiah, your descendant] like a signet ring, for I have chosen you [as the one with whom to renew My covenant to David’s line],’” declares the Lord of hosts.

To a first century Jew Heaven and Earth was Israel, Jerusalem and the temple and the whole Judaic system of temple sacrifices in Jerusalem.

Josephus a Jewish historian hired by the Romans to take meticulous records of the war from 67-70 A.D. says in his writings in " Antiquities of the Jews", book 3, chapter 7," when Moses distinguished the tabernacle into 3 parts, and allowed 2 of them for the priests, as a place accessible and common, he denoted the land and seas, these being of general access to all; but he set apart the third division for God, because Heaven is inaccessible to men".

2nd temple Jews called the outer court the sea, then the inner court the Earth, and the holy of holies the Heavens where God dwells. So to a 1st century Jew, who was Jesus' audience, and not 21st century Americans, when their temple and holy city was destroyed in 70 A.D. THEIR Heaven and THEIR Earth did pass away. This fulfilled the law and the prophets for there was now no place to offer sacrifices, and the law which the cross had made obsolete had now passed away

Hebrews 8

13 When God speaks of "A new covenant," He makes the first one obsolete. And whatever is becoming obsolete (out of use, annulled) and growing old is ready to disappear.

Christ then tells us in Revelation

Revelation 21:1 "The first Heaven and first Earth were passed away, and there was no more sea".

To understand that we must ask what was the "first" Heaven and "first" Earth to 1st century Jews? Their temple (Heaven and Earth) had been completely destroyed and now there is a new Heaven and new Earth which is the Temple not made with hands of bricks, and straw and mortar but made by God.

Revelation 21

2 And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, arrayed LIKE A BRIDE adorned for her husband; 3 and then I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "See! THE TABERNACLE OF GOD IS AMONG MEN, and He will live among them, and they will be His people, and God Himself will be with them [as their God,]

Paul says it clear as crystal...

1 Corinthians 3

16 Do you not know and understand that you [the church] are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells [permanently] in you [collectively and individually]?

Revelation 21

9 Then one of the seven angels.... came and spoke with me, saying, "Come here, I will show you **the bride, the wife of the Lamb.**" 10 And he carried me away in the Spirit to a vast and lofty mountain, and showed me the holy (sanctified) **city of Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God,**

Also, there is NO TEMPLE... no more sea or outer court with the brazen altar and laver of washing where the priests would have to continuously offer sacrifices and wash themselves, because now we are cleansed "Once for all" by the blood of Jesus.

Revelation 21

22 I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty [the Omnipotent, the Ruler of all] and the Lamb are its temple.

We are now in a new covenant, with a new Adam (Jesus), a new Eve (the bride, the lambs wife), living in a new Jerusalem and city (church of the firstborn), a new temple (body of Christ), enjoying the fruit of the 2nd tree (life), with the first tree (law of sin & death) now cut down and defeated, and the Lambs resurrection life infusing us to enjoy the life of the age to come (the new covenant age and eternal life).

So just know that literal Heaven and Earth are NOT going anywhere and the law has been completely fulfilled and the

only temple God lives in is the tabernacle among men, which is our bodies.

So... DO NOT BE AFRAID of the World coming to an end, but instead realize that those in Christ are now the tabernacle of God.

**But 2 Peter 3:8 !!! Everything is going to melt!!!**

2nd Peter 3:8 is not giving us a hidden mathematical formula for figuring out when the "elements" would melt with fervent heat.

To better understand what "elements" these are, people need to read scripture and study the words used to translate into their English counterparts.

These "elements do not refer to the scientific elementary table, nor do they refer to the physical makeup of the planet.

Do a word study of the Greek word "Stoichea" used in the 2 Peter 3 Passage. It is the word translated "Elements".

It is used in the Pauline epistles by Paul 5 other times, and no one else uses the word. The usage of the word by Paul is determinative of the meaning of how Peter is using it. Peter even cites Paul at the end of 2 Peter chapter 3.

Galatians 4:3 In the same way we also, when we were children, were enslaved to the elementary principles of the world.

Elementary Principles comes from the Greek "Stoicheia." And Paul is not referring to the table of Periodic elements, he is referring to the elements of the Old Covenant.

Galatians 4:9 But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how can you turn back again to the weak and worthless elementary

principles of the world, whose slaves you want to be once more?

Here again, the “elementary principles” comes from that Greek word “Stoicheia.” It does not mean the physical creative ingredients in the earth.

It is again a clear reference to the “elements of the old covenant.” And Paul urges the Galatians to turn their back on those weak and worthless elements of the old covenant.

How is it you turn your back on the elements that are contained in the earth?

This is exactly how the word “Stoicheia” is used by Peter. He is not talking about the elements of iron and gold and helium and argon etc. all being burned up physically. He is referring to the at hand burning up of the old covenant in AD 70.

Colossians 2:8 See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception [pseudo-intellectual babble], according to the tradition [and musings] of mere men, following the **elementary principles** of this world, rather than following [the truth—the teachings of] Christ.

Colossians 2:20 If you have died with Christ to the **elementary principles** of the world, why, as if you were still living in the world, do you submit to rules and regulations, such as, 21 “Do not handle [this], do not taste [that], do not [even] touch!”? 22 (these things all perish with use)—in accordance with the commandments and teachings of men. 23 These practices indeed have the appearance [that popularly passes as that] of wisdom in self-made religion and mock humility and severe treatment of the body (asceticism), but are of no value against sinful indulgence [because they do not honor God].

Hebrews 5:12 For though by this time you ought to be teachers [because of the time you have had to learn these truths], you actually need someone to teach you again the **elementary principles** of God's word [from the beginning], and you have come to be continually in need of milk, not solid food.

The usage of the Greek word "Stoicheia" is always the same, it is ALWAYS referring to the elements of the Old Covenant.

### **OK, But what about Revelation 21:4 ?**

Revelation 21: 4 and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be death; there will no longer be sorrow and anguish, or crying, or pain; for the former order of things has passed away."

What are the tears and sorrow and anguish or crying or pain about? What causes them?

This verse is not talking about sorrow and anguish and crying and pain in general, but rather it is referring to those FORMER THINGS in regards to the OLD COVENANT and DEATH, Which were done with. There would no longer be any sorrow, anguish, crying or pain regarding the FORMER THINGS, which have passed away.

There is no longer any death for those of us in Christ, we are changed in the twinkling of an eye from mortal to immortal at the moment that we are born again.

Revelation 21:22 I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty [the Omnipotent, the Ruler of all] and the Lamb are its temple. 23 And the city has no need of the sun nor of the moon to give light to it, for the glory (splendor, radiance) of God has illumined it, and the Lamb is its lamp and light. 24 The nations [the redeemed people from the earth] will walk by its

light, and the kings of the earth will bring into it their glory. 25 By day (for there will be no night there) its gates will never be closed [in fear of evil]; 26 and they will bring the glory (splendor, majesty) and the honor of the nations into it; 27 and nothing that defiles or profanes or is unwashed will ever enter it, nor anyone who practices abominations [detestable, morally repugnant things] and lying, but only those [will be admitted] whose names have been written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

The Ekklesia -

No temple, Christ is our Temple

No sun moon or stars - leaders in the priesthood - Christ is THE high priest forever, and we are now priests and kings. We walk by the light of Christ and His word.

The nations will walk by its light - There is no longer Jew or Gentile - there is ONLY Christ's Ekklesia.

The Day the gates will NEVER close - The gospel will be proclaimed forever and God's chosen people will continue to come in to His Kingdom!

Revelation 22:15 Outside are the dogs [the godless, the impure, those of low moral character] and the sorcerers [with their intoxicating drugs, and magic arts], and the immoral persons [the perverted, the molesters, and the adulterers], and the murderers, and the idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices lying (deception, cheating).

## **TWENTY SERIOUS QUESTIONS FOR FUTURISTS :**

~Charles Meek

1. Why have Christians made failed predictions about the end of the world for 2000 years?

2. If time means nothing to God, why does God constantly use time-restricted statements about the fulfillment of prophecy—such as: must shortly take place, at hand, near, quickly, soon, last times, last hour, last days, this generation, etc.?

3. If we have no clue about when Christ would come in judgment, why did Jesus frequently insist that his PAROUSIA (Second Coming)—and indeed the fulfillment of all prophecy—would be fulfilled while those living in the first century were still alive (Matthew 10:23; Matthew 16:27-28; Matthew 26:64; Luke 21:22, 28, 32; Revelation 1:1-3; Revelation 22:6, 12, 20)? Was Jesus simply wrong? If so, can we trust Him on other things He said?

4. If the teaching that one day is a 1000 yrs, and a 1000 years is as a day to the Lord is literal. . . DOES THAT MEAN?—1000 years in Revelation are a single 24 hour day (2 Peter 3; Revelation 20)?

5. If any of the New Testament was written after AD 70, why is there no mention anywhere in the New Testament IN THE PAST TENSE about the incredible events surrounding the destruction of the temple and Jerusalem in that year?

6. If the Great Tribulation is still future to us, why did Jesus tell the first century Christians that they could avoid it by fleeing to the mountains (Matthew 24:16; 21)? And why did the Apostle John tell his readers a few years later that THEY were in the tribulation (Revelation 1:9)?

7. If the book of Revelation is written to us today, why would John write to the seven churches if it had nothing to do with

them? Why would John torture these first-century Christians with impossible and intricate symbolic labyrinths that applied only to people 2,000 years later? Why does Revelation say some 30 times that the events MUST be fulfilled SOON? (Examples: Revelation 1:1-3; 22:6, 12, 20)

8. Why does Hebrews 10:37 say that in a VERY VERY (“very” is there twice in the Greek) LITTLE WHILE Jesus would return and not delay? Was the author of Hebrews and the other biblical writers that expressed the same thing FALSE PROPHETS?

9. If the biblical “last days” are in the 21st century, why does Peter and the writer of Hebrews both say the last days were in their time (Acts 2:16-17; Hebrews 1:1-2)?

10. If the biblical “last days” started in the first century, but continue to this day, why did Peter say the end of all things was at hand, and the judgment was about to begin when he was writing (1 Peter 4:7, 17)? Given Jesus’ condemnation of the Jews of his day, which He said would be in their generation (Matthew 23:29-39), isn’t it logical that this is the Great Judgment of which the New Testament speaks?

11. John said it was the “last hour” (1 John 2:18) when he was writing. Does that mean that its fulfillment is now 17 million hours late?

12. If the GREAT COMMISSION is not yet fulfilled, why did Paul say it had been fulfilled when he was writing (Roman 1:8; 10:18; Colossians 1:5-6, 23)?

13. If “heaven and earth” have not yet passed away, does that mean that every jot and tittle of the law is still in effect (Matthew 5:17-18)?

14. If the NEW JERUSALEM is a future physical location, how is it possible that the Hebrews in the first century were already there (Hebrews 12:22)?

15. If Jesus was going to return literally and physically (Acts 1:11), why do we read that his ascension was hidden from view by a cloud? If Jesus is going to return LITERALLY “in like manner” (Acts 1:11), does that also mean that He will return riding a white horse (Revelation 19:11)?

16. If Jesus was to return in a physical, visible appearance to the whole world, why did He tell his first-century disciples (John 14:19) that the world would never see him again?

17. If the King James Version of the Bible really speaks of an end to the physical universe, why is “end of the world” found in the King James Version consistently translated as “end of the AGE” in modern translations and literal translations (like Young’s Literal Translation)?

18. If the last-days events are still future to us, why are there over 100 passages in the New Testament that declare that these events would happen soon?

19. If “soon” means “2000 years later,” does that mean it was going to take Timothy 2000 years to be sent to the Philippians by Paul (Philippians 2:19)?

20. If the prophetic passages were fulfilled once in the first century, and then again thousands of years later, why is there no hint of this by Jesus and the biblical writers?

# **Cessation of Supernatural Gifts and Offices**

NOTE\* The cessationist view does NOT say that God does not work miracles today or at any time. God can and does work supernaturally whenever He pleases wherever He pleases.

The cessationist view DOES hold to God's word that the supernatural "GIFTS and OFFICES" ceased at the end of the old covenant, when the PERFECT and COMPLETE New Covenant was fully established in 70ad.

ALL supernatural gifts and offices were temporary measures given to the early church until the New Covenant was fully established, completed and perfected in Christ's completed work.

### **The Temporary Nature of Spiritual Gifts and Offices**

1 Corinthians 13:8-13

"Love never fails [it never fades nor ends]. But as for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for the gift of special knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part [for our knowledge is fragmentary and incomplete]. But when that which is complete and perfect comes, that which is incomplete and partial will pass away. When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things. For now [in this time of imperfection] we see in a mirror dimly [a blurred reflection, a riddle, an enigma], but then [when the time of perfection comes] we will see [reality] face to face. Now I know in part [just in fragments], but then I will know fully, just as I have been fully known [by God]."

Paul equates the supernatural gifts to a partial and immature phase of the New Covenant Ekklesia, which would be fulfilled when "that which is complete and perfect" comes.

Many have interpreted "that which is complete and perfect" as the completion of the canon of Scripture but this is illogical and cannot be argued adequately in God's word.

What can be shown to be crystal clear in God's word is that Christ and the New Covenant is "The complete and perfect" and that it came and was fulfilled in Christ's return in 70 AD. Since Christ's return and the fulness of the New Covenant was realized in 70 AD, the need for supernatural gifts and offices as temporary signposts vanished with the full revelation of God's kingdom and the completion of the faith once delivered to the saints.

Hebrews 2

10 For it was fitting for God [that is, an act worthy of His divine nature] that He, for whose sake are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the author and founder of their salvation perfect through suffering [bringing to maturity the human experience necessary for Him to be perfectly equipped for His office as High Priest].

## **The Perfect High Priest**

Hebrews 5

9 And having been made perfect [uniquely equipped and prepared as Savior and retaining His integrity amid opposition], He became the source of eternal salvation [an eternal inheritance] to all those who

obey Him, 10 being designated by God as High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

Hebrews 7

11 Now if perfection [a perfect fellowship between God and the worshiper] had been attained through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people were given the Law) what further need was there for another and different kind of priest to arise, one in the manner of Melchizedek, rather than one appointed to the order of Aaron? 12 For when there is a change in the priesthood, there is of necessity a change of the law [concerning the priesthood] as well. 13 For the One of whom these things are said belonged [not to the priestly line of Levi but] to another tribe, from which no one has officiated or served at the altar. 14 For it is evident that our Lord descended from [the tribe of] Judah, and Moses mentioned nothing about priests in connection with that tribe. 15 And this becomes even more evident if another priest arises in the likeness of Melchizedek, 16 who has become a priest, not on the basis of a physical and legal requirement in the Law [concerning his ancestry as a descendant of Levi], but on the basis of the power of an indestructible and endless life. 17 For it is attested [by God] of Him,

“You (Christ) are a Priest forever  
According to the order of Melchizedek.”

18 For, on the one hand, a former commandment is cancelled because of its weakness and uselessness [because of its inability to justify the sinner before God] 19 (for the Law never made anything perfect); while on the other hand a better hope is introduced through which we now continually draw near to God.

20 And indeed it was not without the taking of an oath [that Christ was made priest] 21 (for those Levites who formerly became priests [received their office] without [its being confirmed by the taking of] an oath, but this One [was designated] with an oath through the One who said to Him,

“The Lord has sworn

And will not change His mind or regret it,

‘You (Christ) are a Priest forever’”).

22 And so [because of the oath’s greater strength and force] Jesus has become the certain guarantee of a better covenant [a more excellent and more advantageous agreement; one that will never be replaced or annulled].

A Perfect New Covenant

Hebrews 8

7 For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion for a second one or an attempt to institute another one [the new covenant]. 8

However, God finds fault with them [showing its inadequacy] when He says,

“Behold, the days will come, says the Lord,

When I will make and ratify a new covenant

With the house of Israel and with the house of Judah;

9 Not like the covenant that I made with their fathers

On the day when I took them by the hand

To lead them out of the land of Egypt;

For they did not abide in My covenant,

And so I withdrew My favor and disregarded them, says the Lord.

10 “For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel

After those days, says the Lord:

I will imprint My laws upon their minds [even upon their innermost thoughts and understanding],  
And engrave them upon their hearts [effecting their regeneration].

And I will be their God,  
And they shall be My people.

11 “And it will not be [necessary] for each one to teach his fellow citizen,

Or each one his brother, saying, ‘Know [by experience, have knowledge of] the Lord,’  
For all will know [Me by experience and have knowledge of] Me,

From the least to the greatest of them.

12 “For I will be merciful and gracious toward their wickedness,

And I will remember their sins no more.”

13 When God speaks of “A new covenant,” He makes the first one obsolete. And whatever is becoming obsolete (out of use, annulled) and growing old is ready to disappear.

Now even the first covenant had regulations for divine worship and for the earthly sanctuary. 2 A tabernacle (sacred tent) was put up, the outer one or first section, in which were the lampstand and the table with [its loaves of] the sacred showbread; this is called the Holy Place. 3 Behind the second veil there was another tabernacle [the inner one or second section] known as the Holy of Holies, 4 having the golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant covered entirely with gold. This contained a golden jar which held the manna, and the rod of Aaron that sprouted, and the [two stone] tablets of the covenant [inscribed with the Ten Commandments]; 5 and above the ark

were the [golden] cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat; but we cannot now go into detail about these things.

6 Now when these things have been prepared in this way, the priests continually enter the outer [or first section of the] tabernacle [that is, the Holy Place] performing [their ritual acts of] the divine worship, 7 but into the second [inner tabernacle, the Holy of Holies], only the high priest enters [and then only] once a year, and never without [bringing a sacrifice of] blood, which he offers [as a substitutionary atonement] for himself and for the sins of the people committed in ignorance. 8 By this the Holy Spirit signifies that the way into the Holy Place [the true Holy of Holies and the presence of God] has not yet been disclosed as long as the first or outer tabernacle is still standing [that is, as long as the Levitical system of worship remains a recognized institution], 9 for this [first or outer tabernacle] is a symbol [that is, an archetype or paradigm] for the present time. Accordingly both gifts and sacrifices are offered which are incapable of perfecting the conscience and renewing the [inner self of the] worshiper. 10 For they [the gifts, sacrifices, and ceremonies] deal only with [clean and unclean] food and drink and various ritual washings, [mere] external regulations for the body imposed [to help the worshipers] until the time of reformation [that is, the time of the new order when Christ will establish the reality of what these things foreshadow—a better covenant]. 11 But when Christ appeared as a High Priest of the good things to come [that is, true spiritual worship], He entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made

with hands, that is to say, not a part of this [material] creation. 12 He went once for all into the Holy Place [the Holy of Holies of heaven, into the presence of God], and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, having obtained and secured eternal redemption [that is, the salvation of all who personally believe in Him as Savior]. 13 For if the sprinkling of [ceremonially] defiled persons with the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a [burnt] heifer is sufficient for the cleansing of the body, 14 how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal [Holy] Spirit willingly offered Himself unblemished [that is, without moral or spiritual imperfection as a sacrifice] to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works and lifeless observances to serve the ever living God? 15 For this reason He is the Mediator and Negotiator of a new covenant [that is, an entirely new agreement uniting God and man], so that those who have been called [by God] may receive [the fulfillment of] the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has taken place [as the payment] which redeems them from the sins committed under the obsolete first covenant.

#### Hebrews 10

1 For since the Law has only a shadow [just a pale representation] of the good things to come—not the very image of those things—it can never, by offering the same sacrifices continually year after year, make perfect those who approach [its altars].

## **The Signs of an Apostle and Their Fulfillment**

Another key passage in understanding the cessation of spiritual offices;

2 Corinthians 12:12

"The signs that indicate a genuine apostle were performed among you fully and most patiently—signs and wonders and miracles."

The apostolic office was marked by supernatural confirmations, which were necessary to establish the authority of Christ's messengers. These signs, however, were not meant to be perpetual. The apostles were foundational to the church.

Ephesians 2

19 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens [outsiders without rights of citizenship], but you are fellow citizens with the saints (God's people), and are [members] of God's household, 20 having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus Himself as the [chief] Cornerstone,

and once their purpose was fulfilled and the foundation laid, the office was no longer necessary.

## **The Purpose of Spiritual Gifts and Offices and Their Fulfillment**

Ephesians 4:8-13

"Therefore it says, 'When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, And He bestowed gifts on men.' (Now this expression, 'He ascended,' what does it

mean except that He also had previously descended [from the heights of heaven] into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is the very same as He who also has ascended high above all the heavens, that He [His presence] might fill all things [that is, the whole universe].) And [His gifts to the church were varied and] He Himself appointed some as apostles [special messengers, representatives], some as prophets [who speak a new message from God to the people], some as evangelists [who spread the good news of salvation], and some as pastors and teachers [to shepherd and guide and instruct], and He did this to fully equip and perfect the saints [God's people] for works of service, to build up the body of Christ; until we all reach oneness in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God [growing spiritually] to become a mature [complete/perfect] believer, reaching to the measure of the fullness of Christ [manifesting His spiritual completeness and exercising our spiritual gifts in unity].”

This further clarifies the temporary role of spiritual gifts: This passage teaches that spiritual gifts were given until “we all reach oneness in the faith” and to become “a mature believer” - the greek for “MATURE” in this verse is the same word Paul uses in 1 Corinthians 13:10 of “COMPLETE AND PERFECT”. Christ’s return in 70 AD marked the full establishment of His kingdom and the maturity of the faith, then these gifts had fulfilled their purpose and were no longer needed.

Hebrews 2:1-4 and the Role of Miracles

Hebrews 2:1-4

"For this reason [that is, because of God's final revelation in His Son Jesus and because of Jesus' superiority to the angels], we must pay much closer attention than ever to the things that we have heard, so that we do not [in any way] drift away [from truth]. For if the message given through angels [the Law spoken by them to Moses] was legally binding and unalterable, and every violation and disobedient act received an appropriate penalty, how will we escape [appropriate retribution] if we ignore such a great salvation [as is now offered]? It was first spoken by the Lord, and it was confirmed to us and proved authentic by those who personally heard [Him speak], and it was also testified by God [confirming the message of salvation] both by signs and wonders and by various miracles carried out by Jesus and the apostles, and by granting to believers the gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will."

This passage links miracles and spiritual gifts to the validation of the gospel during its initial proclamation. If the gospel was confirmed in the first century and the faith was fully established, then these gifts were no longer needed.

### **The Fulfillment in 70 AD**

The Scriptures indicate that spiritual gifts and offices were temporary measures given to the early church for the purpose of establishing the faith. With the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD, Christ's return, and the full revelation of His kingdom, the church had matured, reaching the "oneness in the faith."

Since the church was no longer in its formative stage, there was no longer a need for the offices of apostles, prophets, evangelists, teachers, or supernatural and miraculous gifts. The faith had been fully revealed, and the signs that accompanied its establishment had fulfilled their purpose. As such, from a preterist perspective, spiritual gifts and offices ceased in 70 AD, aligning with Paul's teaching that these things were temporary until completion came.

### **Walking in Faith in the Post-70 AD Church**

With the cessation of spiritual gifts and offices in 70 AD, the church entered a new phase—one in which believers were to walk by faith, grounded in the completed revelation of God's kingdom. Without miraculous signs, prophetic utterances, or apostolic leadership, the post-70 AD church functioned through the maturity of faith, reliance on Scripture, and the enduring work of love within the body of Christ.

Walking by Faith, Not by Sight

2 Corinthians 5:7

"For we walk by faith, not by sight [living our lives in a manner consistent with our confident belief in God's promises]."

The early church required spiritual gifts to confirm the gospel and establish the faith. However, once the faith was fully revealed, believers no longer needed signs and wonders to affirm God's promises. Instead, they were to trust in what had already been fulfilled in Christ. The destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD signified the complete transition into the New Covenant of faith.

## **The Authority of Scripture and the Completed Faith**

With the apostles no longer present, the foundation they laid through the written Word became the sole guide for Christian living.

Jude

3 "Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I was compelled to write to you [urgently] appealing that you fight strenuously for [the defense of] the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints [the faith that is the sum of Christian belief that was given verbally to believers]."

The faith had been delivered "once for all," meaning there was no need for continuing revelation. Believers were to study and uphold the Scriptures as the completed revelation of God's will.

## **The Role of Love and Fellowship**

Without supernatural gifts and offices, the church was sustained through love and mutual edification.

1 Corinthians 13:13

"And now there remain: faith [abiding trust in God and His promises], hope [confident expectation of eternal salvation], love [unselfish love for others growing out of God's love for me], these three [the choicest graces]; but the greatest of these is love."

Whereas tongues, prophecies, and miracles were temporary, love was eternal. The post-70 AD church was to function not

through supernatural manifestations but through faith-driven love and unity among believers.

## **The Ongoing Work of the Kingdom**

Although supernatural gifts and offices ceased, the mission of the church continued. Believers were still called to evangelize, teach, and encourage one another.

Colossians 3:16

"Let the [spoken] word of Christ have its home within you [dwelling in your heart and mind—permeating every aspect of your being] as you teach [spiritual things] and admonish and train one another with all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs with thankfulness in your hearts to God."

The focus shifted from miraculous signs to the daily, transformative power of the gospel in believers' lives. Teaching, admonition, and worship became the central means of strengthening the church.

## **The Fully Mature Church**

The church, having reached maturity in 70 AD, was no longer reliant on supernatural gifts and offices. Instead, it thrived through the authority of Scripture, the exercise of faith, and the power of love. The fulfillment of the kingdom meant that believers could now walk in confidence, fully equipped with God's revealed truth. The absence of supernatural gifts and offices was not a loss but a sign of completion—ushering in an era where faith, hope, and love

defined the life of the church.

## **The Old Exodus and The New Exodus**

During the Exodus, Israel experienced a series of supernatural signs that confirmed God's presence and provision:

**Pillar of Fire and Cloud:** These served as visible symbols of God's guiding presence. By day, the pillar of cloud directed the Israelites, while at night, the pillar of fire provided light and assurance of divine protection.

**Manna from Heaven:** Daily, God provided food in the form of manna—a miraculous sustenance that met their needs even in the harsh conditions of the desert.

**Unwearing Clothes:** The Israelites' clothing miraculously remained intact, symbolizing God's ongoing care and preservation during their journey.

Each of these signs was a tangible reminder that God was actively working to deliver His people from bondage, establish a covenant relationship, and lead them to the Promised Land. The miraculous manifestations were meant to build faith and serve as temporary aids until the covenant was fully realized in the possession of the land.

## **The New Covenant Exodus: A Journey of Faith and Transformation**

The early church's transition from the Old to the New Covenant is an analogous process

Miraculous Signs from Christ's Death and Resurrection: Just as the Exodus was marked by signs, the death and resurrection of Christ served as the ultimate supernatural event that defined the New covenant between God and humanity. The resurrection was the "credible proof" that confirmed Jesus as Christ (King) and the victory over sin and death and inaugurated the New Covenant.

Acts 17

31 because He has set a day when He will judge the inhabited world in righteousness by a Man whom He has appointed and destined for that task, and He has provided credible proof to everyone by raising Him from the dead."

## **The Early Church's Miracles**

Following Christ's ascension, the early church experienced miraculous events—healings, conversions, and signs—that paralleled the supernatural occurrences of the Exodus. These events authenticated the apostolic message and provided spiritual sustenance similar to the manna that fed Israel.

**A Forty-Year Period of Transition:** While the Exodus lasted for forty years in the wilderness, many see the early church's formative period as a time of trial, preparation, and miraculous provision that lasted until the fulfillment of God's promise. The judgment on Jerusalem in 70 AD marks the end of this era, much like entering the Promised Land ended the wilderness period.

**Parallel Themes: Provision, Guidance, and Fulfillment**

Provision:

Old Covenant: Manna was a physical reminder of God's provision during a time of scarcity.

New Covenant: The spiritual nourishment provided through the gospel and the Holy Spirit offered a new kind of sustenance, feeding the faith of believers.

Guidance and Presence:

Old Covenant: The pillar of fire and cloud represented God's constant guidance.

New Covenant: The risen Christ, through His teachings and the empowering work of the Spirit, guides the church on its journey of faith.

Temporal Signs with Eternal Purpose:

Old Covenant: The miraculous signs (unwearing clothes, manna, divine light) were temporary, ceasing once Israel entered the Promised Land.

New Covenant: Similarly, the early church's signs were meant to serve their purpose during the transition period until the church reached its intended maturity.

With the complete establishment of the church by 70 AD, these miraculous signs ceased, signifying that the New Covenant had been fully enacted and the church was to function on the basis of the established revelation of Christ's victory and the written Word.

Both in the Old and New Covenants, the cessation of supernatural phenomena signals the completion of a divine mission:

**Entry into the Promised Land:** For Israel, once the physical territory was secured, there was no further need for miraculous signs; the covenant was now living reality.

**The Full Establishment of the Church:** In a parallel manner, the early church's period of miraculous signs ended when the New Covenant was fully established—identified by the judgment on Israel and Jerusalem in 70 AD. This event symbolized the closure of a formative era, where the supernatural was no longer required to validate the faith because the church had been built upon the finished work of Christ.

The parallels between Israel's forty-year journey from Egypt and the early church's forty-year transition from the Old to the New Covenant are rich in symbolic and theological meaning. In both instances, God provided supernatural signs to confirm His presence, sustain His people, and guide them through a period of transformation. As Israel entered the Promised Land, and as the early church reached its maturity by 70 AD, these miraculous signs ceased. This cessation was not a withdrawal of God's favor but a fulfillment of His redemptive plan—a sign that the people had reached the intended destination, and it was time to live out the reality of the covenant in daily life.

# **Sacramentum - Baptism and Communion**

## **Baptism as a Pledge of Allegiance to Jesus and His Kingdom**

Baptism is one of the central sacraments in Christianity, symbolizing not only the washing away of sin but also the public declaration of one's loyalty and commitment to Jesus Christ and His Kingdom. In the ancient world, such an act was not simply a religious rite but a radical pledge of allegiance, often seen as a direct challenge to existing authorities. For the early Christians, baptism was more than a mere ritual; it was a public and powerful expression of their allegiance to **Jesus as Lord**, a title that came with deep political and religious ramifications. The conflict that this caused between the early believers and the Jewish leaders of their time ultimately contributed to the jealousy and animosity that led to Christ's crucifixion.

## **Baptism as a Public Declaration**

In the Bible, baptism is directly connected to a **public confession of faith** and allegiance to Christ. When Peter addressed the crowds at Pentecost, he called them to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus for the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38). This act of baptism was a declaration that they were forsaking their old ways and swearing loyalty to Jesus as **Messiah**. Baptism wasn't just a private act of faith; it was an **oath** to follow Christ and live under His reign.

Paul, in his letter to the Romans, connects baptism to the idea of dying with Christ and rising to a new life of allegiance to Him:

Romans 6:4 "Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life"

Through baptism, a believer publicly declares their loyalty to Christ, symbolically dying to their old allegiances—whether

to sin, to the world, or to any earthly authority—and rising into a new identity in Christ's Kingdom.

## **Jesus as King: A Threat to the Authorities**

From the start of His ministry, Jesus proclaimed the coming of the Kingdom of God (Mark 1:15), a kingdom that had clear implications for both political and religious authorities. To pledge allegiance to Jesus was to recognize Him as Lord and King, a title that challenged the power structures of both the Jewish religious leaders and the Roman Empire.

For the Jewish leaders, the rise of Jesus and His growing influence among the people was a direct threat to their power. The high priest and members of the Sanhedrin were deeply entrenched in their authority over the Jewish people, ruling as intermediaries between God and man through their interpretation of the Mosaic Law.

When Jesus declared,

John 14:6 “I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father except through Me”

He was making a radical claim that undermined their authority. To be baptized in the name of Jesus was, in essence, to pledge allegiance to Him as the true intermediary between God and man, rejecting the religious leaders' claim to be the gatekeepers of the Jewish faith.

The Jewish leaders were acutely aware of this shift. They saw Jesus as a direct challenge to their religious and social order. The Gospels record numerous instances of their growing jealousy and anger. In John 11:48, after Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, the religious leaders expressed their fear, saying,

"If we let Him go on like this, all men will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation."

They understood that Jesus was gaining a following that could ultimately destabilize their control.

## **Baptism and the Allegiance to a New King**

One of the most powerful moments in the New Testament is when Pilate questions Jesus during His trial, asking, "Are You the King of the Jews?" (John 18:33). Jesus' response was profound:

John 18:36 "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm"

Here, Jesus reveals that the nature of His kingdom is in the midst of all earthly political powers, yet it demands absolute loyalty. As explained earlier, "world" in this verse is "kosmos" and is a jurisdictional term, meaning Jesus' Kingdom is not under the jurisdiction that He and Pilate were conversing in.

The Jewish leaders' accusation before Pilate made clear the tension that had built up:

John 19:12  
"If you release this man, you are no friend of Caesar; everyone who makes himself out to be a king opposes Caesar."

They understood that if people pledged allegiance to Jesus as King through acts like baptism, it would challenge both their religious authority and the political order of Rome. Jesus' Kingdom posed a real threat to the established powers, both religious and secular.

**The Crucifixion: A Culmination of Jealousy and Fear**  
The public allegiance to Jesus symbolized by baptism stirred up deep-seated jealousy among the Jewish leaders. Mark 15:10 reveals that even Pilate knew the religious leaders had delivered Jesus up out of envy. Jesus' growing influence and His claim to divine kingship threatened their hold over the people. The religious authorities could not tolerate a movement that declared a new king—especially one who claimed divine authority.

In Matthew 27:1-2, we see the culmination of this jealousy:

"When morning came, all the chief priests and the elders of the people conferred together against Jesus to put Him to death; and they bound Him, and led Him away and delivered Him to Pilate the governor."

Their jealousy and fear of losing control led them to conspire for His execution.

### **The Kingdom of God: A New Allegiance**

Baptism in the New Testament is therefore deeply intertwined with the idea of allegiance. To be baptized in the name of Jesus is to renounce all other allegiances—to governments and all other powers of this world, or to one's own will—and to declare Jesus as King.

Paul describes this shift in allegiance when he writes:

Colossians 1:13 "For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son"

Through baptism, believers are publicly pledging their citizenship in the Kingdom of God, leaving behind the "domain of darkness" ruled by sin and death.

This new allegiance caused immense conflict in the early church. The Jewish leaders, recognizing that baptism into Christ was a pledge to a new king, were filled with jealousy and rage, ultimately leading them to crucify the one who dared to claim divine kingship. But through His death and resurrection, Christ triumphed over the powers of this world, establishing a kingdom that would never end.

## **Going Back To The Birth of an Empire**

In the wake of Julius Caesar's assassination, the Roman Republic was thrown into chaos. Power quickly became the prize, and the struggle was led by two very different figures: Marc Antony, Caesar's trusted lieutenant, and Gaius Octavian, his grandnephew and adopted son. In a clever political move, Octavian reached out to the long-ignored, weakened Senate. Recognizing his respectful deference, they rallied behind him and even declared Antony an "Enemy of the State." Forced to flee for his life, Antony was eventually chased down and defeated by Octavian at the Battle of Actium in 31 BCE.

The public was captivated by this victory—a moment the people saw as the arrival of their savior, the one who had delivered Rome from chaos and ushered in an era of "peace and security." In 27 BCE, in a symbolic gesture of humility, Octavian returned power to the Senate and assumed the title *princeps*, meaning "first among equals." In gratitude (and perhaps with a touch of political savvy), the Senate honored him with the name Augustus, meaning "the magnificent one." Despite the apparent humility in his actions, Augustus embraced his new title and soon declared that Rome was destined to rule the world on behalf of the gods. Thus, the foundation was laid for an empire—one that historians recognize as Augustus's transformation of Rome into a true

imperial state, ruling as its first emperor, the supreme “king of kings.”

## **Rome as a System of Domination**

Under the Empire, society was split into two distinct classes: the ruling elites and everyone else. The common people had little influence over governmental decisions, their lives organized into a rigid, pyramid-like structure with the emperor and his inner circle at the top. Wealth was concentrated upward, leaving the majority to subsist on meager resources. Most citizens kept their heads down—submitting to authority, working long hours, paying taxes, and rarely questioning the established order. They formed networks of patronage, paying homage to Caesar as part of a well-understood social contract.

Rome maintained its grip on power through various means: forced labor, steep taxes, land seizures, strict social stratification, and a blend of political collaboration and civic religion that centered on emperor worship. With a potent mix of military might and ideological control, Roman generals marched their troops to the empire’s frontiers, offering “peace and security” to those who submitted and forcing subjugation on those who resisted.

## **The Power of an Oath**

To cement loyalty, Caesar and his successors required both individuals and entire nations to publicly pledge their allegiance—a promise known as a sacramentum. The term appears around 150 times in ancient Roman texts. Julius Caesar himself was the first to use this oath in a military context, describing it as a voluntary pledge made by soldiers

when they joined his ranks. Livy recounts how, during the Republic, a consul would administer this oath of obedience, binding soldiers to follow orders and support one another. Even the famed Cicero noted that when a legion was disbanded, a soldier's original oath no longer held legal weight, and a new one was required. Later, historian Tacitus defined *sacramentum* as the verbal pledge given to an emperor, an oath so sacred and public that breaking it meant facing everything from disgrace to death.

### **A Counter-Imperial Oath**

Early followers of Christ had their own *sacramentum* to express their loyalty to Jesus and His kingdom. Tertullian, writing in the second and third centuries, specifically identified baptism as the Christian version of this sacred oath—a pledge to the King of Kings that contrasted sharply with a soldier's loyalty to Caesar. Just as a soldier's oath inducted him into the Roman military, baptism welcomed believers into God's kingdom, marking a decisive break with the past and with Rome's oppressive social order.

For early Christians, baptism wasn't just a ritual—it was a radical, countercultural act. By rejecting the dominant imperial religion and pledging allegiance to Jesus, believers were not only embracing a new identity, but they were also, quite literally, taking a stand against Rome's established order. This revolutionary act of faith often came at a high price, subjecting early Christians to persecution and even death.

## **Baptism as a Bold Statement**

The Gospel accounts trace the origins of this movement to John the Baptizer, a man who abandoned a life steeped in the temple tradition to herald a coming kingdom. When Jesus submitted to John's baptism, it wasn't just an act of humility—it was a declaration that set the stage for a new way of life. The heavens themselves affirmed Jesus' identity as the "Son of God," and His subsequent ministry—filled with healing, exorcism, and divine proclamation—challenged the authority of Rome.

After His resurrection, Jesus commissioned His disciples to "go and make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19). This mission carried a subversive edge: converting nations that were once under Rome's control and asking people to transfer their allegiance from Caesar to Christ. In the process, early Christians found themselves at odds with both Roman authorities and their own traditional communities, facing severe repercussions for their new loyalties.

For Jews, turning to Christ meant a difficult re-negotiation of their identities. Baptized Jewish believers, still seen as part of the Jewish community, often faced hostility from Jews and sometimes even from the Roman authorities. Gentile converts, on the other hand, had no such protective legacy; their choice to follow Christ marked them as political and social rebels, risking ostracism, the loss of patronage, and even execution.

## **The Shifting Boundaries of Faith and Power**

The early church emerged as a direct challenge to the Roman Empire—a community that embraced a radically egalitarian

ethic based on love, mercy, and justice. Baptism symbolized a clear break from the old order: by pledging themselves to Christ, believers declared that their loyalty belonged to a different kingdom. Over time, however, as the church grew and became more intertwined with the fabric of Roman society, the original countercultural meaning of baptism began to fade. Under Constantine, for example, baptism eventually became less a badge of resistance and more a sign of social conformity.

Today, particularly in the Western world, there is a noticeable disconnect between baptism as a mere formality and its original, revolutionary significance. Modern churches often resemble large, well-funded institutions more than the radical community of believers who once dared to defy an empire. Now is the time for theologians and church leaders to revisit and reclaim the powerful, transformative meaning of baptism—a call not just to personal salvation, but to a public, countercultural life that embodies the principles of Christ’s kingdom.

### **A Pledge of Allegiance**

Baptism, then, is not merely a personal act of faith. It is a bold and public pledge of allegiance to Jesus Christ as Lord and King. In the ancient world, this was seen as a direct challenge to the authorities, both religious and political, and it continues to carry profound implications today. Through baptism, believers declare their loyalty to a Kingdom, a Kingdom that calls for total allegiance to Jesus Christ. The Jewish leaders’ jealousy over this shift in allegiance led to Christ’s crucifixion, but His Kingdom remains eternal, and through baptism, we join in that everlasting pledge of allegiance.

Understanding all of this provides a profound clarity as to

why whole families were baptised, including infants and young children. Baptism of a father and his household was about the allegiance of his household to a King, NOT about a personal profession of faith in Jesus as a mere spiritual leader.

## **The Last Supper as Christ's Pledge of Allegiance to His Bride**

The Last Supper is one of the most significant events in the ministry of Jesus. Commonly understood as the institution of Communion (or the Lord's Supper), this event is rich in meaning, symbolizing the relationship between Christ and His Church, His Bride. Far from being a simple religious ritual, the Last Supper represents Christ's profound pledge of allegiance to His Bride, the Church. When we partake in Communion today, we are not merely remembering His death; we are recalling the covenant pledge Christ made to us, His people, and reaffirming our participation in that covenant.

## **The New Covenant: Christ's Betrothal to His Bride**

At the Last Supper, Jesus spoke of the "new covenant in His blood." This covenant was not just a legal transaction; it was a relational commitment—akin to a marriage pledge. The concept of covenant throughout Scripture is tied closely to the relationship between God and His people, often likened to a marriage

Jeremiah 31:31 "Behold, the days are coming," says the Lord, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel (the Northern Kingdom) and with the house of Judah (the Southern Kingdom), 32 not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them," says the Lord. 33 "But this is the covenant which I will make with the

house of Israel after those days,” says the Lord, “I will put My law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they will be My people. 34 And each man will no longer teach his neighbor and his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they will all know Me [through personal experience], from the least of them to the greatest,” says the Lord. “For I will forgive their wickedness, and I will no longer remember their sin.”

Hosea 2:19 “And I will betroth you (Israel) to Me forever; Yes, I will betroth you to Me in righteousness and in justice, in lovingkindness and loyalty, and in compassion. 20 “I will betroth you to Me in stability and in faithfulness. Then you will know (recognize, appreciate) the Lord

In Jewish culture, betrothal was a serious covenant between a bridegroom and a bride. The bridegroom would offer a cup of wine to his bride as a symbol of his commitment to her, sealing their relationship until the marriage was consummated. This imagery aligns perfectly with the Last Supper. Jesus, the Bridegroom, offers the cup to His disciples, His future Bride, as a sign of His commitment to them—a pledge that He will return for His Church and bring her into full union with Himself.

Luke 22:19-20 "And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, 'This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.' And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, 'This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.'"

The disciples' drinking of the wine symbolizes their acceptance of the Bridegroom's pledge. In doing so, they enter into a binding relationship with Christ, sealed by His sacrifice on the cross.

## **"Do This in Remembrance of Me": Reaffirming the Pledge**

When Jesus instructs His disciples to "do this in remembrance of Me," He is calling them not only to remember His death, but to recall the covenant He established—a pledge of undying love and commitment.

1 Corinthians 11:26 "For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes."

Every time believers before 70AD took Communion, they were not just looking back to the cross but were also looking forward to the return of the Bridegroom. This ongoing practice of Communion keeps the Church focused on the ultimate fulfillment of the covenant: the marriage supper of the Lamb (Revelation 19:7-9). It is a reminder that Christ, as the faithful Bridegroom, returned to claim His Bride, and we are to live in faithfulness to Him, reaffirming our commitment.

Revelation 19:7 "Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready."

## **The Broken Bread: Christ's Body Given for His Bride**

At the Last Supper, Jesus breaks the bread and says, "This is my body, which is given for you" (Luke 22:19). This act of breaking the bread represents the ultimate sacrifice Christ made for His Bride. In Ephesians 5, Paul likens the relationship between Christ and the Church to that of a husband and wife, highlighting the sacrificial love that Christ demonstrated.

Ephesians 5:25-26 "Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word."

Christ's body was broken for the Ekklesia/Church, His Bride, as an act of ultimate allegiance. Just as a husband is called to lay down his life for his wife, Jesus willingly gave His life to redeem His people. His broken body represents the price of the new covenant—the pledge He made to bring His Bride into a perfect, eternal relationship with Him.

### **The Poured-Out Wine: A Blood Covenant**

In the ancient world, covenants were often sealed with the shedding of blood, symbolizing the seriousness and permanence of the agreement. At the Last Supper, Jesus speaks of His blood being poured out as the blood of the new covenant.

Matthew 26:28 "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins."

This blood covenant is not just a legal contract; it is a binding, life-giving relationship. In the same way that a bridegroom commits to his bride, Jesus commits His life, His very blood, to His Ekklesia. The shedding of His blood on the cross was the ultimate demonstration of His love and commitment. Through this blood covenant, we are forgiven, cleansed, and brought into a relationship with God that cannot be broken.

This blood signifies the lengths to which Christ was willing to go for His Bride. His allegiance to His people is unwavering, sealed with His very life.

## **Communion: A Living Pledge**

The act of Communion is not just a memorial of Christ's death—it is a reminder of the covenant relationship between Christ and His Ekklesia. Each time believers partake in Communion, they are remembering their covenant with Christ, remembering His pledge and pledging their loyalty to Him. We proclaim His death and the consummation of our relationship at the marriage supper of the Lamb.

Matthew 26:29 "I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

Jesus' statement here pointed to a future celebration—the marriage supper in the Kingdom of God, and continues for eternity. The Ekklesia is to remain faithful, just as a bride remains faithful to her bridegroom. Communion serves as the sign of that faithfulness, a continual reminder that we are married to Christ.

## **The Marriage Supper: Fulfillment of the Pledge**

The Bible culminates in the glorious wedding feast of the Lamb in Revelation, where the pledge made by Christ at the Last Supper is fully realized. The Ekklesia, purified and made ready, is presented to Christ as His spotless Bride.

Revelation 19:9 "Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb."

The marriage supper was the ultimate fulfillment of Christ's pledge of allegiance to His Bride. He returned, and the union between Christ and His Ekklesia is complete, eternal, and perfect. The Church celebrates this promise through eternal communion with our Bridegroom.

## **Communion as Covenant Renewal**

Communion is far more than a ritual or symbolic act. It is the ongoing renewal of the covenant Christ made with His Bride. Every time we break the bread and drink the cup, we are reminded of His sacrificial love, His commitment to us, and our own call to faithfulness.

The Last Supper was Christ's pledge of allegiance to His Ekklesia, let us remain faithful, remembering the covenant and living as the spotless Bride He has called us to be.

Hebrews 13:20-21 "Now may the God of peace... equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen."

**“Hell” NO**

God's word is VERY clear, the wages of sin is DEATH. Nowhere in Scripture does God say that the wages of sin is eternal conscious torment.

#### Genesis 2

15 So the Lord God took the man [He had made] and settled him in the Garden of Eden to cultivate and keep it. 16 And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, "You may freely (unconditionally) eat [the fruit] from every tree of the garden; 17 but [only] from the tree of the knowledge (recognition) of good and evil you shall not eat, otherwise on the day that you eat from it, you shall most certainly die.

#### Romans 1

32 Although they know God's righteous decree and His judgment, that those who do such things deserve death, yet they not only do them, but they even [enthusiastically] approve and tolerate others who practice them.

#### Romans 6

23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God [that is, His remarkable, overwhelming gift of grace to believers] is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

For many Christians today, the concept of Hell as a place of eternal conscious torment is accepted without question. However, a closer study of the Bible reveals that this popular idea is not actually found in Scripture. The words translated as "hell"—Sheol, Hades, and Gehenna—have been misunderstood and mistranslated, leading to a distorted view of God's justice and judgment. Let's explore what the Bible actually says about these terms and how they have been misinterpreted over time.

There are four words Translated “hell” in the Bible.

Sheol (Hebrew) It’s used 65 times in the Old Testament and means “GRAVE.”

Hades (Greek) It’s used 11 times in the New Testament, and like sheol means “GRAVE.”

Tartaros (Greek) It occurs just once (in 2 Peter 2:4). It is defined as: darkness of the material universe, dark abyss, prison.

Gehenna (Greek) It is used 12 times. The word is derived from the name of the narrow, rocky Valley of Hinnom located just outside of Jerusalem.

Christ used this word in Matthew 10:28 to describe the fate of unrepentant Judah/Jerusalem.

Matthew 10:28 Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; but rather be afraid of Him who can destroy both soul and body in Gehenna.

Jesus was referring to this prophecy.

Malachi 4:1 “For behold, the day is coming, burning like a furnace, and all the arrogant (proud, self-righteous, haughty), and every evildoer shall be stubble; and the day that is coming shall set them on fire,” says the Lord of hosts, “so that it will leave them neither root nor branch.

Gehenna aka Valley of Hinnom was a literal place, where Josiah laid waste the idols of Molech and Asherah. When used by Jesus it is in reference to the prophecy of Jeremiah and it is an indication of the complete destruction of Israel and Jerusalem in 70ad - it has NOTHING to do with eternal conscious torment in a mythical place called hell.

Hades was the same as Sheol or The Grave - a holding place of the dead until the resurrection at the judgement and deestruction of Israel and Jerusalem in 70ad.

Hades/Sheol/The Grave is now empty.

## **Sheol – The Grave**

In the Old Testament, the Hebrew word Sheol is used to describe the place where the dead reside, often translated as "the grave" or "the pit." It is not a place of eternal torment, but simply the state of death or the realm of the dead. Both the righteous and the wicked are described as going to Sheol.

Psalm 16:10 "For You will not abandon my soul to Sheol; Nor will You allow Your Holy One to undergo decay."

Here, Sheol is clearly a reference to the grave or death. There is no mention of eternal suffering, only the finality of death.

Ecclesiastes 9:10 "Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might, for in Sheol, where you are going, there is neither working nor planning nor knowledge nor wisdom."

Again, Sheol is portrayed as a place of inactivity, not a place of conscious suffering.

## **Hades – The Greek Underworld**

In the New Testament, the Greek word Hades is often used in place of Sheol. Hades, much like Sheol, refers to the realm of the dead, not a place of eternal torment. When Jesus speaks of Hades, it's often in the context of death and the grave.

Revelation 20:13-14 "And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades gave up the dead

who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done. Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire."

Hades here is not a place of eternal suffering but simply the abode of the dead, which will ultimately be destroyed. Even death itself will be cast into the lake of fire, symbolizing the end of death and the final judgment.

### **Gehenna – The Valley of Hinnom**

One of the most misunderstood words in the Bible is Gehenna, which is often translated as "hell." Gehenna was a real place outside of Jerusalem—the Valley of Hinnom—and it had a dark history. In ancient times, it was a site where children were sacrificed to the pagan god Molech (2 Kings 23:10). Whenever Jesus used the word Gehenna, He was not referring to an eternal place of torment but rather making a direct reference to the judgment and destruction of Jerusalem.

Matthew 23:33 "You serpents, you brood of vipers, how will you escape the sentence of Gehenna?"

Jesus is warning the Pharisees of the imminent destruction that would come upon Jerusalem, which was fulfilled in 70 AD with the Roman siege.

Jesus was using Gehenna as a symbol of earthly judgment, not an otherworldly realm of eternal torment. The Valley of Hinnom became a metaphor for the physical and national destruction that would befall the unfaithful. Everytime Jesus used the word Gehenna it was in reference to the coming judgment and complete destruction of Israel and the old covenant.

## **The Absence of Eternal Torment**

Nowhere in the Bible do we find a clear, consistent teaching of eternal conscious torment. The concept of Hell as a place of unending suffering originated in pagan philosophy, not in the biblical text. The Greeks had their own ideas about the afterlife, including eternal punishment, which were later incorporated into Christian theology, especially through Dante's *Inferno* and other medieval works.

Jesus Himself teaches about destruction, not eternal suffering.

Matthew 10:28 "Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in Gehenna."

The word used here is destroy—a complete and utter end—not "torment."

John 3:16 "whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life."

The alternative to eternal life is not eternal suffering but perishing, ceasing to exist.

## **Where Did the Idea of Eternal Torment Come From?**

The idea of eternal conscious torment was largely popularized by catholic church fathers, particularly Augustine, who was heavily influenced by Greek philosophy. This view gained more prominence during the Middle Ages, but it was never part of the original teachings of Jesus or the Apostles.

The Bible consistently points to death, destruction, and annihilation as the fate of the wicked, not eternal suffering.

2 Thessalonians 1:9 "These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power."

The penalty is destruction, not ongoing torture.

## **The True Meaning of Judgment**

When we understand the biblical terms correctly, we see that God's judgment is about justice, not unending torment. God is just, and His judgment reflects His character. The destruction of the wicked, the end of death, and the ultimate victory of Christ are the central themes of Scripture.

The modern concept of Hell as a place of eternal conscious torment is a misinterpretation of the Bible. The words Sheol, Hades, and Gehenna have been misunderstood, leading to confusion about God's justice and the fate of the wicked. When we examine the Scriptures closely, we see that God's judgment leads to destruction for the unfaithful, not eternal torment. Jesus' warnings about Gehenna were rooted in the destruction of Jerusalem and the judgment on Israel, not in an afterlife of eternal suffering.

By returning to the biblical text and shedding the influence of pagan philosophies, we can gain a clearer understanding of God's justice, His mercy, and His ultimate plan for humanity. The true gospel proclaims life in Christ, not fear of unending torment.

## **The Rich Man and Lazarus – A Parable Misunderstood**

One of the most misunderstood stories in the New Testament is the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, found in Luke 16:19-31. Many Christians interpret this parable as a literal description of Hell and eternal conscious torment. However, when we examine the cultural context, the beliefs

of the time, and the message that Jesus was conveying, it becomes clear that this parable is not about Hell at all. Instead, it is a profound commentary on the unbelief of the Jewish religious leadership and their rejection of Jesus as the Messiah—even if someone were to rise from the dead.

### The Cultural Background: Jewish Beliefs About Sheol

Before diving into the parable itself, it's important to understand the cultural backdrop against which Jesus was speaking. By the time of Jesus, many Jewish leaders, particularly the Pharisees, held to certain beliefs that were not directly derived from Scripture but from extra-biblical traditions, notably the Talmud. One such belief was the idea that Sheol, the Hebrew term for the place of the dead, had separate compartments: one for the righteous, often referred to as Abraham's Bosom or paradise, and another for the wicked, often associated with torment. This concept of Sheol having separate compartments comes from Talmudic teachings, not from the Bible. The Old Testament describes Sheol as a general place of the dead—both righteous and unrighteous went to Sheol, but it was not depicted as a place of eternal torment. Over time, extra-biblical writings like those found in the Talmud began to develop more elaborate depictions of the afterlife, including the notion that the rich and powerful would reside in paradise, because obviously they were more righteous, while the poor and lowly were consigned to torment because obviously they were less righteous or even out right evil.

### **Jesus' Parable: Flipping the False Teaching**

In the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, Jesus takes this popular but erroneous teaching and turns it on its head. In the story, the rich man, who had lived in luxury and ignored the plight of the poor, finds himself in torment after death, while Lazarus, a poor beggar covered in sores, is carried by angels to Abraham's Bosom.

The radical twist in this story would have shocked the Jewish audience. They would have expected the rich man, as someone who appeared to be favored by God, to go to paradise and the poor man, seen as cursed by God, to be in torment. Instead, Jesus reverses their expectations: the rich man is in agony, and Lazarus is comforted in Abraham's Bosom.

Part of the message here is not about a literal description of Hell or eternal conscious torment. Instead, Jesus is confronting the false belief that material wealth and status were indicators of righteousness and favor with God. He is emphasizing that God's judgment is based on the heart, not outward appearances or earthly riches.

### **The True Point of the Parable: Unbelief and Rejection of the Messiah**

At the climax of the parable, the rich man, from his place of torment, pleads with Abraham to send Lazarus back from the dead to warn his brothers, saying that if someone from the dead were to come back, they would repent. But Abraham replies, "If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead" (Luke 16:31).

This is the central point of the parable. Jesus is speaking directly to the Jewish religious leadership, particularly the Pharisees, who prided themselves on their knowledge of Moses and the Prophets. Yet, despite having the Scriptures, they were blind to the fact that Jesus was the fulfillment of the Messianic prophecies. The parable foreshadows the fact that even when Jesus Himself would rise from the dead, many of these same leaders would still refuse to believe in Him as the Messiah.

In John 11, we see this very scenario unfold with the resurrection of Lazarus, a real person, unlike the character in the parable. After Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead, the

religious leaders plot to kill Jesus instead of acknowledging Him as the Messiah (John 11:45-53). Even witnessing a miracle as profound as resurrection was not enough to break through their hard-hearted unbelief.

## Sheol, Gehenna, and Eternal Conscious Torment

To further understand this parable, it's essential to dispel the modern misconception that Jesus was describing Hell as a place of eternal conscious torment. As mentioned earlier, the word Sheol simply refers to the realm of the dead in the Old Testament, and it was never divided into compartments of paradise and torment. This idea stems from Talmudic teachings, not from Scripture.

Furthermore, whenever Jesus spoke of Gehenna, which is often mistranslated as Hell, He was referring to the Valley of Hinnom, a literal place outside of Jerusalem. Gehenna was a symbol of judgment and destruction, not a place of eternal torment. Jesus used Gehenna as a vivid image of the destruction that would come upon Jerusalem if the people did not repent. This destruction was fulfilled in 70 A.D., when the Roman army laid siege to Jerusalem, culminating in the complete devastation of the Temple and the city.

In this light, it becomes clear that Jesus' parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus is not about Hell or the afterlife at all. Instead, it's a sharp warning to the religious leaders about their unbelief, their failure to care for the poor and marginalized, and their impending judgment if they continued to reject Jesus as the Messiah.

## **The False Teaching of Separate Compartments in Sheol**

The idea that Sheol had separate compartments for the righteous and wicked, with one part being a place of torment, comes from Jewish traditions found in the Talmud and other non-biblical sources. The Old Testament never

teaches that Sheol was divided this way. Instead, the Bible describes Sheol as the common destination of all the dead, whether righteous or unrighteous, without any indication of separation based on moral standing.

By using the parable to reverse the roles of the rich man and Lazarus, Jesus was subverting these extra-biblical ideas and exposing their flaws. The Pharisees believed that their wealth, status, and adherence to the law guaranteed them a place in paradise. But Jesus' parable warns that true righteousness is not about external success or appearances, but about the condition of the heart and faithfulness to God's commandments.

By understanding this parable in its proper context, we can move away from the erroneous teachings of eternal conscious torment and focus on the true message of Jesus: the call to faithfulness, compassion, and repentance in light of the coming Kingdom of God.

### **What about all the scriptures that talk about “eternal fire” ??**

“Eternal fire” is Apocalyptic language regarding the end of the old covenant, and it is initially reserved for those beings that are immortal.

#### Revelation 20

9 And they swarmed up over the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints (God's people) and the beloved city [Jerusalem]; but fire came down from heaven and consumed them. 10 And the devil who had deceived them was hurled into the lake of fire and burning brimstone (sulfur), where the beast and false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night, forever and ever.

Human beings in a fallen state are mortal, not immortal, they die... even in fire.

Jude

7 just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the adjacent cities, since they in the same way as these angels indulged in gross immoral freedom and unnatural vice and sensual perversity. They are exhibited [in plain sight] as an example in undergoing the punishment of everlasting fire.

The people of Sodom and Gomorrah and those cities are not still burning, it is obvious apocalyptic language.

In Matthew 24-25, known as the “Olivet Discourse,” Jesus is speaking of the destruction of Israel and Jerusalem and the old covenant.

Matthew 25

41 “Then He will say to those on His left, ‘Leave Me, you cursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels (demons);

The “eternal fire” prepared for Satan and his fallen angels.

Why is it eternal? Because the New Covenant is eternal.

The City - New Jerusalem - is the new covenant Bride of Christ and it’s “gates” are NEVER closed. Meaning, the new covenant is eternal and people will be entering through its gates eternally, and outside will be those who do evil.

Revelation 21

2 And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, arrayed like a bride adorned for her husband;

9 Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls filled with the seven final plagues came and spoke with me, saying, “Come here, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.” 10 And he carried me away in the Spirit to a vast and lofty mountain, and

showed me the holy (sanctified) city of Jerusalem  
coming down out of heaven from God,  
25 By day (for there will be no night there) its gates  
will never be closed

#### Revelation 22

15 Outside are the dogs [the godless, the impure,  
those of low moral character] and the sorcerers [with  
their intoxicating drugs, and magic arts], and the  
immoral persons [the perverted, the molesters, and  
the adulterers], and the murderers, and the idolaters,  
and everyone who loves and practices lying  
(deception, cheating).

Again, obvious apocalyptic language.



**Marks of a REAL Xian - How Do I Know  
I'm Saved ?**

There is a second thread that runs right beside the first thread and that is the matter of...who is a REAL Christian in The Kingdom of God?

It is of utmost importance that one determine whether or not he or she is a REAL Christian living in The Kingdom of God.

2 Corinthians 13:5

Test and evaluate yourselves to see whether you are in the faith and living your lives as committed believers. Examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves that Jesus Christ is in you—unless indeed you fail the test and are rejected as counterfeit?”

There are some who will think they are Christians and belong to the covenant and the Kingdom, yet they will be sadly mistaken.

Jesus confronts the Pharisees and the religious leaders of Israel.

Peter exposes the false faith of Simon the sorcerer.

Paul shows the Judaizers about their false faith, who want to demand that people observe the law and be circumcised in order to be saved.

James describes the dead faith of a purposeless life.

Peter calls for vigilance to watch for wolves within the Ecclesia.

Jude exposes the wolves in the Ecclesia, and compels us to contend for the truth.

John describes churches that had made a name for themselves but had no life. They thought they were alive but in fact they were dead. They allowed false teachers and were

in danger of Jesus fighting against them.

Looking at the concern of who is a REAL Christian, there are those who claim to be the children of God and those who REALLY are the children of God.

The gospel, therefore, is good news, not good advice! It's not about what you have to do for God, but it's the news of what God has done for you in Christ to set you free.

Now, what are the signs of a REAL Christian?

How do we know that we are truly saved?

1 John 5:13

“I write this to you who believe in, adhere to, trust in, and rely on the name of the Son of God so that you may know with settled and absolute knowledge that you already have life, yes, eternal life.”

What is John referring to when he says, “I write this to you?”

He is referring to the first 4 chapters of his letter.

## **Marks Of A Christian**

### **ONE : Fellowship of Believers**

1 John 1:7

“But if we really are living and walking in the Light, as He is in the Light, we have true unbroken fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His son cleanses us from all sin and guilt.”

The “we” is referring to Christ's Ekklesia.

John is writing specifically to believers in Jesus as King (Christ) living in The Kingdom of God.

“...if we are living and walking in the Light, as He is in the

Light, we have true fellowship with one another...”

Christians living and walking in the Light have TRUE fellowship with one another. True fellowship with God AND our Christian brothers and sisters.

If you are not in TRUE fellowship with fellow Christians, you need to re-examine yourself as to whether or not you are a REAL Christian.

What is TRUE fellowship?

Fellowship is the Greek word Koinonia - contributory help, participation, sharing in, communion, partnership, communication, distribution.

If you are a REAL Christian, you like being with and fellowshiping with other Christians. You have reasons to be together, to fellowship, and to spend time in various settings, contributing to others needs, having your needs contributed to, partnering in all of life.

This doesn't mean that you don't have friends that are not Christians.

But if you do not truly enjoy doing life with other Christians, then John is telling us that this is a sign that you are not a real Christian.

What did fellowship look like to the early Christians?

Acts 2:41-47

“So then, those who accepted his message were baptized; and on that day about 3,000 souls were added to the body of believers. They were continually and faithfully devoting themselves to the instruction of the apostles, and to fellowship; to eating meals together and to prayers.

A sense of awe was felt by everyone, and many wonders and signs (attesting miracles) were taking

place through the apostles. And all those who had believed in Jesus as Savior were together and had all things in common, considering their possessions to belong to the group as a whole. And they began selling their property and possessions and were sharing the proceeds with all the other believers, as anyone had need. Day after day they met in the temple area continuing with one mind, and breaking bread in various private homes. They were eating their meals together with joy and generous hearts, praising God continually, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord kept adding to their number daily those who were being saved.”

Fellowship is different from merely seeing friends and acquaintances once a week on Sunday morning and at an occasional potluck. Fellowship is living life together, and being involved with one-another’s lives.

Galatians 6:2 “Bear one another’s burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ.”

This means really caring for and having a hand in your fellow Christians’ lives. Actively engaged, helping keep each other accountable, and taking care of their needs.

There seems to be a lot of people that claim to be Christians, yet are not truly a part of a body of believers.

There are a lot of excuses, and yes, let’s face it, they are excuses for why some don’t want to be part of a community, and don’t want to have fellowship with Christians.

“I’m a Christian, but I don’t like organized religion.”

This is just another way of saying...

“I want the blessings that go with saying that I’m a Christian, but I don’t want the responsibilities that go with being a

Christian.”This is literally taking Jesus Christ’s name in vain.

This is the same as, “I don’t want to be bothered with people, and relationships require too much effort that I don’t want to put forth.”

If you are a REAL Christian, then recognize the need for other people and other people’s need for you.

If God commands Christians to “love your neighbor....” then you need a neighbor!

“I’ve been hurt by the church.”

This means a variety of things to a variety of people, but it has become a claim of those that have been offended in some way, shape, or form.

Ever since Cain and Abel, people have been notorious for being offended. Because of our sinful nature, we are easily offended by God. Each and every one of us are sinful by nature; therefore, each and every one of us have been offended at some point, if not frequently.

Get over it.

I know, that is an insensitive thing to say...

“You don’t know my situation... my story... my circumstances...”

Nope, and you don’t know mine either.

God does know; take it up with Him. He will forgive your sin of selfishness and allow you to be part of a body of fellow sinful Christians, so that you can have true fellowship and grow more mature.

I also need to address the issue of people using the excuse...

“I don’t like being around Christians or going to church, because they are all hypocrites.”

hyp·o·crite

'hipə,krit/

noun

1. a person who claims to have standards or beliefs to which his/her own behavior does not conform.

Are there hypocrites in churches?

Of course there are!

Just like there are hypocrites in bars and restaurants... In clubs and all associations...etc., etc.

Yet, I’ve never heard of a church where every single person is a hypocrite.

When I hear this statement, most of the time it is not hypocrisy that is the problem, but rather accountability. When a Christian holds someone accountable in one area while not holding themselves or others accountable in all other areas of life, this is not hypocrisy. This is simply a case of not being accountable or disciplined in all areas of life.

Rather than considering changes that might need to be made and growing from there, the person decides that it is easier to avoid people who will confront them about their sin and would hold them accountable.

Which leads to the next point.

## **Two: Are You A Sinner?**

I John 1:8

“If we say that we have no sin, we delude and lead ourselves astray, and the Truth is not in us.”

How do we even define sin?

Romans 3:20

“For no person will be justified [freed of guilt and declared righteous] in His sight by [trying to do] the works of the Law. For through the Law we become conscious of sin [and the recognition of sin directs us toward repentance, but provides no remedy for sin].”

The law shows us the character of God, and the impossibility of living up to His character. It is a package deal... all or nothing...

Falling short of 1% of the law, makes us breakers of the whole law.

If you can not admit that you are a SINNER, then it is hardcore evidence that you are not a REAL Christian.

Why did I capitalize SINNER?

Because sin is serious!

If you do not recognize the grossness of your sin, if you do not see yourself as a vile sinner at your core without Christ, Then you need to re-examine yourself.

John is not talking about just flippantly saying, “Oh yeah, I sin once in a while.”

Jeremiah 17:9

“The heart is deceitful above all things and it is extremely sick; who can understand it fully and know its secret motives?”

Mark 7:21-23

For from within, [that is] out the heart of men, come base and malevolent thoughts and schemes, acts of sexual immorality, thefts, murders, adulteries, acts of greed and covetousness, wickedness, deceit,

unrestrained conduct, envy and jealousy, slander and profanity, arrogance and self-righteousness and foolishness (poor judgment). All these evil things [schemes and desires] come from within and defile and dishonor the man.”

This is the acknowledgment that we are slaves to sin without Christ.

If you are not disgusted by your sinful heart and recognize that you can not stand before a Holy God without Christ as your savior, then there needs to be a change.

Notice John doesn't say that you need to see yourself as wonderful and great in God's view.

There isn't more of a need for better self esteem, to love ourselves more.

Understanding the complete heinousness of our sin causes us to run into the open arms of Christ and stay there!

A better self esteem and lack of understanding of our sin causes us to rely on ourselves instead of always seeing our need for God.

If you have trouble seeing your sin, pray and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal your sin to you so that you can grow and be more sanctified.

If however, you are totally aware of your sin and truly see the heinousness of your sin....

And you have repented of your sin and put faith in Christ's work upon the cross...

Please!! Understand this!

**YOU ARE A NEW CREATION IN CHRIST!**

God has truly forgiven your sin!

God has removed your sin from you as far as the east is from

the west!

2 Corinthians 5:21

“For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”

Romans 8:9-11

“However, you are not [living] in the flesh [controlled by the sinful nature] but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God lives in you [directing and guiding you]. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him [and is not a child of God]. If Christ lives in you, though your [natural] body is dead because of sin, your spirit is alive because of righteousness [which He provides]. And if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead lives in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit, who lives in you.”

### **Three: Do you keep His commandments?**

1 John 2:3-4

“And this is how we may discern that we are coming to know Him, if we keep His commandments. Whoever says, “I know Him but fails to keep and obey His commandments is a liar and the Truth is not in him.”

Do you even know His commandments?

“But wait! I’m not under the law!”

This has been one of the greatest lies of the modern, postmodern and now post-Christian church!

We as Christians are not under the ETERNAL

PUNISHMENT of the law because of Christ's atonement on the cross! BUT... the law is the standard by which God calls us to live by. The law is not arbitrary, it is according to God's nature, it is literally His Character.

Meaning God did not flip a coin.  
Heads lying is wrong – tails lying is perfectly fine...

The law is the standard of God's character that we are to live by and strive to meet.

The law is for our GOOD!  
God gave it to us for our benefit, for our health.  
For us to live prosperous and fulfilled lives, blessed and to be a blessing to others.

Matthew 22:36-40

“Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?” And Jesus replied to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. The second is like it, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself [that is, unselfishly seek the best or higher good for others].’ The whole Law and the [writings of the] Prophets depend on these two commandments.”

So Jesus summed up the entire law in these two.

The first 4 of the ten commandments are summed up in  
“Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.”

The last 6 of the Ten Commandments are summed up in  
“Love your neighbor as yourself”

The rest of “the law” is details and “case law” of  
THE TEN.

Do you even know the Ten Commandments?

Do you strive to keep and obey them? Let alone the rest of God's word?

Again it's for our benefit!

To keep God's commands presupposes knowing them! And knowing God's commands presupposes reading and studying them. And yet most Christians can not even name the ten most prominent commands.

But no one really obeys all the commands, Christians just pick and choose which commands to obey. Right?

No!

First, let's clarify....

There are two departments of law that God gives.

Levitical - the sacrificial/ceremonial - How to conduct sacrifices and run the temple.

Mosaic - moral/civil - How to glorify God and how to conduct life; individually, with neighbors and as a society or culture.

Because Jesus Christ was the final sacrifice there is no sacrificial/ceremonial system, hence no sacrificial/ceremonial Levitical law to keep.

This is the theme of the entire book of Hebrews.

Civil/moral laws were given initially for living in God's theocracy displayed in the types and shadows of Israel.

The word theocracy originates from the Greek θεοκρατία meaning "the rule of God". This in turn derives from θεός (theos), meaning "god", and κρατέω (krateo), meaning "to rule."

When we really stop to look at reality, ALL governments are theocracies. Government rule is just a question of which god's morals determine the laws.

Ironically, some of our civil laws were originally based on Biblical law.

Moral laws reflect God's character and these laws never change or expire because God's character never changes or expires .

And as a REAL Christian obedience should become part of our nature. We are no longer slaves to sin but slaves to Christ.

#### **Four: Don't Love The World**

1 John 2:15

“Do not love or cherish the world or the things that are in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.”

This is not saying that you can't have “stuff” or even “nice stuff” or that you can't enjoy certain things within the world.

The word “Love” in the Greek is Agape - to love, wish well to, take pleasure in, long for

The word “world” in the Greek is Kosmos - worldly affairs, orderly arrangement, a jurisdiction

John is talking about taking pleasure in the orderly arrangement or worldview and the things in that worldview.

Where is our allegiance?

You either follow God's worldview and orderly arrangement or the false worldview, orderly arrangement of men.

## Genesis 4

16 So Cain went away from the presence of the LORD, and lived in the land of Nod, east of Eden. 17 Cain knew his wife and she conceived and gave birth to Enoch; and Cain built a city and named it Enoch, after the name of his son.

Cain, the first murderer, “left the presence of the Lord” and “built a city.” Cain started the first orderly arrangement based on a worldview absent from the worldview of God.

There’s a clear and undeniable divide between the ways of God and the ways of the world. Starting with the politics of The Kingdom of Christ vs the politics of the world. The moral and ethical collapse of our culture makes that obvious. Even just a quick look shows how many cultural agendas are openly hostile to biblical Christianity: feminism’s attack on the traditional family, the normalization of sexual promiscuity and homosexuality, the growing acceptance of violence, materialism and hedonism pushed by the media, the decline of personal integrity and business ethics, and the erosion of right and wrong through postmodern relativism—the list goes on.

If these pagan views of politics, morality and ethics have your allegiance, Then you are not a REAL Christian.

The scary thing is that most of the people that claim to be Christian have never really thought out their worldview, they have never studied how scripture addresses these things as a worldview.

Most churches do not teach a Christian worldview. Most Christians have never even heard the idea of a “worldview”.

But make no qualms about it...  
Everyone has a worldview.

A worldview is any ideology, philosophy, theology,

movement, or religion that provides an overarching approach to understanding God, the world, and man's relation to God and the world.

Another way to put it....

A worldview is a bundle of ideas that answer the questions;

How did I get here?

Who am I ?

What is my purpose?

For a Christian these questions are answered in detail throughout God's word.

If you can't answer these questions according to God's word, you need to question if Jesus is your Christ/King and if you truly live in His Kingdom or the kingdoms of the world.

### **Five: Jesus, Jesus, Jesus ONLY Jesus**

1 John 2:23

“No one who denies or disowns the Son even has the Father, Whoever confesses, acknowledges and has the Son has the Father also.”

This one seems obvious, but I am amazed at how many people claim to be a Christian yet will say that there are more ways to heaven than through Jesus Christ. There are NO OTHER ways to the Father!

ONE WAY – ONE SON

If you try to keep from offending people by saying or agreeing with the idea that there are many ways to eternity life in heaven, then you are NOT a REAL Christian.

No one who denies the Son has the Father.

John 14:6

“Jesus said to him, ‘I am the Way and the Truth and the Life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.’”

There is no compromise on this!  
There is no other way!

Oprah Winfrey is wrong! There are not a million ways to get to God.

Joel Osteen is wrong! There are not any other religions or ways to God.

Billy Graham and Robert Schuller are wrong, there is not a “wideness” in God’s mercy, you cannot follow Christ without being conscious of it.

**NO ONE GETS TO THE FATHER BUT THROUGH CHRIST!**

Proverbs 14:12

“There is a way which seems right to a man and appears straight before him, But its end is the way of death.

## **Six: Christians Don't Practice Sin**

1 John 3:9

9 No one who is born of God [deliberately, knowingly, and habitually] practices sin, because God’s seed [His principle of life, the essence of His righteous character] remains in him [who is born again—who is reborn from above]; and he [who is born again] cannot sin, because he is born of God and longs to please Him.

This seems pretty self explanatory. Yet this again seems to need to be said.

If you practice something you are intentionally trying to become good at it. If you practice a sport, you practice with

the intent of being good at it and possibly becoming the best at it.

If you knowingly practice sin, John is telling you that you are not born of God, let me repeat... you are not born of God.

Now, I know what you are thinking. Does this include addictions? The answer is yes, IF you are addicted to a sin and deliberately practice with no want of changing, no guilt, no shame of practicing the addiction then yes this is what John is talking about here.

IF however, you are dealing with an addiction and you are trying not to practice and you are hit with guilt and shame and you know you should not be practicing sin then you need help! And you need help from Christian brothers and or sisters. Someone that will keep you accountable and someone that will truly care for you.

If you deny you need help, then you are denying sin and practicing sin.

Another argument is...

We are under grace not the law.

Yes, we are justified by grace.

But we are sanctified by obedience!

If your argument for being “under grace” and not the law is to say that it doesn’t matter if you sin -

This is a grasp at justifying your willful sin and again you are not born of God. You are not a REAL Christian.

John stated before, that if you DENY you are a sinner...you are not a REAL Christian.

Now, let me state very clearly! None of this is to say that we, as Christians. do not sin or deal with sin. John is not saying

that at all. John is saying that if you are a REAL Christian you will be more and more conscious of sin and will deal with it more and more willingly.

Let me state again that knowing what sin is, is known by knowing God and His Word.

Galatians 5:19 Now the practices of the sinful nature are clearly evident: they are sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality (total irresponsibility, lack of self-control), 20 idolatry, sorcery, hostility, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions [that promote heresies], 21 envy, drunkenness, riotous behavior, and other things like these. I warn you beforehand, just as I did previously, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

### **Seven: Christians Love Their Brothers and Sisters**

1 John 3:14

“We know that we have passed over out of death into Life by the fact that we love the brothers and sisters in Christ. He who does not love remains in spiritual death.”

We love our brothers and sisters in Christ, and it shows. The world can see that we love other Christians. We take care of our own.

LOVE is a verb.

LOVE means actively taking care of our brothers and sisters in Christ.

The second greatest command is to love our neighbors, first and foremost is our Kingdom family.

Jesus says....

John 13:34-35 “...Just as I have loved you, so you too are to love one another. By this everyone will know that you are My disciples, if you have love and

unselfish concern for one another.”

So, not only are Christians to love fellow Christians, but Christ tells us that is one way that the world will know that we are REAL Christians! Because we love fellow Christians!

1 Peter 4:8-9

8 Above all, have fervent and unfailing love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins [it overlooks unkindness and unselfishly seeks the best for others]. 9 Be hospitable to one another without complaint.

Leviticus 19:18

You shall not take revenge nor bear any grudge against the sons of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself; I am the Lord.

1 John 3:18

Little children (believers, dear ones), let us not love merely in theory with word or with tongue giving lip service to compassion, but in action and in truth in practice and in sincerity, because practical acts of love are more than words.

John 15:12-17

12 “This is My commandment, that you love and unselfishly seek the best for one another, just as I have loved you. 13 No one has greater love[nor stronger commitment] than to lay down his own life for his friends. 14 You are my friends if you keep on doing what I command you. 15 I do not call you servants any longer, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you [My] friends, because I have revealed to you everything that I have heard from My Father. 16 You have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you and I have appointed and

placed and purposefully planted you, so that you would go and bear fruit and keep on bearing, and that your fruit will remain and be lasting, so that whatever you ask of the Father in My name [as My representative] He may give to you. 17 This [is what] I command you: that you love and unselfishly seek the best for one another.

## **Eight: The Word of God**

1 John 4:6

“We are children of God. Whoever is learning to know God listens to us; and he who is not of God does not listen or pay attention to us. By this we know the Spirit of Truth and the spirit of error.”

Here John is referring to the Apostles, himself included, and holding the teachings of the apostles up to the Truth found in the O.T. scriptures.

If you do not follow the teachings of God’s word and listen and pay attention to God’s word and teaching then you are NOT a REAL Christian.

Real Christians enjoy and listen to God’s teaching.

We know the Apostles were teaching in the Spirit of truth because we can test their teachings against the rest of God’s word.

God’s word at the time of the Apostles was the Old Testament.

The Bible, known as God’s word, is just that, God’s word.

The Bible is the most reliable book on the face of the earth. Period.

66 books

Written over a time span of 1500 years.

Written by 40 different authors.  
Written in 3 different languages.  
Written across 4 different continents.  
Corroborated by over 24 historians at the time of writings.

And not one contradiction.  
Not even philosophy or theology!!

What does that mean?

From Genesis to Revelation the message remains the same.  
None of the authors of any of the books of the Bible give differing ideas, philosophies, or theologies.

That is purely God's word!

There are no historical or geographical statements in the Bible that have ever been proven wrong.

A REAL Christian will stand for the reliability and veracity of the Bible.

God's word as given by the Holy Spirit is not open to anyone's personal interpretation.

Just as John says here, Peter also states;

2 Peter 1:19-20

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

"Prophecy of scripture" is the giving or relaying of God's word to those who wrote by the Holy Spirit.

There is a right interpretation and ALL other interpretations are wrong interpretations.

Its black and white...

This is exactly the way the Bible presents itself...

It presents Truth and error, God's way and man's way...

There is a right way and a wrong way...

There is a right interpretation of a passage and every other interpretation is the wrong one.

There is a right theology and every other one that disagrees with it is a wrong theology.

There is a right way to understand God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, and salvation and a wrong way.

This is on every page of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation.

From the Garden of Eden with its two trees one allowed one forbidden. To the eternal destiny of the human being in heaven or in death, the Bible sets forth two and only two ways. God's way and all others. Accordingly, people are saved or lost.

They belong to God's people or the world. There is the narrow way to eternal life and the wide way to eternal death. There are those within the kingdom and those outside. There is life and death, truth and falsehood, good and bad, light and darkness, the kingdom of God and the kingdom of satan, Love and hatred, spiritual wisdom and the wisdom of the world. Christ is the Way the Truth and the Life and no one may come to the Father but by Him. He is the only name under the sky by which one may be saved.

There may be more than one application of certain scriptures, but there is only one right interpretation of God's word.

## **Nine: Confess Jesus is the Son of God**

1 John 4:15

“Anyone who confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him and he in God.”

A REAL Christian will not deny that Christ is God incarnate in the person of His son.

1 John 5:7

“So there are three witnesses in heaven: the Father, the Word and the Holy Spirit, and these three are One;”

John states at the beginning of his gospel that “The Word” is Jesus.

John 1:1-14

1 “In the beginning [before all time] was the Word (Christ), and the Word was with God, and the Word was God Himself.

2 He was present originally with God. 3 All things were made and came into existence through Him; and without Him was not even one thing made that has come into being. 4 In Him was Life, and the Life was the Light of men.

5 And the Light shines on in the darkness, for the darkness has never overpowered it [put it out or absorbed it or appropriated it, and is unreceptive to it].

6 There came a man sent from God, whose name was John.

7 This man came to witness, that he might testify of the Light, that all men might believe in it [adhere to it, trust it, and rely upon it] through him.

8 He was not the Light himself, but came that he might bear witness regarding the Light.

9 There it was—the true Light [was then] coming into the world [the genuine, perfect, steadfast Light] that illuminates every person.

10 He came into the world, and though the world was made through Him, the world did not recognize Him [did not know Him].

11 He came to that which belonged to Him [to His own—His domain, creation, things, world], and they

who were His own did not receive Him and did not welcome Him.

12 But to as many as did receive and welcome Him, He gave the authority (power, privilege, right) to become the children of God, that is, to those who believe in (adhere to, trust in, and rely on) His name—

13 Who owe their birth neither to blood nor to the will of the flesh [that of physical impulse] nor to the will of man [that of a natural father], but to God. [They are born of God!]

14 And the Word (Christ) became flesh (human, incarnate) and tabernacled (fixed His tent of flesh, lived awhile) among us; and we [actually] saw His glory (His honor, His majesty), such glory as an only begotten son receives from his father, full of grace (favor, loving-kindness) and truth.”

So John is stating that confessing that Jesus is God’s son is a statement of the Trinity.

If you don’t confess that Jesus Christ is part of the triune God you are not a real Christian.

Another application of 1 John 4:6 is emphasizing the actual act of confessing.

When was the last time you confessed that Jesus is the Son of God to someone?

I know a lot of you reading this will say, “but I’m not any good at sharing the gospel, I’ll let my pastor or someone else do it.”

So what you are saying is that you truly understand that you, like all of mankind, are a sinner who will stand in judgment before the God of all creation and that Jesus is the Christ/King of all creation proven by the fact that He died on the cross and rose three days later in order to quell God’s wrath which is the penalty for your sin so that you can spend

eternity with Him and live in His Kingdom now and for eternity where all your needs will be supplied.

But you are not willing to share that incredible news with anyone? Because your pastor can do it better??

Feel the fear and do it anyway!

It only gets easier when you do it!  
And besides, with the extent of social media now, there really is no excuse for not confessing Christ as the Son of God.

Are you too embarrassed to proclaim Christ as your Lord and Savior??

If I looked at your social media could I tell that you are a REAL Christian?

“If you do not have a passion to see lost souls saved, you are not saved yourself.

Do you look for times to confess that Jesus is the Son of God? To share Christ with a dying world? A world that is going to eternal death?

It's not rocket science, you don't need to have a diploma to share Christ with someone. Just be willing to open your mouth when the time presents itself.

There we have it. These 9 things are a starting point to hold you accountable. For someone who has truly repented and knows Jesus Christ is their savior from God's just wrath, these are signs of healthy faith.

Are there any exceptions??

What about the person who repents and truly knows Christ on their deathbed, or on death row.

From the time a person truly repents and puts their faith in Christ's blood that was spilt as a sacrifice on the cross these hallmarks of God's grace will show forth even if it is for as long as a twinkling of an eye.

A person is justified by grace through faith in a second.  
A person is being sanctified from that second till their last breath.

**How Should We Then Live NOW?**

**How Should We Then Live** was a Christian cultural and historical documentary film series and book written by Francis Schaeffer. The premise is that modern relative values are based on “Personal Peace” (the desire to be personally unaffected by the world's problems) and “Affluence” (an increasing personal income.) He warns that when we live by these values we will be tempted to sacrifice our freedoms in exchange for an authoritarian government who will provide the relative values. He further warns that this government will not be obvious like the fascist regimes of the 20th century but will be based on manipulation and subtle forms of information control, psychology, and genetics.

This film series and book were prophetic.

How Should We Then Live.. **NOW ??**

The first and most foundational step in Exodus from the systems of the world is recognizing and proclaiming Christ as the sole King of your life. Jesus made it clear that His Kingdom is different from the world's kingdoms. His reign is eternal, just, and righteous, while worldly governments are temporary and flawed.

John 18:36 "Jesus answered, 'My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would be fighting so that I would not be delivered over to the Jews. But My kingdom is not from this world.'"

This means rejecting the notion that any government or politician can advance the agenda of Christ's Kingdom. It also means that our hope should not be in human leaders or systems but in Jesus alone.

Make a personal and public declaration that Christ alone is your King. This can be done in practical ways, like refusing to engage in practices that signal allegiance to earthly powers

such as voting, political campaigning, or pledging loyalty to a flag or nation.

The following explains how Christ's Ekklesia must prepare to side step the coming judgment and destruction of Western Civilization and rebuild in the generations after its demise.

When the Western Roman Empire fell in the 5th century, it left a significant void across Europe. Political structures collapsed, urban centers disintegrated, and the well-organized system of roads, trade, and communication networks fell into disrepair. In the chaotic aftermath, however, small, self-sustaining Christian communities preserved much of the culture, learning, and faith of the past, often becoming the foundation upon which medieval Europe was built. These Christian communities played a critical role in sustaining both Biblical and practical life knowledge, which allowed them to survive and eventually contribute to a new social order.

### **The Model of Christian Community**

As the Roman Empire weakened, many Christians sought refuge from the moral decay and political corruption of the Roman world by forming Kingdom communities. As early as the 3rd century in Egypt, where Christians like St. Anthony the Great withdrew into the desert to pursue a life of solitude, prayer, and asceticism. These early hermits formed the foundation of Christian monasticism, with men and women following St. Anthony's example of devotion and simplicity.

Understand, I am not advocating for monastic life, and nowhere does God's word instruct or even condone monastic life, but over time, this solitary form of monasticism evolved into communal life. St. Pachomius developed a Kingdom community where Christians lived together, sharing work and worship. By the time of the fall of Rome in 476, Christian communities had spread across the

Mediterranean, bringing with them a model of shared Christian life focused on Biblical maturity, agricultural work, and learning. The Rule of St. Benedict, written in the early 6th century, further solidified this structure, emphasizing the values of Biblical maturity, labor, and community. Kingdom communities soon spread throughout Europe, providing a stable, self-sustaining model that would prove critical for survival and societal rebuilding in the post-Roman era.

### **Kingdom Communities as Centers of Learning and Agriculture**

The fall of Rome led to widespread disruption of educational and administrative systems. Amidst this decay, Kingdom Communities became the primary centers of learning, preserving classical texts, Scriptures, and theological writings. Kingdom Communities also served as agricultural centers. Christians maintained self-sustaining farms, gardens, and vineyards. These communities perfected Biblical farming techniques helping improve productivity in an era marked by scarcity and insecurity. For instance, the Kingdom Communities of Gaul (modern France) maintained vineyards and introduced Biblical techniques for crop rotation, which influenced the surrounding Kingdom Communities.

### **The Preservation of Christian Morality and Social Order**

While pagan society was marked by frequent warfare, looting, and instability, Kingdom communities offered a model of peace and stability. The Christians of these communities practiced and modeled a Christian moral order, emphasizing humility, charity, and care for the poor. Kingdom Communities frequently provided food and shelter for travelers, the sick, and the poor, preserving a Christian ethic of compassion and hospitality.

In Ireland, Kingdom Communities spread Christianity to the British Isles and beyond. St. Columba established a Kingdom Community on the island of Iona, which became a center for Christian activity and the spread of Biblical teaching to Scotland and Northern England. These Irish Kingdom Communities had a distinct Biblical structure that preserved Christian values and provided sanctuaries in regions far from the chaos of Rome's collapse.

As secular infrastructure crumbled, Kingdom Communities undertook rebuilding projects that would benefit society at large. In the 8th and 9th centuries, Christians developed advanced techniques in water management, agriculture, and construction. Kingdom Communities built mills, cleared forests, and developed farmland, establishing economic stability in regions otherwise lacking any stability.

During times of violence, Kingdom Communities served as sanctuaries, providing a place of refuge. The practice of "sanctuary," where people could seek protection within Kingdom Communities, reinforced the role of the Ekklesia as a shelter and safe haven. This service helped Christians maintain a sense of safety and security in a world plagued by warfare.

The fall of Rome set Europe on an uncertain path, but Kingdom Communities preserved not only faith but also knowledge, social order, and practical skills that laid the groundwork for a new society. By focusing on self-sufficiency, agriculture, learning, and community cohesion, Kingdom Communities were able to thrive independently, rebuilding society from the bottom up. These communities provided the stability, Biblical guidance, and moral framework to live and thrive. Through their resilience and faith, these Kingdom communities preserved the legacy of the past and provided a foundation for future generations.

## **In the World, Not of the World: Practical Steps for Living in the Kingdom of God**

Jesus prayed to the Father that His followers would be in the world but not of it, calling His disciples to live distinctively as citizens of His Kingdom while in a fallen, pagan society. Christians are called to represent Christ and His Kingdom, not to reform the world's systems but to live in faithful obedience to God within those systems.

Nowhere does Scripture instruct believers to make pagan nations or pagan cultures “great again”; rather, it calls us to seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness living as sojourners in this world.

We must take practical steps to embody this calling, forming communities of faith that exit worldly systems while remaining steadfast witnesses to Christ within them.

### **Seek First the Kingdom of God**

The first step for Christians who desire to live separately from worldly systems is to align their priorities with God's Kingdom.

Matthew 6:33 “But first and most importantly seek (aim at, strive after) His kingdom and His righteousness [His way of doing and being right—the attitude and character of God], and all these things [life's necessities] will be given to you also”.

By making God's Kingdom and righteousness our primary goal, we turn our focus away from the desires, ambitions, and worries that drive the world, cultivating a mindset rooted in eternal values.

## **Form Communities of Faith**

Living in the Kingdom of God involves forming close, supportive communities of faith.

Acts 2:42 “They were continually and faithfully devoting themselves to the instruction of the apostles, and to fellowship, to eating meals together and to prayers.”

By gathering regularly for fellowship, worship, and mutual support, believers encourage one another to remain faithful in a world that does not know Christ.

## **Practice Financial Independence from Worldly Systems**

Believers can exit worldly financial systems - living in debt, by depending on God’s provision and practicing self-sufficiency.

1 Thessalonians 4:11-12 “Make it your ambition to live quietly and peacefully, and to mind your own affairs and work with your hands, just as we directed you, so that you will behave properly toward outsiders and be dependent on no one [and have need of nothing]”

By minimizing reliance on government welfare programs or debt, Christians can live freely in service to God, stewarding resources responsibly within a community of faith.

## **Prioritize Kingdom Education**

Rather than relying on public education systems, Christians **MUST** seek alternatives aligned with biblical values, teaching children in the faith.

Proverbs 22:6 “Train up a child in the way he should go [teaching him to seek God’s wisdom and will for

his abilities and talents], even when he is old he will not depart from it.”

Christian homeschooling or private schooling centered on Scripture nurtures children in the truth of God’s Word rather than the pagan teachings rampant in public systems. A Kingdom of God Community is essential for this to be available to all. Forming homeschooling co-ops so that those who have trouble affording to homeschool can still keep from relying on pagan education.

### **Develop Skills for Self-Sustenance**

As citizens of God’s Kingdom, Christians should cultivate practical skills that allow them to provide for themselves and others, reducing dependency on worldly economies. The early church exemplified this through generosity and self-sustenance, sharing resources to meet the community’s needs

Acts 4:32 Now the company of believers was of one heart and soul, and not one [of them] claimed that anything belonging to him was [exclusively] his own, but everything was common property and for the use of all. 33 And with great ability and power the apostles were continuously testifying to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace [God’s remarkable lovingkindness and favor and goodwill] rested richly upon them all. 34 There was not a needy person among them, because those who were owners of land or houses were selling them, and bringing the proceeds of the sales 35 and placing the money down at the apostles’ feet. Then it was distributed to each as anyone had need.

Christians should grow their own food, learn trades, and develop entrepreneurial skills like carpentry, mechanics,

high tech and other practical vocations that contribute to their communities and allow them to serve others.

## **Serve in Godly Compassion Rather than Political Reform**

Scripture emphasizes compassionate service over political activism. Jesus commanded His followers to care for the poor, the sick, and the imprisoned, not to seek positions of influence within pagan systems.

Matthew 25:35-36 “For I was hungry, and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me something to drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in; I was naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me.”

By dedicating themselves to acts of love and mercy, Christians can witness to God’s Kingdom without seeking to reform the world’s pagan systems.

## **Reject Unequal Partnerships with the World**

Paul warns believers to avoid being “unequally yoked” with unbelievers, encouraging Christians to refrain from close alliances that would compromise their faith.

2 Corinthians 6:14 Do not be unequally bound together with unbelievers [do not make mismatched alliances with them, inconsistent with your faith]. For what partnership can righteousness have with lawlessness? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? 15 What harmony can there be between Christ and Belial (Satan)? Or what does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? 16 What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said: “I will dwell among them and walk among

them; And I will be their God, and they shall be My people. 17 “So come out from among unbelievers and be separate,” says the Lord, “And do not touch what is unclean; And I will graciously receive you and welcome you [with favor], 18 And I will be a Father to you,  
And you will be My sons and daughters,”  
Says the Lord Almighty.

In a practical sense, this means discerning carefully which relationships, contracts, and commitments we enter, ensuring they align with Kingdom values and don't lead us into compromise with worldly standards or ethics.

This command cautions against binding relationships that require compromise of faith, such as contractual obligations or roles that would force a believer to act contrary to God's justice, mercy, or truth.

Government positions such as police officers, judges, public-school teachers, and political officials involve enforcing or upholding policies, laws, and teachings that contradict biblical values. When Christians work in these roles, they face situations where they are required to support actions or decisions that conflict with God's commands—upholding “unjust laws” or administering punishments that may not align with God's justice, and teaching things that are in direct conflict with God's word.

By entering roles within pagan systems, Christians unintentionally yoke themselves to the world's values, especially when required to enforce laws or regulations that contradict biblical principles. Many government roles come with the inherent temptation of authority, financial stability, and power, all of which can compromise a believer's focus on God's Kingdom.

Matthew 13:22 And the one on whom seed was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but

the worries and distractions of the world and the deceitfulness [the superficial pleasures and delight] of riches choke the word, and it yields no fruit.

Matthew 6:24 “No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.”

This principle emphasizes that Christians should not hold positions where they must uphold values that oppose the teachings of Christ, for it risks a divided loyalty that can compromise their faith.

### **Model Peaceful Citizenship Without Dependence on Worldly Authority**

The Apostle Paul, a natural-born citizen of Rome, serves as a model for how Christians can respect earthly laws while living primarily as citizens of Heaven.

Paul used his Roman citizenship to defend himself when it was a clear benefit to The Kingdom of God.

Acts 22:25 But when they had stretched him out with the leather straps [in preparation for the whip], Paul said to the centurion who was standing by, “Is it legal for you to whip a man who is a Roman citizen and uncondemned [without a trial]?” 26 When the centurion heard this, he went to the commander and said to him, “What are you about to do? This man is a Roman!” 27 So the commander came and asked Paul, “Tell me, are you a Roman?” And he said, “Yes.” 28 The commander replied, “I purchased this citizenship [of mine] for a large sum of money [so how did you acquire yours?]” Paul said, “But I was actually born a citizen.” 29 So those who were about to interrogate him by torture immediately let him go; and the

commander was also afraid when he realized that Paul was a Roman and he had put him in chains.

But Paul never relied on Roman systems for his provisions or sense of identity or purpose. Rather, his life was grounded in Christ and His Kingdom. Similarly, Christians today can live as peaceful citizens, obeying lawful authorities where it does not conflict with God's commands, but refraining from seeking political power or influence.

### **Reject Materialism and Embrace Generosity**

The love of material wealth binds people to the world's values, whereas generosity reflects Kingdom priorities. Jesus taught,

Matthew 6:19-20 "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven"

Matthew 19:21 Jesus answered him, "If you wish to be perfect [that is, have the spiritual maturity that accompanies godly character with no moral or ethical deficiencies], go and sell what you have and give [the money] to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me [becoming My disciple, believing and trusting in Me and walking the same path of life that I walk]." 22 But when the young man heard this, he left grieving and distressed, for he owned much property and had many possessions [which he treasured more than his relationship with God].

Luke 12:16 Then He told them a parable, saying, "There was a rich man whose land was very fertile and productive. 17 And he began thinking to himself, 'What shall I do, since I have no place [large enough in which] to store my crops?' 18 Then he said, 'This is

what I will do: I will tear down my storehouses and build larger ones, and I will store all my grain and my goods there. 19 And I will say to my soul, “Soul, you have many good things stored up, [enough] for many years; rest and relax, eat, drink and be merry (celebrate continually).” 20 But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your soul is required of you; and now who will own all the things you have prepared?’ 21 So it is for the one who continues to store up and hoard possessions for himself, and is not rich [in his relationship] toward God.”

Christians are called to cultivate a spirit of generosity and stewardship, using what they have to serve others and invest in God’s Kingdom, rather than amassing wealth and possessions as the world does.

### **Be a Faithful Witness Without Worldly Influence**

The call to be in the world but not of it means living a life that points others to Jesus without compromising.

Matthew 5:14 “You are the light of [Christ to] the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden;”

By embodying Christ’s love and truth, believers can be a powerful witness to others. However, this does not mean adopting the world’s strategies or conforming to its ways. Rather, it means living out the teachings of Jesus in humility, holiness, and service, so that our lives become a testimony to the reality of God’s Kingdom.

### **The Call to Exit Worldly Systems**

Scripture consistently calls believers out of worldly systems rather than instructing them to improve or “make great” the nations around them. When Israel was exiled in Babylon, God’s instruction was not to change Babylon but to remain faithful to Him within it.

Jeremiah 29: Now these are the words of the letter which Jeremiah the prophet sent from Jerusalem to the rest of the elders in exile and to the priests, the prophets and all the people whom Nebuchadnezzar had taken into captivity from Jerusalem to Babylon. 4 “So says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the captives whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon, 5 ‘Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat their fruit. 6 Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there and do not decrease [in number]. 7 Seek peace and well-being for the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf; for in its peace (well-being) you will have peace.’ 10 “For thus says the Lord, ‘When seventy years [of exile] have been completed for Babylon, I will visit (inspect) you and keep My good promise to you, to bring you back to this place.

The New Testament emphasizes this even further. Paul reminds believers that “our citizenship is in heaven” affirming that we do not belong to the world’s systems but to the Kingdom of God.

Philippians 3:17 Brothers and sisters, together follow my example and observe those who live by the pattern we gave you. 18 For there are many, of whom I have often told you, and now tell you even with tears, who live as enemies of the cross of Christ [rejecting and opposing His way of salvation], 19 whose fate is destruction, whose god is their belly [their worldly appetite, their sensuality, their vanity], and whose glory is in their shame—who focus their mind on earthly and temporal things. 20 But [we are different, because] our citizenship is in heaven.

As Christ's followers, we are to live within the cultures and nations we find ourselves in but without becoming enmeshed in their values or agendas. Jesus prayed,

John 17:16 "They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world"

This mandate calls us to form communities of faith and service that stand apart, relying on God and supporting one another rather than conforming to the world's standards.

To be in the world but not of the world is to live as sojourners, aware that our true allegiance is to Christ and His Kingdom. Paul exemplified this by using his Roman citizenship as a tool when necessary but never placing his hope or identity in it. Christians today are called to live in much the same way: participating in the societies we inhabit without allowing them to shape our values, priorities, or loyalties.

By focusing on community, service, and Kingdom-centered living, we fulfill our calling to be a distinct people of God, set apart to declare His praises and embody His love to a world that does not know Him. As Christ's Kingdom ambassadors, we can stand as a testimony of His righteousness, peace, and hope NOW and for eternity.

Jesus and His disciples provide a model of ministry that is free from political involvement or official authority within pagan governments. Despite living in a time when Rome ruled with harsh laws, neither Jesus nor His apostles sought to reform Roman policy or hold government positions. The early Christians obeyed civil laws where it did not compromise their faith but avoided entanglements with the government's power structures.

The apostles spread the gospel and built communities rooted in God's principles rather than seeking political power.

1 Corinthians 7:23 “You were bought with a price [a precious price paid by Christ]; do not become slaves to men [but to Christ].”

In positions within secular systems, Christians risk “becoming slaves” to political agendas, required to act according to the state’s interests rather than Christ’s teachings.

Matthew 5:16 Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good deeds and moral excellence, and [recognize and honor and] glorify your Father who is in heaven.

Instead of compromising by enforcing laws or policies that contradict God’s justice and mercy, Christians can serve in ways that reflect Christ’s love and truth without entanglement.

Roles in healthcare, Christian education, charity, trades, and self-employment just to name a few can provide ways to engage and serve without the compromises that often come with government positions. Christians can seek vocations that promote love, mercy, and humility—ideals consistent with God’s will and separate from pagan influences.

Paul describes believers as “ambassadors for Christ”

2 Corinthians 5:20 So we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making His appeal through us; we [as Christ’s representatives] plead with you on behalf of Christ to be reconciled to God

representing God’s Kingdom while residing in a foreign land. An ambassador does not adopt the practices of the host nation but instead remains faithful to their home country’s laws and customs. Likewise, Christians are to represent the values of God’s Kingdom, which can become compromised

in roles where they must uphold or enforce values contradictory to their faith.

Christians are called to build communities focused on God's Kingdom, not on reforming or controlling worldly systems.

Hebrews 13:14 "For here we have no lasting city, but we are seeking the city which is to come."

Christians are pilgrims promoting God's Kingdom rather than stakeholders in temporal systems. When believers focus on community, charity, and Biblical maturity, they can provide a witness to God's truth without compromise.

Scripture's call for Christians to live in the world but not be of it, and to avoid binding relationships or contracts with unbelievers, sets a high standard of allegiance to God's Kingdom. By avoiding roles that entangle them in pagan systems or force them to compromise biblical principles, Christians can live as FREE citizens of Heaven, devoted solely to Christ and His commandments. Seeking alternative, God-honoring ways to engage and serve in society fulfills Jesus' instruction to be salt and light, representing His Kingdom with integrity and faithfulness.

Resist Conformity to the Humanist Worldview

Romans 12:2 instructs believers to avoid conforming to the world's patterns. This is a call to resist the cultural and political pressures that seek to shape our thinking and actions. In today's society, it's easy to be swept up in the constant cycles of political outrage, consumerism, and social media trends. However, Christians are called to live differently.

Romans 12:2 "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect."

Separation from the world begins with a transformed mind—renewed through the Word of God, prayer, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. When we change our thinking, our actions follow, and we begin to live according to Kingdom principles, not the world’s priorities.

Regularly meditate on Scripture and ask God to reveal areas where your thinking aligns with the world instead of Christ’s Kingdom. Take practical steps to reject conformity, whether that means avoiding certain forms of media or abstaining from political debates.

Begin or join a small group or home fellowship that shares this commitment to Christ’s Kingdom. Make community life central to your walk with God—sharing resources, studying the Word together, and supporting one another in rejecting worldly systems.

## **Reject Nationalism and Political Idolatry**

In the Bible, any form of idolatry—including the seeking of political leaders, ideologies, or national identity—is condemned. When Israel demanded a king, it was a form of idolatry because they wanted to trust in human power rather than in God (1 Samuel 8:7). Similarly, today’s political fervor is a form of idolatry, where people look to politicians as saviors or political ideologies as solutions to the world’s problems.

1 John 5:21 "Little children, keep yourselves from idols."

Nationalism, which elevates one’s nation above all others, is incompatible with the global and eternal nature of Christ’s Kingdom. Christians are called to love all people and nations, seeing themselves as citizens of God’s Kingdom first and foremost.

Refuse to engage in nationalism or political idolatry. This could mean not participating in patriotic ceremonies that glorify earthly nations or refusing to vote for political candidates. Instead, focus on being an ambassador for Christ's Kingdom.

The Bible contains strong warnings against seeking human political leaders to rule over God's people, equating this desire with idolatry and the pursuit of false gods.

One of the clearest examples of this is in 1 Samuel 8, where Israel demanded a human king despite God's desire to be their only King. The subsequent warning from God through Samuel, and other biblical passages, emphasize that turning to earthly rulers is akin to rejecting God's rule and placing hope in something other than Him. Here's how the Bible addresses the dangers of seeking political leaders, the idolatry inherent in this pursuit, and the consequences that follow.

### **Israel's Demand for a King in 1 Samuel 8: A Rejection of God's Rule**

In 1 Samuel 8, the people of Israel approached Samuel, the last judge of Israel, and demanded, "Now appoint us a king to judge us like all the nations" (1 Samuel 8:5). Israel's desire for a king "like all the nations" was a clear indication that they wanted to imitate pagan nations rather than remain distinct as God's chosen people. Their desire to rely on a visible, human leader undermined their direct relationship with God.

God responded to Samuel's distress over this request by stating, "They have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me from being King over them" (1 Samuel 8:7). This response is significant because it reveals that seeking a human leader to replace God's direct rule is, in essence, idolatry—a rejection of God's kingship in favor of an earthly figure.

## **The Consequences of Rejecting God's Kingship**

God, through Samuel, warned Israel of the consequences of having a human king. The king would take their sons for war, their daughters for labor, their fields and vineyards, and impose heavy taxes and servitude upon them (1 Samuel 8:10-18). These warnings reveal the inherent dangers of seeking a human leader:

- **Loss of Freedom:** The king would “take” from the people, enslaving them to serve his interests, rather than God's.
- **Idolatrous Dependence:** By depending on a king, the people would shift their trust from God's provision to the king's resources and protection.
- **Spiritual Consequences:** God warned, “You will cry out in that day because of your king whom you have chosen for yourselves, but the Lord will not answer you” (1 Samuel 8:18). The decision to rely on a human king would come at the cost of alienation from God, as they had rejected His direct rule over them.

This passage serves as a warning for all believers that reliance on human political systems and leaders, rather than God, invites a form of bondage and spiritual estrangement.

### **“Put Not Your Trust in Princes”**

Psalm 146:3-4 warns against placing trust in human leaders: “Do not trust in princes, in mortal man, in whom there is no salvation. When his spirit leaves him, he returns to the earth; in that very day his thoughts and plans perish.”

Human leaders are limited, finite beings, lacking the power to provide ultimate deliverance or lasting security.

Trust in political leaders becomes idolatrous because it replaces faith in God with reliance on human beings. The Hebrew prophets repeatedly warned Israel against looking to military alliances, political treaties, or rulers for security, as

these were seen as false substitutes for God's protection and provision (Isaiah 31:1; Jeremiah 17:5).

## **Political Power and Idolatry in Ancient Israel**

Throughout Israel's history, the political entity led the people into idolatry. The kings of Israel and Judah led the nation away from God and into the worship of idols (1 Kings 16:30-33). Even Solomon, who began his reign faithfully, ultimately allowed his foreign wives to turn his heart to false gods (1 Kings 11:4-6).

This pattern shows the danger of investing authority in a human leader, who leads people away from God's commands. Seeking political power as a solution for spiritual problems, therefore, puts God's people at risk of compromising their values and engaging in idolatrous practices.

## **Jesus' Teaching: The Kingdom "Not of This World"**

Jesus emphasized that His followers are to focus on God's Kingdom rather than earthly power structures. When questioned by Pontius Pilate about His kingship, Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world... My kingdom is not from here" (John 18:36). Jesus' words remind believers that His Kingdom operates on a different level than the world's pagan political systems. While human governments seek power, control, and influence, Jesus' Kingdom focuses on humility, service, and love for God and neighbor.

The early church followed this model, living under Roman rule without seeking to reform or take control of political offices. Instead, they prioritized the gospel and built a distinct community governed by God's law of love, as seen in Acts 2:42-47.

## **"You Cannot Serve Two Masters"**

Jesus taught His disciples in Matthew 6:24, “No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other.” For Christians, serving God as King means that any allegiance to earthly political leaders must never interfere with their ultimate loyalty to God.

When believers place their hopes in political figures or platforms, they divide their loyalty, compromising on biblical values to align with party policies or the “lesser of two evils.” This divided loyalty leads to moral and spiritual compromise, causing believers to accept and even support unbiblical practices for the sake of political success.

### **“Come Out from Their Midst and Be Separate”**

Paul’s instruction in 2 Corinthians 6:14-18 emphasizes the importance of remaining spiritually distinct: “Do not be unequally bound together with unbelievers...Therefore, come out from their midst and be separate,” says the Lord. “And do not touch what is unclean.” Christians are to maintain a separation from the values and pursuits of the world, including political systems that promote worldly ideals rather than godly ones.

### **Seeking Earthly Leaders as a Form of Idolatry**

The Bible consistently teaches that putting one’s hope in earthly leaders reflects a lack of faith in God’s provision. Jeremiah 17:5 warns, “Cursed is the man who trusts in and relies on mankind, making [weak, faulty human] flesh his strength, and whose mind and heart turn away from the Lord.”

Idolatry, by definition, is “the placement of one’s ultimate trust for provision and protection in something or someone other than God.”

When Christians put their hope in political leaders to bring about righteousness, security, or provision, they make idols of these leaders, substituting them for the role God is meant to fill.

## **The Example of Jesus and the Apostles**

Neither Jesus nor His apostles sought political power. They focused on proclaiming the Kingdom of God, which transcends earthly governments.

Jesus refused Satan's offer of political dominion over the kingdoms of the world, as this would have meant compromising His mission (Matthew 4:8-10).

Similarly, the apostles did not involve themselves in Roman politics but instead dedicated themselves to spreading the gospel and building the Ekklesia - The Kingdom of God. Their example highlights a devotion to God's Kingdom over and above any earthly allegiance.

The Bible warns against seeking human leaders in place of God, equating this pursuit with idolatry and a rejection of God's kingship. From Israel's request for a king in 1 Samuel 8 to the warnings of the prophets and teachings of Jesus, Scripture emphasizes that reliance on political power compromises the faithfulness and distinctiveness of God's people. True allegiance for a Christian lies with the Kingdom of God, where Christ alone is King. When believers seek God as their only source of guidance, provision, and security, they fulfill their calling to be distinct from the world, keeping their faith firmly rooted in Him alone.

## **Focus on Kingdom Economics**

The Bible offers a model of economic justice that is radically different from the world's systems of greed and exploitation. In the early church, believers shared their resources so that no one was in need (Acts 4:32-35). Jesus taught that wealth

should be used to serve others, not to build personal empires.

Luke 12:33 "Sell your possessions, and give to the needy. Provide yourselves with moneybags that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail."

By focusing on Kingdom economics, Christians can detach themselves from consumerism and greed, instead using their resources to serve others and advance the work of God's Kingdom.

Practice generosity by sharing your resources with those in need and supporting ministries that align with Kingdom values. Consider living simply so that you have more to give.

### **Educate Yourself on Kingdom Theology**

One of the most important aspects of separating from worldly systems is developing a robust understanding of Kingdom theology. This means studying Scripture with the goal of understanding how the early church lived and what Jesus taught about His Kingdom. It also means rejecting liberal theology that spiritualizes the Kingdom or futurist eschatology that pushes the Kingdom off into the distant future.

Matthew 5:5 "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth."

Jesus taught that His Kingdom would be established here on earth, and it is the responsibility of believers to live as citizens of that Kingdom now, not waiting for a distant fulfillment.

Dive deeply into the Scriptures, focusing on Jesus's teachings about the Kingdom. Seek Biblical teachings, and communities

## **Steps to Full Reformation**

The Protestant Reformation of the 16th century was a monumental moment in church history, but it didn't go far enough. While reformers like Martin Luther, John Calvin, and Ulrich Zwingli courageously confronted many of the errors within the Roman Catholic Church, they failed to fully restore the church to the simple, powerful faith of the apostolic era. As a result, we're left with thousands of denominations, complex church hierarchies, and theological confusion—far removed from the unity and purity of the early church.

Practical steps for a full reformation, taking the church back to its Apostolic foundations, eliminating denominations, dismantling man-made hierarchies, addressing erroneous eschatological views, and rooting out liberal theology.

These steps are a call to return to the model of the New Testament church, restoring the Bride of Christ to her original purpose and mission.

### **1. Reject Denominationalism: Embrace Biblical Unity**

Ephesians 4:4-6 "There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all."

The first and most critical step toward reformation is rejecting denominationalism. The proliferation of denominations is a direct violation of the biblical call for unity. The early church was one unified body, not divided into factions based on personal interpretations or traditions. To move toward full reformation, we must reject the

divisiveness of denominations and embrace the biblical teaching that there is "one body and one Spirit."

Churches should dissolve denominational boundaries and commit to partnering with all true followers of Christ, regardless of tradition or affiliation.

## **2. Dismantle the Modern Church Hierarchy**

Matthew 23:11 "But the greatest among you shall be your servant."

The church of the Apostles was marked by servant leadership, not by hierarchical power structures. Modern church hierarchy, with its emphasis on titles, ranks, and professional clergy, is far removed from the simplicity of the early church, where leaders were known as servants and shepherds, not corporate executives.

Churches should adopt a model of shared leadership, where elders serve the congregation voluntarily, without salaries, and power is decentralized. Leaders should focus on serving and discipling others, rather than maintaining positions of authority.

## **3. Restore House Church Gatherings**

Acts 2:46 "Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart."

The early church met in homes, creating an environment of intimacy, discipleship, and shared life. By restoring the house church model, we can return to the authentic fellowship that characterized the Apostolic church.

Churches should move away from large, impersonal buildings and encourage small, intimate gatherings in homes, where discipleship and community can flourish.

#### **4. Eliminate Paid Clergy**

Acts 20:33-34 "I have coveted no one's silver or gold or clothes. You yourselves know that these hands ministered to my own needs and to the men who were with me."

The Apostolic church did not rely on a paid clergy. Leaders like Paul supported themselves through their own labor, ensuring that the gospel was free of charge. The modern system of paying pastors and church leaders has created a professionalized clergy that often hinders true spiritual growth and community engagement.

Churches should eliminate salaried positions for clergy and encourage bi-vocational ministry, where leaders support themselves through outside work, following the model of the Apostle Paul.

#### **5. Reject Futurist Eschatology: Embrace a Biblical View of the Kingdom**

Luke 17:20-21 "The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed; nor will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or, 'There it is!' For behold, the kingdom of God is in your midst."

Futurist eschatology, with its emphasis on a rapture to some future kingdom, has distracted the church from the present reality of the kingdom of God. Jesus taught that the kingdom was already present in His ministry, and the Apostles understood that the church was the manifestation of God's kingdom on earth.

Churches should abandon speculative end-times teachings and embrace the biblical truth that the kingdom of God is here and now, calling believers to live as citizens of this kingdom today.

## **6. Reestablish Discipleship as the Central Mission**

Matthew 28:19 "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit."

The church's primary mission is to make disciples, yet this essential task has been overshadowed by programs, events, and entertainment. The Apostolic church focused on personal discipleship and spiritual growth, not building institutions or attracting crowds.

Churches should prioritize one-on-one discipleship and small group mentorship, where mature believers walk alongside new converts, teaching them to follow Christ in every area of life.

## **7. Teach the Priesthood of All Believers**

1 Peter 2:9 "But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession."

The priesthood of all believers is a foundational truth that was neglected for centuries. Every Christian has direct access to God and is called to be a minister of the gospel. This truth must be restored to the church in order to break the power structures that have elevated a select few to positions of authority.

Churches should equip every believer to minister, pray, and serve, breaking down the barriers between clergy and laity.

## **8. Refute Liberal Theology: Return to Scriptural Authority**

2 Timothy 3:16 "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness."

Liberal theology, with its rejection of biblical authority and reinterpretation of essential doctrines, has led many churches away from the truth of Scripture. The Apostolic church held fast to the Word of God, and we must return to this same commitment.

Churches must reject liberal interpretations of Scripture that undermine the authority of God's Word and instead return to a faithful, literal reading of the Bible.

## **9. Simplify Worship: Focus on the Word and Fellowship**

Acts 2:42 "They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer."

The early church's worship was simple: it focused on the teaching of Scripture, fellowship, and prayer. Modern churches have often complicated worship with elaborate productions and programs that distract from the core elements of Christian life.

Churches should simplify their worship services, focusing on Scripture, prayer, and genuine fellowship, rather than entertainment and production.

## **10. Eliminate Human-Centered Leadership Structures**

Philippians 2:3 "Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves."

The Apostolic church was led by humble servants, not by charismatic personalities seeking power or influence. Modern leadership structures often elevate the leader at the expense of the congregation. To fully reform, the church must reject celebrity-style leadership and return to the biblical model of humble, Christ-centered service.

Leaders should foster humility, accountability, and mutual submission within the church, ensuring that all decisions are made for the glory of God and the good of the congregation.

### **The Path to Full Reformation**

The Protestant Reformation was a beginning, but it did not go far enough. To fully restore the church to its Apostolic roots, we must reject the systems and structures that have divided and weakened the body of Christ. By following these 10 steps, we can eliminate denominations, dismantle modern hierarchies, and return to the simplicity, unity, and power of the early church. True reformation is not about tweaking the existing system—it is about a radical return to the church as Jesus and the Apostles envisioned it: united, humble, Spirit-led, and committed to the truth of God's Word.

## **Recommended Reading List**

This is not an endorsement of the authors, all of the contents on their websites, in their books or everything they write.

## Websites

<http://TKOG.org>

<https://prophecyquestions.com/>

<http://RevelationRevolution.org>

<http://PreparingYou.com>

<http://AbolishHumanArchism.com>

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