

The Doctrine of Dispensations

Point 1. Definition

A dispensation is a period or segment of time in human history expressed in terms of divine revelation. The inerrancy of the Word of God is the source for this revelation, which looks at both history and future events from the divine viewpoint. The word *dispensation* is a technical theological term used primarily by the apostle Paul in viewing both the divine outline and divine interpretation of human history. There are many interpretations of history from various sources, but the only accurate interpretation is dispensational. Dispensations are the vehicles by which believers living at a specific time period in history can orient to God's will, plan and purpose for their lives. God's plan is not the same for every dispensation; in fact, His plan is quite different in each. For example, Old Testament believers were under the ritual plan of God, Our Lord Jesus Christ was under the incarnation plan of God, and today the believer is under the predesigned plan of God for the Church-age. The believer's orientation to both time and human history, specifically in relation to the Angelic Conflict, is vitally necessary in understanding God's plan and purpose for his life. A believer cannot accurately interpret his role or purpose in life without understanding how God is taking mankind from beginning to end, while separating history into divine dispensations for the purpose of His own glorification and the execution of His perfect plan.

Dispensationalism is not a present day philosophical theory. It is a Biblical topic having its origin in the original languages of Scripture. Throughout history, philosophers, historians and doctrinal believers have been advocates of dispensationalism and millennial teachings. Some examples are:

1. Polycarp (70 A.D. - 167 A.D.): Disciple of the apostle John; he wrote that following the Second Coming, the saints will rule with Jesus Christ for 1000 years.
2. Papias (80 A.D. - 163 A.D.): Disciple of both the apostle John and Polycarp; he wrote that those belonging to Jesus Christ will reign with Him at His Second Coming for 1000 years.

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3. Justin Martyr (110 A.D. -165 A.D.): He distinguished between Israel and the Church, the Law and grace, and often spoke of dispensations and the saints' rule with Christ in Jerusalem for 1000 years.

4. Irenaeus (130 A.D. - 20 A.D.): He spoke of four principle covenants given to the human race, through Adam, Noah, the Law, and the Church, with the Church being heavenly in its reign. He often spoke of dispensations, particularly the Church-age.

5. Clement of Alexandria (150 A.D. - 200 A.D.): He distinguished three patriarchal ages, i.e., Adam, Noah, and Abraham, and clearly separated the Mosaic age from the Church.

6. Hippolytus (160 A.D. - 240 A.D.): Disciple of Irenaeus; he fixed the end of the age when Christ would return to rule with Church for 1000 years.

7. Cyprian (200 A.D. - 258 A.D.): Maintained the reign of Christ with His Church for 1000 years.

8. Coracion (230 A.D. - 280 A.D.): Millennialist; spoke of 1000-year reign of Christ with the saints.

9. Victorinus (240 A.D. - 303 A.D.): Millennialist; spoke of 1000-year reign of Christ with His Church.

10. Methoduis (250 A.D. - 311 A.D.): Millennialist; maintained that Christ would return at the Second Advent to reign for 1000 years in Jerusalem with His saints.

11. In composing the Nicene Creed in 323 A.D., a council of 318 bishops supported the Millennial reign of Christ with His saints following the Second Coming.

English theologian Daniel Whitby (1638 A.D. - 1736 A.D.) strongly opposed Millennial views, despite the fact that these views passed through the most knowledgeable Christians for 250 years, and were held by many fathers of the second and third centuries as the tradition of Jesus and the apostles. He wrote in his Treatise on Tradition that all Roman Catholics and the vast majority of Protestants now reject the doctrine of the Millennial reign of Jesus Christ with His saints upon the earth. Whitby then named early teachers of this Bible doctrine: Papias, Justin, Irenaeus, Apollinaris, Cyprian, Tertullian, Lactantius, and Severus.

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It is certain that the postmillennialist would glory to no end if he could uncover conclusive early historical data supporting their position, but such is not the case.

Dr. H. A. Ironside states in his book *In the Heavens*: "*A dispensation is an economy or a particular order, or a condition of things prevailing in a special age, which does not necessarily prevail in another age.*"

In every dispensation, God has a plan for believers, and it is a plan that must be followed precisely. In grace, God provides the means whereby believers are able to execute that plan. And while there is a different divine plan for believers in each dispensation, there is only one way of salvation throughout all of human history, and that is personal faith in the saving work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Point 2. Dispensational Vocabulary

We will start with the Greek word *oikonomia*. While it means *management of a household*, or *administration of a business*, it also means *order, plan, or arrangement*. It was first used in the Attic Greek by Plato, where it referred to household administration, meaning authority of parents over their children, provision of parents for their children and the policy of parents for their children. It is used in the Koine Greek as referring to dispensations in several scriptures that we will note. A second word referring to dispensations is the word *aion*, which is often translated *ages*. It refers to dispensational categories of human history such as the age of Israel, the Church-age, and the Millennial age, and is used in such passages as **Romans 16:25**, **Ephesians 3:9**, and **Colossians 1:26**.

Ephesians 1:6-10, *to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. In Him, we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace, which He lavished on us. In all wisdom and insight He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention [gracious pleasure] which He purposed in Him [planned in Himself], [that in the dispensation of] the fullness of the times, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth, according to His gracious pleasure which He planned in Himself, that in the dispensation [or the oikonomia] of the fullness of times [our dispensation, the Church-age]*

The word *mystery* indicates that it was unknown to Old Testament saints, but it is not unknown to us today. The Church-age is when human history reaches its

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peak in God's gracious provision for every individual believer. So verse 10 says, [in the dispensation of] *the fullness of the times* [Church-age], *that He gathers together in one head all things in Christ* (a reference to the entire Royal Family), *both those who are already in Heaven* (believers who have died) *and those who are on earth* (those who remain) *in Him*.

Actually, this verse is talking about the Rapture. When the Church-age reaches its fullness or completion, the Lord Jesus Christ will gather together all believers, those who are in Heaven and those who remain on earth.

Ephesians 3:1-2 *For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles, if indeed you have heard [And the first class condition says, and you have!] of the stewardship [dispensation] of God's grace [Dispensation = oikonomia] which was given to me for you [your benefit]*

Paul, the greatest theologian in history, was a dispensationalist.

Ephesians 3:3 *that by revelation there was made known to me the mystery [doctrine], as I wrote before in brief,*

And in **Ephesians 3:8-9**, Paul says, *To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches [wealth] of Christ, and to bring to light what is the dispensation of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world has been hidden in Christ, who created all things.*

Colossians 1:24-25 *Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I do my share on behalf of His body, which is the Church, in filling up what is lacking [deficient] in Christ's afflictions. Of this Church [age] I was made a minister according to [on the basis of] the stewardship [dispensation] from God, which has been bestowed on me for your benefit, so that I might fully carry out the preaching of [to fulfill your deficiency in] the Word of God,*

We are all deficient until we understand the doctrine of Dispensations.

Colossians 1:26-29 *that is, the mystery which has been hidden from past ages [or aion, which in the plural means past dispensations] and generations, but has now been manifested [or revealed] to His saints. to whom [those saints] God willed to make known what are the riches [or wealth] of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory [a reference to the indwelling of the Lord Jesus Christ]. We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete [mature] in Christ Jesus [or spiritual]*

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champions]. *For this purpose also I labor, striving according to His [working or enabling] power, which mightily works within me.*

And, one other passage to make it very clear that this is a Biblical subject, and not just speculation.

1 Timothy 1:3-4 *As I urged you upon my departure for Macedonia, remain on at Ephesus so that you may instruct certain men not to teach strange doctrines, nor to pay attention to [be occupied with] myths and endless genealogies [fables, fictions], which give rise to mere speculation rather than furthering the administration [dispensation] of [which is from] God, which is by faith [associated with doctrine].*

In the King James Version, it reads, rather than Godly edifying which is in faith, instead of, the dispensation, which is from God. Godly edifying is the accusative feminine singular of *oikonomia*. (*mallon e oikonomia theou ten en pistis*) The *en* plus the instrumental of *pistis* translates as *by means of doctrine*.

Another word that describes our subject, dispensations, is the word *kairos*, which is defined as *era* or *chronological order of system*. It means a period of time characterized by a distinctive development. This noun is used for the organization of historical events in their dispensational categories in **1 Thessalonians 5:1-2**; it is used for orientation to the Church-age in **Romans 8:18, 11:5, and 13:11**. The same noun is used for orientation to the Jewish age in **Ephesians 2:11-12**; and in **Luke 21:24** it is used for the times of the Gentiles, or that period of history when only Gentile nations can function as client nations to God. The times of the Gentiles runs co-terminishly with the Church-age.

A fourth word, *chronos*, is used for time as a succession of events, and it is where we get our English word chronology. Occasionally *chronos* is used for a section of time, and therefore occasionally it refers to a dispensational connotation, as in **Romans 16:25** where *chronos* is used for all dispensations prior to the Church-age (translated as *since the world began* or *in times of ages*).

This noun has a dispensational connotation in **1 Thessalonians 5:1, 2 Timothy 1:9, Titus 1:2, 1 Peter 1:20, Jude 18**.

Point 3. An Outline of Dispensations in History

We will note six dispensations in history, which fall into three categories:

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Theocentric dispensations refer to the Old Testament, of which there are two - the age of the Gentile and the age of the Jew.

Christocentric dispensations refer to those having Our Lord Jesus Christ as the center of the dispensation. These are the Hypostatic Union and the Church-age.

Eschatological dispensations also consist of two, the Tribulation and the Millennium. Eschatology refers to last things or future things in prophecy.

In the Theocentric dispensations, we have first the age of the Gentiles, which covers the time period from the creation of mankind on planet earth up until B.C. 1441, or the Exodus. The age of the Gentiles includes the age of positive volition, which runs from the creation of Adam and the woman to their fall, the age of negative volition, which runs from the fall to the time of Abraham, and the age of the Patriarchs, such as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, all the way to Moses.

The age of the Jews began with the Exodus in B.C. 1441 and lasted until the birth of Jesus Christ in B.C. 4. During this time frame there were a number of Jewish client nations to God. The first is the Theocratic Kingdom, which lasted from the Exodus to the time of Samuel (B.C. 1441 to B.C. 1020), and held the view that God was the head of the earthly government. Old Testament Jews considered Israel to be a theocracy, Exodus 19:3-9, Deuteronomy 33:4-5. A theocracy is a government in which God rules the state through ecclesiastical authority.

Then came the time of the United Kingdom, which lasted from Saul to Rehoboam (B.C. 1020 to B.C. 926). After that, there were two client nations, the divided kingdom: the Northern Kingdom was from Jeroboam to Hosea (B.C. 926 to B.C. 721), and the Southern Kingdom was from Rehoboam to Zedekiah (B.C. 926 to B.C. 586). After that, we have the Babylonian captivity, or the 70 years during which no Jewish client nation functioned. Following those 70 years was a restored Jewish client nation, Judah, which existed from B.C. 536 to B.C. 4. Following that was the final administration of divine discipline on the nation Israel in 70 A.D., which wiped Israel off the map as a client nation to God.

In the two Theocratic dispensations of the Gentiles and the Jews, the unconditional covenants to Israel were given, and now in the Church-age Israel is waiting to be restored at the Second Advent, at which time they will again function as a client nation to God, and the unconditional covenants will be fulfilled.

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The Christocentric dispensations began with the virgin birth and the dispensation of the Hypostatic Union, which was the shortest and most important of all dispensations. It is the basis for our *so great salvation*. The second Christocentric dispensation is the Church-age, which is divided into two parts: the pre-canon period from 30 A.D. to 96 A.D., which is the time of the temporary spiritual gifts, or the era of the book of Acts; and the post-canon period which began in 96 A.D. and continues until the Rapture, which is the era of mystery doctrine or the New Testament epistles.

In the Eschatological dispensations, we first have the Tribulational period, which runs from the Rapture of the Church until the Second Coming of Christ. This period consists of seven years and is referred to as the Tribulation in the Bible. It is also called Daniel's 70th Week, and is the greatest time of power struggle in human history. It is the time of Satan's desperation, and is prophesied in the Old Testament plus in the Lord's Olivet Discourse of Matthew, Chapters 24 and 25. It is also prophesied by John in Revelation 6:1.

The second Eschatological dispensation is the Millennial reign of Our Lord Jesus Christ, which begins at the Second Advent and continues through **Revelation 20:7**, at which point Satan is loosed and human history comes to an end. It is also the time of the re-gathering and restoration of Israel, and the time of the fulfilling of Israel's unconditional covenants. The Millennium is a time of perfect environment on the earth. The onset of the Millennium is a time of judgment, referred to at the Baptism of Fire, which eliminates all Jew and Gentile unbelievers left alive after the Tribulation. After being judged, all rational creatures, whether human unbelievers or fallen angels, are cast into a lake of fire for all eternity.

Then of course we have the eternal state where all believers are in their resurrection bodies forever with God. The present universe will be completely destroyed, and a new universe will be created for the eternal state.

Be warned that covenant theology is still very strong and that most current theologians today reject dispensational truth. Emotionalism is becoming more and more common as time goes on, and dispensational truth is hardly understood, which makes this study even more important. If more pastor-teachers understood dispensations, the Church would have less controversy; but today theology is divided as never before by controversies, which have to do with the fact that many do not understand the Christian way of life and the wonderful things that God has provided in the Church-age.

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Point 4. Theocentric Dispensations

In eternity past there was a time when the Trinity was without the world. We know this because God performed certain things in preparation for mankind before the foundation of the world, **Matthew 13:35** and **25:34**, **Luke 11:50**, **John 17:24**, **Ephesians 1:3-4**, **1 Peter 1:20**, **Revelation 13:8**. Then in **Genesis 1:1** God created the heavens and the earth, but in **Genesis 1:2** something happened to the earth, *The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep,*

The word *hayah* [was] means *became without form* or *void*. Something occurred between **Genesis 1:1** and **Genesis 1:2** that made God angry. We identify this as the GAP fact, a reference to the Angelic Conflict before the creation of Adam and the woman.

In **Jeremiah 4:22-26**, Jeremiah identifies the rebellious people of his day as similar to those creatures who lived on the earth between **Genesis 1:1** and **Genesis 1:2**. **Jeremiah 4:22-26** *For My people are foolish; they know Me not. They are stupid children and have no understanding. They are shrewd to do evil, but to do good they do not know. I looked on the earth, and behold, it was formless and void; and to the heavens, and they had no light. I looked on the mountains, and behold, they were quaking, and all the hills moved to and fro. I looked, and behold, there was no man, and all the birds of the heavens had fled. I looked, and behold, the fruitful land was a wilderness, and all its cities were pulled down before The Lord, before His fierce anger.*

So far we have the original earth, the chaotic earth, and the restoration of the earth (i.e., the seven days). Then followed the Garden of Eden and the creation of mankind (the age of positive volition, an indefinite period of time), and the Eden crisis (the fall of man). From the Eden crisis, we go to Noah and the flood; from the flood to Abraham; and from Abraham to the Law or the age of Israel.

The age of positive volition began with man and woman on planet earth as trichotomous beings, each having body, soul and spirit. Adam and the woman (Ishshah) were involved in two categories of perfection:

1. They were created as perfect beings with body, soul and spirit. With the human spirit they had the ability to have fellowship with God every day, even though there was no Bible at that time. And because of their perfect souls, they also had a wonderful relationship and interaction with each other. They had what you might call a perfect spiritual and social life on a day-by-day basis. In addition to each having a perfect soul and spirit, they were also perfect

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physically. They had everything that one could imagine or wish for in life that is worthwhile, plus they were both geniuses.

2. They were placed in perfect environment, the Garden of Eden. When the Lord Jesus Christ came into the Garden to teach them, both Adam and the woman were recipients of direct revelation from God. But even in perfect environment, mankind had problems.

In the age of positive volition, there were two divine institutions, free will and marriage. Adam and the woman had free will concerning their daily decisions in reference to everything around them. They had perfect environment and total freedom. There was a tremendous difference between the age of positive volition in the Garden of Eden and other dispensations. Perfect environment does not exist in any other dispensation except during the Millennial reign of Christ, and no other dispensation has total freedom. Adam and the woman had divine institution number one, free will, and divine institution number two, marriage by God Himself. They had sex in the Garden, they had marvelous conversations, and they had total admiration for each other's beauty. However, neither perfect environment nor marriage are a source of happiness or the means to solve the problems of life, as was demonstrated during the very first dispensation.

While there was no written canon of Scripture during this era, there was positive volition for a certain indefinite period of time, and God's policy toward Adam and the woman was totally different then from what it is toward us now in the Church-age. For one thing, they were perfect and we are fallen sinners. They were in perfect environment and we are in the devil's world. They were under one negative mandate only (**Genesis 2:17**), while we are under grace along with many commands. Therefore, the dispensation of the Gentiles is divided into three parts: the age of positive volition, the age of negative volition, and the age of the Patriarchs.

The age of negative volition began with the fall of Adam and Eve and continued until Abraham. Note that there was no written canon of Scripture during this second era or age. This period of time is covered for us later on by Moses in Genesis, Chapters 4-9. Moses lived around B.C. 1440 and God revealed to him what He wanted us to know about these early dispensations. One very important principle of doctrine to remember is that in each dispensation, even though God's administration differs, the issue of salvation is always the same: belief in the saving work of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Regardless of how Jesus Christ is revealed, the way to Him is always **Acts 16:31**, *Believe in the Lord Jesus [Christ], and you will be saved.*

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The age of negative volition is the era of the first murder in history, **Genesis 4:1-15**, when Cain murdered his brother Abel, Genesis 4:8. Cain murdered his brother because Abel fulfilled the principle of worship by portraying Jesus Christ as being judged for our sins. Abel offered an animal sacrifice while Cain offered magnificent produce from the ground. Cain was a magnificent farmer, but he offered up his human works instead of a blood sacrifice like Abel did. Cain offered to the Lord the result of his own sweat and toil (remember, man as per **Genesis 3:19** was to live by the sweat of his brow). In this immediate era following the fall, we have envy, jealousy, and arrogance, which were the motives for the first murder.

This era also marks the beginning of capital punishment in history, and God has authorized capital punishment from the time of the first murder right down to this moment.

Genesis 9:5-6 *Surely I will require your lifeblood; from every beast I will require it. And from every man, from every man's brother I will require the life of man. Whoever sheds man's blood, by man his blood shall be shed; for in the image of God He made man.*

This is how crime must be controlled. This is the first statement of capital punishment.

In, **Genesis 9:5**, every animal that murdered, even domestic animals, was executed. A murderer was to be executed, not rehabilitated, not counseled, but executed. In Genesis 9:6, Divine viewpoint is now given, and this is the absolute truth, not a relative truth.

If we went into the prisons right now and executed everyone who is a murderer, and everyone who is a rapist, and if we were consistent in doing this, we would find that crime would decrease drastically! Note, however, that this statement is in no way a reference to going to war and killing the enemy. The commandment, "Thou shall not kill" is incorrectly translated; in reality it says, "You shall not ratsach [murder]." Murder is a crime; however, killing in warfare in defense of one's country is honorable. And the execution of criminals is a must. As a matter of fact, the Jews had a very low crime rate and they had no prisons.

The reason for all this is given in verse 6: for in the image of God He made man.

A change in dispensation did not change this principle. In **Matthew 26:52**, Our Lord spoke to Peter. Peter had intended to defend the Lord with his life, and

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when the temple policemen stepped forward to cease Our Lord, Peter pulled out a sword and cut off a soldier's ear, **Matthew 26:52**: Then Jesus said to him, *"Put your sword back into its place; for all those who take up the sword [unlawfully] shall perish by the sword."* It is the unlawful use of weapons, and crime, violence, terrorism, rape, murder, all of these categories draw the sword illegally; and all criminals who draw the sword must die by the sword.

The issue of capital punishment is a perfect illustration of the fact that every dispensation has certain divine laws that apply to ALL of them. Capital punishment began in **Genesis 9**; it continued in the Mosaic Law, **Exodus 21:14**; it continues in the Church-age, **Romans 13:1-8**; during the Tribulation, terrorism is dealt with by capital punishment; in **Revelation 2:26-28**, capital punishment will be practiced in the Millennium.

Note that establishment principles remain basically the same throughout the dispensations. The difference between dispensations is God's plan for believers in that particular dispensation, NOT in the laws of divine establishment.

The reason why Cain was not executed for murdering his brother Abel was because capital punishment had not been a law up to that point in time; but the mark of Cain was the mark of violence, and others avoided him because of this mark. Following this incident, any murder meant execution.

The first murder was due to a religious dispute - Cain's works and merits against Abel's bloody sacrifice, or faith toward the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Abel claimed that a bloody sacrifice was necessary. Cain claimed that an offering of works taken from the soil (which God had cursed) was sufficient. (This is an illustration of grace vs. legalism or works.) Cain became angry, but he did not kill Abel immediately that day. The Lord Jesus Christ even tried to reason with Cain. However, one day while working in the field, Cain brought the subject up again. He became so angry and uncontrollable that he killed his brother; and the Bible tells us that Satan was not only the instigator of Abel's murder, but also the author of Cain's religion. Religion started in the Garden of Eden and was perpetuated by Satan through Cain, **1 John 3:12, Jude 11**. So Cain fled, and was the first one to build a city with all its filth and sin.

Among the descendants of Cain were Jubal, the inventor of musical instruments, and Tubal-Cain, an instructor of workers in brass and iron. Men in those days used their brains to improve and build up a godless civilization, and they didn't live for 70 years, they lived for hundreds of years, some for nearly 1,000 years! Their accumulation of knowledge, experience, and skill advanced

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the arts and sciences, and resulted in the invention and manufacture of all the appliances of a luxurious civilization. The building of such a ship as that constructed by Noah is an illustration. Other illustrations are the Tower of Babel, and the Great Pyramids, both of which involved in their construction a tremendous knowledge of mathematics and astronomy.

Cain and Abel did not have a Bible, so they received personal revelation from the Lord. We tend to observe those days as being primitive, but in reality they were not. Cain and Abel had personal conversation with the Lord, while Church-age believers converse with the Lord through the written word. They could have more than one wife, while we cannot. They could have incest; we cannot. So, you can see some of the differences in the policy for their dispensation and ours. Abel was to offer up a bloody sacrifice; we do not. Again is the principle that in each dispensation God has a specific plan or a system for the believer to obey and be tested in.

During the age of negative volition under the dispensation of the Gentiles, we have two great believers whose names are recorded in **Hebrews 11:5** and **11:7**. One was Enoch, and the other was Noah. Enoch never died physically; he was simply taken from the earth, living for 800 years and then taken up to Heaven by God before the flood came. We should note that Cain had a son called Enoch in **Genesis 4:17-18**, but he is not the Enoch of **Hebrews 11**. The Enoch of **Hebrews 11** was the son of Jared and father of Methuselah, 7th in descent from Adam in the line of Seth. He is known as the one who walked with God, which describes his dedication and devotion to doctrine (**Genesis 5:22-24**).

Noah was a great believer as well. And, why was Noah great? Noah believed God when God said He was going to visit the earth with a great judgment! First, Noah built a ship that he constructed on dry land where he received a lot of ridicule, and he built the ship according to the exact measurements given by God. Noah was precise and accurate with his dedication to God. He warned people that water was going to fall from the sky, and as far as we know, nothing like that had ever happened before.

Noah did what Adam failed to do. Noah had three sons and a marvelous wife, and he maintained authority over his family, and because of that he had spiritual influence over them as well. In fact, his was the only family left in the world that had not been corrupted by the angelic infiltration. The only line between Adam and Noah that remained true humanity was Noah's family. The Lord Jesus Christ had to come into the world as true humanity; He could not come in as half angel and half man. And so, when eight people boarded that ship, they were the last eight true human beings on the face of the earth,

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preserving the line of humanity through which Jesus Christ would eventually come into the world.

During the time of Noah, man throughout the world spoke one language and there was one race. This illustrates the fact that one language, one race, and one skin color (i.e. unity) cannot solve man's problems.

And so we have what is called the Antediluvian dispensation or Antediluvian age, the word antediluvian meaning "before the flood". The outcome of this brilliant, but Godless, civilization is described in **Genesis 6**. In the midst of this Godless civilization, a startling event occurred: Beni-ha-Elohim came on the scene, **Genesis 6:2**.

2 Peter 2:4-5 *For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into Hades and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment; and did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a preacher of righteousness, with seven others, when He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly;*

Jude v. 6 *And angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day,*

Peter tells us in **2 Peter 2:5** that the time of the sin was just before the flood, referring to the same sin that caused the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. In **Genesis 19:5**, the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah demanded that Lot surrender to them the two male angels that he had received into his home. They wanted to "know them" as the King James Bible states it.

The outcome of the pre-flood invasion of the earth by the fallen angels is what brought on the flood, and the earth was changed, thus wiping out the Garden of Eden and bringing an end to the Antediluvian age.

In that dispensation, mankind was treated as a whole, there were no nations, and there was no Mosaic Law. Conscience was the standard of human conduct. It was the standard by which men accused or excused themselves. Even though **Romans 3:20** says, by the law is the knowledge of sin, mankind was without excuse in the Antediluvian age. God was very near to mankind in those days, and His voice was heard in rebuke, as to Cain in **Genesis 4:14**; heard in communion with Enoch, **Genesis 5:22-24**; heard in counsel as with Noah, **Genesis 6:3**. We must distinguish that dispensation as being one without the Law and the following dispensation to come as the one under the Law. It is

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important to note that while there was no written law during the dispensation before the flood, there was an unwritten law, written in the hearts of men.

Romans 2:12 *For all who have sinned without the Law will also perish without the Law, and all who have sinned under the Law will be judged by the Law.*

Therefore, the characteristics of the Antediluvian age are:

1. First an advance in fullness and clearness of revelation;
2. Then a gradual spiritual descending;
3. Followed by a conformity to the world;
4. Then a gigantic half angel, half man civilization;
5. Followed by apostasy and finally a catastrophe.

(These, we shall find, with the exception of #4, are the characteristics of every dispensation that follows.)

Next is the Post-Diluvian age, which existed from the flood until Abraham. If ever the human race had an opportunity to work out the theory of human government, it was right after the flood. Noah was 600 years old and full of wisdom and experience. All of his family had reached adulthood, and behind them was the flood with all its warnings. Noah also reestablished the true principle of worship by erecting an altar and sacrificing upon it. But this new age was a failure just as the previous ones were.

God commanded Noah and his sons to be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth. But instead of scattering, they sought to build a capital city and make themselves a name by building a tower to Heaven, known as the Tower of Babel. This was disobedience, so God came down and confused their speech and scattered them Himself throughout the earth, **Genesis 11:1-9**; thus the origin of different languages on the earth. (Note: When the Church-age began in **Acts 2:4**, the miracle was reversed through the gift of tongues. In Genesis Chapter 11 mankind tried to visit Heaven, but in Acts Chapter 2, Heaven visited mankind!)

After the flood one of Noah's sons, Ham, got involved with what appears to be a homosexual situation and a curse was put upon him. Shem became the one through whom the Lord Jesus Christ was born. Shem's line eventually became Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Japheth was Noah's third son and all three sons had wives. These three sons were scattered and each of us has descended from one of their families.

The Post-Diluvian age lasted 427 years in all and ended in failure.

Approximately B.C. 4700 the Tower of Babel was destroyed and mankind

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became multi-lingual. After Babel the descendants of Noah and his sons became idolaters; even Abraham's father was an idolater. God decided to single out one family and start fresh, and so the third era in the dispensation of the Gentiles began, which is the age of the Patriarchs (B.C. 2050 to B.C. 1441). There was no written canon of Scripture during the age of the Patriarchs, although this period is covered in the Bible from Genesis Chapter 12 through Exodus Chapter 12.

Abram was a Gentile and remained so for the first 99 years of his life. When he accepted circumcision, this was a sign that he believed that God would give him the sexual ability to reproduce a son in his advanced age. At his circumcision, Abram was changed to Abraham, and he became the first Jew and the father of the Jewish race. The line of descent is from Abraham and not his brother Nahor, Isaac and not his brother Ishmael, Jacob and not his brother Esau. The sons of Jacob were the basis for the Jewish race: Reuben, the firstborn, who lost the right to reproduce through rape; Judah, who became the ruling tribe; Levi, who became the priestly tribe; and Joseph, the double portion tribe (there are really 13, not 12 tribes, Ephraim and Manasseh are double portion tribes). And the others who became tribes are Simeon, Zebulun, Issachar, Dan, Gad, Ashur, Naphtali and Benjamin, who are all sons of Jacob. The age of the Patriarchs ended with the Jews being enslaved in Egypt.

Four times in the book of Genesis, God's plans for the human race were frustrated by negative volition and satanic influence: (1) the fall of man in Eden; (2) fallen angel infiltration and the necessity of the flood; (3) the dispersion of Babel; and (4) the captivity in Egypt. In fact, the last four words in the book of Genesis seem to identify man's destiny as he rebelled against God: a coffin in Egypt.

So, the age of the Patriarchs ended with the Egyptians in control and the Jews in slavery. The age of the Patriarchs is the transition into the age of the Jews, and the transition is made by one of the greatest men in the Old Testament, Moses, a descendant from the tribe of Levi. There was never a man quite like Moses in all of the Old Testament; he is the greatest born again genius of the Old Testament. Moses was an extremely powerful man, his strength was fantastic, and he was extremely powerful, well built, and handsome. He was a genius in the field of music, in the field of writing, and in engineering (having built two of the great treasure cities in Egypt). He was a military genius, an administrative genius, and above all that he had doctrine, common sense, good manners and wisdom. There was no unbalance of any kind in his life. He was one of the reasons why Egypt became great.

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Moses was born into slavery, but spent 40 years living in the palace as an Egyptian prince. Moses was just a baby when the order to execute all Jewish children under a certain age was given. His parents refused to comply with such an evil order, and so his mother, by an act of great faith, put Moses in a little basket that floated and she sealed it up and sent it down the Nile River. It just so happened (by the grace of God, it was no accident) that the basket ended up where the daughter of the Pharaoh was bathing, and she heard the cry of the baby and saw the basket floating ... or if you will, the ark. She opened the basket and saw the beautiful baby and she adopted him as her own. And she called him Moses because in the Hebrew language, Mosheh means drawn from the water.

For 39 years Moses grew up in the palace as a great man. He was going to marry Pharaoh's daughter and be the next Pharaoh of Egypt, but two things happened: Moses discovered his origin (that of a Jew), **Acts 16:31**, and he grew spiritually. He departed from Egypt and refused to accept the crown, giving up the glory of being Pharaoh of Egypt for the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. And, he was not afraid of Pharaoh or his wrath.

Moses wanted to liberate the Jews from Egyptian slavery, but he mistakenly tried to do it in the energy of the flesh and that is when he killed one of the taskmasters or Egyptian slave drivers. The Jews had rejected him at that time, and although he would become one of the greatest leaders who ever lived, his own people rejected him.

Moses fled into the desert and there he spent 40 years. Following that time was his experience with the burning bush, and eventually he led the Jews to freedom from slavery in Egypt. Then the Exodus began, and that story is a marvelous one, involving one of the greatest men who ever lived. The patience of Moses, the courage, the mental attitude, his marvelous spiritual life and his humility are fantastic, **Numbers 12:3**. He was the meekest man on all the earth.

Moses is the human author of the first five books of the Bible, inspired by God the Holy Spirit.

When Moses and the Jews reached the Promised Land, they sent twelve spies to scope it out, one from every tribe in Israel. Out of the twelve that came back, only two, Caleb and Joshua, came back with a positive report. Caleb and Joshua believed that the Jews could overcome the giants inhabiting the Promised Land, but the rest of the people cried and murmured all night in fear and unbelief. Moses instructed the Jews that until everyone in that current

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generation over 20 years old died, no one would enter the Promised Land. For 40 years, they wandered around in the desert, until all of the adults over 20 years old were dead. Unfortunately, because this great man misrepresented God by striking the rock instead of speaking to the rock, he was permitted to see the land from the top of a mountain but he was not permitted to go into the land, due to his sin of misrepresenting God and not following God's directions precisely. Think of it, the greatest believer of the Old Testament could not go into the Promised Land!

One of the things that God gave to Moses and the Jews is what we call the Mosaic Law. In the Hebrew it is called the Torah. The Torah is much larger than the Ten Commandments, though the Ten Commandments were given first because no nation is a client nation to God without freedom. In order to have a functioning client nation there must be freedom as God has defined it.

The time frame for the dispensation of the Jews is from B.C. 1441 to B.C. 4, and it is covered in the Old Testament from Exodus Chapter 13 to Malachi Chapter 4. This is the dispensation of the Old Testament canon, and the election of Israel as a client nation to God under the ritual plan of God. (Note that the ritual plan of God for the Jews has nothing to do with the royal plan of God for the Church-age believer.)

There were three categories of covenants that characterized the dispensation of Israel. The first category is the Mosaic Law; the second category consists of the unconditional and unfulfilled covenants (Abrahamic, Palestinian, Davidic, and New); and the third category consists of the unconditional covenants that will be fulfilled at the Second Coming.

As a client nation to God, Israel was the missionary agency. The establishment of a client nation to God developed three principles that are still true today and are the reason why the United States became a client nation to God. First of all, there must be freedom, and freedom must exist under the laws of divine establishment. It does not make a difference what kind of government there is; a king or counsel may rule it, or a republican form of government may rule it. The form of government is not the issue - freedom is the issue. Secondly, under freedom there must be the right for the expression and communication of the Gospel. In other words, there must always be evangelism. Third, there must be a way of life for believers to mature spiritually, and from mature believers there should be missionaries sent out to other nations.

The Mosaic Law was divided into three parts. First was Codex #1, consisting of the Freedom Code or Decalogue and including the Ten Commandments,

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which define freedom in terms of morality without self-righteousness or arrogance. Arrogant morality becomes destructive toward freedom and privacy, but the Ten Commandments defined freedom in terms of morality, privacy, property, authority and the right to live. Everyone has the right to live, unless of course he makes wrong decisions related to criminality, resulting in capital punishment. And morality is never truly morality without recognizing the privacy of other people. There is a great deal of self-righteousness in moral degeneracy of today. Many self-righteous people are very moral and very arrogant, entering into degeneracy by judging others and intruding on their privacy. Freedom means the right to own property, land, clothes, automobiles, and the like, along with the right to dispose of that property as one sees fit, either foolishly or wisely.

The Ten Commandments are the first definitions of freedom in terms of relationship to God, and they even teach the principle of separation between church and state. However, Israel was also taught that obligations to God included patriotism and responsibility to the state. This was one of the problems brought out in Malachi in that the Jews were not paying their taxes in spite of being commanded to bring all their tithes to the treasury (note: NOT to the church). Their tithes, of course, refer to the required 10% income tax.

The purpose of the Ten Commandments in the Decalogue was to define freedom. We cannot have freedom without having a true relationship with God, and therefore the commandment, Thou shall have no other Gods before Me. We have no right to intrude upon the privacy of someone else, thus the commandment, Thou shall not commit adultery. A man's wife belongs to that man and not to someone else. And, of course there were commandments referring to property, Thou shall not steal, and the right to live, Thou shall not murder. Most importantly, the Law could not function without evidence, and therefore the commandment, Thou shall not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

The second part of the Mosaic Law, Codex #2, included the ordinances or the Spiritual Code of the Mosaic Law. It included a complete Christology and Soteriology, which was communicated in prophetic form, both through ritual and verbal messages. It also included the structure of the tabernacle. Every part of the tabernacle had definite doctrinal meaning. The holy days all had definite doctrinal meaning, and each holy day spoke of certain functions of Israel toward the Lord Jesus Christ. The Levitical priesthood and Levitical offerings were both found in the ordinances as well.

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The third part of the Mosaic Law, Codex #3, was called the Judgments or the Establishment Code. It was for both believer and unbeliever alike within the client nation. The Establishment Code made no distinction between believer and unbeliever and it dealt with criminal activity, mainly capital punishment, to be practiced whether the criminal was a believer or unbeliever. Courtroom activity was also defined.

By now you can see that Codex #1 was for both believers and unbelievers, Codex #2 was for believer only, and Codex #3 was for both believer and unbeliever. In the Judgments, or Codex #3, divine institutions were addressed, i.e. volition, marriage, family, and nationalism. Codex #2 taught the strength of the family unit for stability in the nation, with the principle, 'as goes the family, so goes the instability of society'. The Bible teaches that the stabilizer of a nation is the family, which is why the parents were to train and educate the children. In addition, Codex #3 taught nationalism, NOT internationalism. Internationalism is unacceptable because in order for it to succeed it calls for Jesus Christ to rule the world, and that will not happen until the Second Advent! Codex #3, the Judgments, included what is referred to in the Bible as tithing, which was for both believers and unbelievers of Israel, **Deuteronomy 14:22-29**. Tithing was a system of taxation for all; in addition there existed an offering for believers only, **Deuteronomy 18:1-5**. So believers had a dual responsibility, paying their taxes (tithing) and giving offerings in the spiritual realm. Certain principles are emphasized in the Judgments, such as maintaining freedom by having a strong military, and through the military being victorious on the battlefield. Therefore, there was a strong military policy in Israel, and the Book of Numbers (meaning 'troops') deals primarily with Israel's military policy.

The real issue here is that the Mosaic Law is part of the Word of God, and therefore must be approached as absolute truth because of the principle referred to as the inerrancy of the Scripture.

The Mosaic Law also addressed diet and sanitation, so the Jews were always hundreds of years ahead of the rest of the world in these things. The Mosaic Law includes all the laws of quarantine. Free enterprise and profit motivation are also addressed; and the concepts of socialism and communism are totally rejected, while a form of charity did exist. Civil disobedience, violence, and revolution are totally rejected in the Mosaic Law.

The Mosaic Law was given to Israel only, **Exodus 19:3, Leviticus 26:46, Romans 3:19** and **9:4**. The Mosaic Law was never given to the Gentiles, **Deuteronomy 4:8**; nor to the Church, **Acts 15:5-24, Romans 6:14, Galatians**

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2:19. The Mosaic Law is NOT specifically a part of the Christian way of life, but it IS a part of the way of life for any establishment nation, and that is the distinction that covenant theologians fail to make. Sabbath observance and tithing are NOT part of the Christian way of life. You are not required to give your money to the church on a percentage basis, or to give anything at all for that matter. **Matthew 23:23** and **Matthew 5:23-24** teach that tithing is not for believers.

The Mosaic Law with its five principles cannot justify **Romans 3:20-28** or **Galatians 2:16**. Keeping the Law cannot save, **Galatians 3:10**. The Mosaic Law cannot provide spirituality, **Galatians 3:2**. It cannot give life, **Galatians 3:21**. The Mosaic Law cannot solve the problems of the old sin nature, **Romans 8:2-4**. Therefore, the Mosaic Law is limited in the spiritual sense. In fact, it is not a spiritual code per say, except for Codex #2, in the ordinances that are primarily found in the book of Leviticus. Furthermore the Lord Jesus Christ, coming as the Messiah, the God-man, perfect deity and perfect humanity, fulfilled the law during the dispensation of the Hypostatic Union, **Matthew 5:17, Romans 10:4, Romans 3:20-28**.

In the Old Testament, the written record of the dispensation of Israel is therefore divided into three parts:

1. The Torah, which includes the first five books of the Old Testament. The human writer under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit was Moses, who had both the gift and office of prophet.
2. The Nabiim, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit by human authors who had the office of prophet. These included Joshua and Samuel, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, plus the later prophets, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habbakuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi.
3. The Kethubim, which includes 'the writings'. This part was written by human authors who had the gift of prophecy only. It includes the poetry and wisdom of Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Song of Solomon, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes and Esther. It is called the Megalith [translated 'rolls']. Lastly, we have the historical section that includes the books of Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Chronicles.

So the Old Testament has three categories, and what does it add up to in the canon of Scripture? It adds up to God's will for the Jews, NOT for the Church! The Law began its reign at Mount Sinai, **Deuteronomy 5:1-3**, and the

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following Scriptures disclose the fact that the Law was never given to anyone other than Israel.

Deuteronomy 5:1 *Then Moses summoned all Israel and said to them: "Hear, O Israel, the statutes and the ordinances which I am speaking today in your hearing, that you may learn them and observe them carefully."*

Romans 2:14 *For when Gentiles who do not have the Law do instinctively the things of the Law, these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves,*

Romans 9:4, *who are Israelites, to whom belongs the adoption as sons, and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the Law and the temple service and the promises.*

Acts 18:14-15 *But when Paul was about to open his mouth, Gallio said to the Jews, "If it were a matter of wrong or of vicious crime, O Jews, it would be reasonable for me to put up with you; but if there are questions about words and names and your own Law, look after it yourselves; I am unwilling to be a judge of these matters."*

Acts 23:29 *and I found him to be accused over questions about their Law, but under no accusation deserving death or imprisonment.*

Acts 25:8 *while Paul said in his own defense, "I have committed no offense either against the Law of the Jews or against the temple or against Caesar."*

John 15:25 *But they have done this to fulfill the Word that is written in their Law, "They hated me without a cause."*

1 Corinthians 9:20 *To the Jews I [Paul] became as a Jew, so that I might win Jews; to those who are under the Law, as under the Law though not being myself under the Law, so that I might win those who are under the Law;*

Galatians 2:11-16 *But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. For prior to the coming of certain men from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he began to withdraw and hold himself aloof, fearing the party of the circumcision. The rest of the Jews joined him in hypocrisy, with the result that even Barnabas was carried away by their hypocrisy. But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the Gospel, I said to Cephas in the presence of all, "If you, being a Jew, live like the Gentiles and not like the Jews, how is it that you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews? We are Jews by nature and not*

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sinners from among the Gentiles; nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified.

Galatians 3:1-3 *You foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified? This is the only thing I want to find out from you: did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?*

Galatians 3:10-14 *For as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse; for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, to perform them." Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident; for, "The Righteous man shall live by faith." However, the Law is not of faith; on the contrary, "He who practices them shall live by them." Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us -- for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree" --in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we would receive the promise of the Spirit through faith."*

Galatians 3:19-25 *Why the Law then? It was added because of transgressions, having been ordained through angels by the agency of a mediator, until the seed would come to whom the promise had been made. Now a mediator is not for one party only; whereas God is only one. Is the Law then contrary to the promises of God? May it never be! For if a law had been given which was able to impart life, then righteousness would indeed have been based on law. But the Scripture has shut up everyone under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the Law, being shut up to the faith, which was later to be revealed. Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.*

Galatians 4:7-11 *Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God. However at that time, when you did not know God, you were slaves to those, which by nature are no gods. But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how is it that you turn back again to the weak and worthless elemental things, to which you desire to be enslaved all over again? You observe days and months and seasons and years. I fear for you, that perhaps I have labored over you in vain.*

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Galatians 4:21-31 *Tell me, you who want to be under law, do you not listen to the Law? For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the bondwoman and one by the freewoman. But the son by the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and the son by the free woman through the promise. This is allegorically speaking, for these women are two covenants: one proceeding from Mount Sinai bearing children who are to be slaves; she is Hagar. Now this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children. But the Jerusalem above is free; she is our mother. For it is written, "Rejoice, barren woman who does not bear; break forth and shout, you who are not in labor; for more numerous are the children of the desolate than of the one who has a husband." And you brethren, like Isaac, are children of promise. But as at that time he who was born according to the flesh persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, so it is now also. But what does the Scripture say? "Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be an heir with the son of the free woman." So then, brethren, we are not children of a bondwoman, but of the free woman.*

Galatians 5:1-4 *It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery. Behold I, Paul, say to you that if you receive circumcision, Christ will be of no benefit to you. And I testify again to every man who receives circumcision that he is under obligation to keep the whole Law. You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.*

Galatians 5:7-9 *You were running well; who hindered you from obeying the truth? This persuasion did not come from Him who calls you. A little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough.*

As we conclude the dispensation of Israel and the Law, we need to note some very vital principles. First, the Scriptures teach that the Law given to and by Moses was a covenant of works and that grace and truth came by way of Jesus Christ, **John 1:17, Galatians 3:19**.

Now what was the purpose of the Law?

Galatians 3:19 *Why the Law then? It was added because of transgressions, having been ordained through angels by the agency of a mediator, until the seed would come to whom the promise had been made.*

We need to understand: So then, the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good, **Romans 7:12**. However, the giving of the Law

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to Israel did not result in an obedient people, but it rather provided their utter sinfulness and helplessness. The Law became condemnation to everyone who failed to keep it, which of course is everyone except the Lord Jesus Christ. And so, in **Romans 7:7**, Paul begins to explain the whole purpose and meaning of the dispensation of the Law.

Romans 7:7 *What shall we say then [or what shall we conclude]? Is the Law sin? May it never be! On the contrary, I would not have come to know sin except through the Law; [In other words, the Law revealed Paul's sinful nature.]; for I would not have known about coveting if the Law had not said, "You shall not covet."*

Romans 7:8 *But sin, taking opportunity through the commandment, [or taking advantage of the Law to arouse in Paul feelings of guilt, which separates the believer from God]. But sin, taking opportunity through the commandment, produced in me coveting of every kind [all manner of evil desire]; (Or, as the Montgomery translation puts it, sin had gained a vantage ground by means of the commandment, and it stirred up within me all manner of lust.)*

James 1:15 *Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death.*

The Law was used by sin to condemn, NOT to give righteousness. Sin actually found its rallying point in the Law and it stirred up the evil desires of the old sin nature, for apart from the Law, sin is dead, **Romans 7:8**. Where there was no consciousness of the Law, sin did not appear to be alive even though it was.

Romans 7:9 *I was once alive apart from the Law; but when the commandment came, sin became alive and I died;*

We have all felt that we were alive and having fun when we didn't know the truth or have knowledge of God's perfect standards. We did not have the Law and we were, or so we thought, alive. But when the commandment came (the Law, the Rules, the Perfect Standards), sin was revived and we died. Sin awoke, rose up, came alive; then we realized it was there all along. Many of you are much more conscious of sin than ever before. Why?? It is because you are now conscious of God's laws and His perfect standards. Paul realized that he had broken the Law and was a sinner doomed to die.

Romans 7:10 *and this commandment, which was to result in life, proved to result in death for me;*

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In other words, mankind thought it could follow God's perfect standards. However, the life that the Law can give comes not from following it, but from its condemning us so much that it forces us to depend upon the Lord Jesus Christ because we cannot possibly live up to God's perfect standards.

Romans 7:11 *for sin, taking an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me.*

Sin used the Law to deceive the individual. It took the Law, which is just, holy and good, then pointed to it, condemning the individual with guilt. Sin deceived and used the Law to condemn.

Romans 7:12 *So, then, the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.*

Romans 7:13 *Therefore did that which is good become a cause of death for me?*

Did that which is good cause death in me? Did the Law bring death to me? Was there something evil in the Law?

Romans 7:13(a) *May it never be! Rather it was sin, in order that it might be shown to be sin by affecting my death through that which is good, so that through the commandment sin would become utterly sinful.*

In other words, the death that came because of the Law was in reality because of the old sin nature in us. The Law brought out the presence of sin. Sin killed the individual and thereby exposed his true character. It used a good thing, the Law, to bring out the individual's spiritual death. The purpose of the Law was to reveal the wickedness and sinfulness of man, NOT to save him!! The Law cannot justify, it cannot save, it cannot produce life, and it is not spirituality. It can only condemn.

So, **Romans 7:13** actually says that through the Law sin became more obvious than ever.

Romans 7:14 *For we know that the Law is spiritual, but I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin.*

The law is spiritual but we are creatures of the flesh; we are carnal and slaves to sin, hence totally depraved. And being totally depraved we are in need of supernatural help, the grace of God, without which there is no hope.

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Romans 7:15 *For what I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I would like to do, but I am doing the very thing I hate.*

I do not understand my own actions. I don't even approve of what I do. What I want to do, or desire to do, I do not do.

Romans 7:15 *but I am doing the very thing I hate.*

I am so far from practicing what I desire to do that I end up hating myself, throwing in the towel, quitting. Or, in some cases what I despise in others, I myself do!

Romans 7:16-17 *But if I do the very thing I do not want to do, I agree with the Law, confessing that the Law is good. So now, being that the action is no longer my own, but sin which dwells in me.*

He agrees that the Law is right, **Romans 7:17**. However, the action does not really belong to the individual but to his old sin nature. This is not an excuse for sin, but rather an understanding of our position in Christ.

Romans 7:18 *For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not.*

This is only normal due to the fact that there is nothing good in our earthly nature. As far as our old sin nature is concerned, we are rotten through and through. Paul is saying, "I will to do what is right, I want to follow the Law but I cannot, I don't have the power. No matter which way I turn, I can't make myself do right. I want to, but I can't."

Romans 7:19 *For the good that I want, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not want.*

"I keep on doing wrong things and thereby breaking the Law. And knowing that the Law is just, holy and good, I am therefore condemned."

Romans 7:20 *But if I am doing the very thing I do not want, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me.*

"If my own actions are against my will, then I must realize that either I'm sick or I am no longer the one doing it. It is not the new nature in me, but the old corrupt nature that has surfaced. It is no longer I myself who is doing it, but sin

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(the old sin nature) that dwells within me. It is the sin nature that is possessing me and does so by pointing to the Law to condemn me."

Romans 7:21 *I find then the principle [of doctrine], that evil is present in me, the one who wants to do good.*

When I desire to do good, I am influenced by evil usually guilt, condemnation, fear, legalism or religion. When I want to do right I am condemned by my wrong actions. I desire to do good and please God, yet I am influenced by evil. Why? Because I have no power to do what is right according to God's perfect standards!

Romans 7:22 *For I joyfully concur with [delight in] the Law of God in the inner man,*

In my heart I love doctrine, I love the Law of God, and I realize God's laws are perfect, holy, righteous and just. As far as my new nature is concerned, I love to do God's will. My inner nature, or new nature, agrees with the Divine Law.

Romans 7:23 *but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of [bringing me into captivity to] the law of sin, which is in my members.*

There is another principle within my lower human nature, the old sin nature that wages war against the law of my mind and the doctrine in my soul. It wages war with God's Word and God's doctrines within me. It makes me a prisoner, it puts me in bondage, and it even uses God's Law to do it! It brings me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members, or, to the power of sin that is operating in my lower (human biological) nature.

Romans 7:24 *Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death?*

A pitiful creature, a pathetic creature. Who will set me free from the body of this death? WHO -- NOT WHAT. Who shall rescue me from this doomed old sin nature? Who can save me? Who can set me free?

Romans 7:25 *Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ Our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the Law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin.*

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God has delivered us from sin and from the Mosaic Law through Jesus Christ Our Lord. Thank God it is done through Jesus Christ! Paul is saying, "With my soul and my new nature I serve and love the doctrines from God, but in my lower nature, I am under slavery to sin. I am a slave to the law of sin when I live in the flesh, or I am a slave to the Law of God when I live in the Spirit."

In the original Greek there is no chapter break, so continuing, **Romans 8:1-4** says, Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

The Law, therefore, was effective only in that it drove the sinner to Christ. The Law was a schoolmaster or child trainer to bring mankind to the Savior. It became the means of turning people to God for His mercy rather than the means of trying to please Him.

Dr. Lewis Sperry Chaefer from his book on grace quotes (**Exodus 19:3-8**):

"And Moses went up unto God, and the Lord called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel; Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all peoples: for all the earth is Mine: and ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words, which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel. And Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before their faces all these words, which the Lord commanded him. And all the people answered together, and said, All that the Lord has spoken we will do. And Moses returned the words of the people unto the Lord, **Exodus 19:3-8**.

While it is certain that Jehovah knew the choice the people would make, it is equally certain that their choice was in no way required by Him. His description of the relation they had sustained to Him until that moment is most tender and pleading: 'Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto Myself.' Such is the character of pure grace. By it the sinner is carried on eagles' wings and brought to God. It is all of God. Until that hour they had been sustained in the faithfulness of

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Jehovah and without the slightest reference to their wickedness; but His plan and purpose for them had remained unchanged. He had dealt with them according to the unconditional covenant of grace made with Abraham. The marvelous blessedness of that grace relationship would have appealed to them as the priceless riches of then failing mercy of God, which it was. The surrender of the blessings of grace should not have been allowed by these people under any condition whatsoever. Had they said at the hearing of the impossible law, 'None of these things can we do. We crave only to remain in that boundless mercy of God, who has loved us, and sought us, and saved us from all our enemies, and who will bring us to Himself,' it is evident that such an appeal would have reached the very heart of God. And the surpassing glory of His grace would have been extended to them without bounds; for grace above all else is the delight of the heart of God. In place of the eagles' wings by which they were carried unto God, they confidently chose a covenant of works when they said: 'All that the Lord has spoken we will do.' They were called upon to face a concrete choice between the mercy of God, which had followed them, and a new and hopeless covenant of works. They fell from grace. The experience of the nation is true of every individual who falls from grace at the present time. Every blessing from God that has ever been experienced came only from the loving mercy of God; yet with that same blasting self-trust, people are now turning to a dependence upon their works. It is far more reasonable and honoring to God to fall helpless into His everlasting arms, and to acknowledge that we rely on His grace alone!

In the dispensation of the Gentiles, God allowed man to govern himself, and as we have seen, mankind failed. In the dispensation of Israel, God proposed to organize a commonwealth with laws and regulations as well as a visible system of worship with a place for that worship to be performed. The government was to be theocratic. This means it was God's intention to rule a nation on earth through a representative that He would appoint for Himself. The first person chosen was Moses. When Moses died, Joshua succeeded him. After Joshua's death, the children of Israel had no ruler and so they cried unto the Lord and He sent the Judges, who governed them for about 450 years, Acts 13:20. This is what the book of Judges is all about. Then the children of Israel wanted to be like other nations, so they provoked God to give them a king. The Lord instructed them to choose one, so they chose a big tall man who was head and shoulders above them all by the name of Saul. Saul reigned for 40 years. He was followed by David, who was succeeded by his son Solomon, each of whom also reigned 40 years. At the death of Solomon in B.C. 975, the Jewish kingdom became divided. Solomon's son Rehoboam received two tribes, spoken of as Judah, and Jeroboam, a usurper, received the tribes called Israel.

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Israel lasted for 254 years longer and was carried captive to Assyria in B.C. 721. One hundred fifteen years later Judah went into exile to Babylon. In B.C. 536, after seventy years of captivity, the Jews returned from Babylon, and from B.C. 166 to B.C. 40, they strove under the Asmoneans to regain supremacy over Palestine. However, in B.C. 40 Herod the great was made king by the Romans and in 70 A.D. Jerusalem was destroyed. Titus destroyed Jerusalem and drove the Jews out of Palestine.

During this entire time there were actually five client nations to God under the dispensation of Israel: the Theocratic Kingdom, the United Kingdom, the Kingdom of Judah, the divided Kingdom of Ephraim, and the Southern Kingdom.

The dispensation of Israel began in B.C. 1440 and continued until B.C. 4, which was the time of the virgin birth of Christ. In fact, during the years that Jesus Christ lived on earth, the Jews continued to exist as a nation but they were in bondage. Judah was under the dominion of the Romans.

During the dispensation of Israel there were four covenants mentioned in the Word of God. These covenants are part of the Theocentric dispensations, and they do not belong to the Church, although covenant theologians will have you believe so! Those four covenants are the Abrahamic Covenant, the Palestinian Covenant, the Davidic Covenant and the New Covenant.

The Abrahamic Covenant

The eternal aspects of the Abrahamic Covenant guarantee Israel a permanent national existence, a perpetual title to the land of promise, and material and spiritual blessings through Christ. This covenant also guarantees Gentile nations a share in these blessings. The covenant is mentioned partially in **Genesis 12:1-3, 13:14-18, and 17:1-8.**

The Abrahamic Covenant included:

1. The promise of a national land, **Genesis 12:1, 13:14-15, 13:17.**
2. The promise of both national and universal redemption, **Genesis 12:3 and 22:18, Galatians 3:16.**

The remainder of the covenant is summed up in **Genesis 12** through **Genesis 22.**

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3. That a great nation should come from him (Abraham), **Genesis 12:2**.
4. That Abraham's name shall be great, **Genesis 12:2**.
5. Abraham should be a blessing so great, that in him shall all families of the earth be blessed, **Genesis 12:3**.
6. To him personally and to his seed (not the Church, but the Jews) should be given Palestine forever to inherit, **Genesis 13:14-17**.
7. The multitude of his seed should be as the dust of the earth, **Genesis 13:16**.
8. That whosoever blessed him (Abraham) should be blessed and whosoever cursed him should be cursed, **Genesis 12:3**.
9. He should be the father of many nations, **Genesis 17:4**.
10. Kings shall proceed from him, **Genesis 17:5**.
11. The covenant shall be perpetual and everlasting, **Genesis 17:7**.
12. The land of Canaan shall be an everlasting possession, **Genesis 17:8**.

In analyzing these particulars we would see that certain individual promises were given to Abraham, certain national promises were given to Israel, and certain promises were given to nations that Abraham would become associated with. The language of the Abrahamic covenant is plain and to the point. The original covenant is given in **Genesis 12:1-3**. Some of the promises are given to Abraham personally, some to Abraham's seed, and some to the Gentiles. For instance, the promise to Abraham himself is that he would be the father of a great nation, **Genesis 12:2**, including kings and nations other than the seed itself, **Genesis 17:6**. God promises His personal blessing on Abraham, in that his name shall be great and he himself shall be a blessing. Then the promise of Abraham's seed, that the nation itself should be great, **Genesis 12:2**, and innumerable, **Genesis 13:16, 15:5**. The nation is promised possession of the land and the covenant is called everlasting, **Genesis 17:7**, and the possession of the land is defined as an everlasting possession, **Genesis 17:8**. The promise to the Gentiles is that all families of the earth are promised blessing in association with Abraham, **Genesis 12:3**. This blessing could be spiritual, physical and even both.

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So, the Abrahamic Covenant has three different areas in which promises were clearly made - to Abraham himself, to his seed, and to the Gentiles associated with him. These promises are not to be transferred to each other; they are to remain as designated ... personal, national, and international. And since the Abrahamic Covenant deals with Israel's title deed to the land of Palestine, her continuation as a nation is guaranteed in order to possess that land, and her redemption is so that she may enjoy the blessings in that land under her king. It is of the utmost importance. This is a literal covenant to be fulfilled by Israel, and therefore Israel must be preserved, converted and restored. It is an unconditional covenant, which indicates that these events in Israel's national life are inevitable. Covenant theologians excuse this away by saying that we (the Church) are the new Israel.

Therefore, we arrive at three conclusions:

1. The Abrahamic Covenant promises Israel permanent existence as a nation;
2. The Church is not Israel and cannot fulfill Israel's promises;
3. Israel has a future as a nation and in a promised land.

The Palestinian Covenant

In the closing chapters of the book of Deuteronomy the children of Israel are facing a crisis in their national existence. They are about to pass from the proven leadership of Moses into the unproven leadership of Joshua. They are standing at the entrance to the land that was promised to them by God in **Genesis 12:7, 13:15, 17:7-8**. At that time the Promised Land was possessed by Israel's enemies, who had shown that they would resist any attempt by Israel to enter into their land. As a result, certain important considerations needed to be faced by the nation Israel.

The first consideration is: Is the land of Palestine still their possession? (Sight says no.) Secondly, did the Mosaic Covenant, which was a conditional covenant, set aside the unconditional Abrahamic Covenant? Thirdly, could Israel hope to enter into permanent possession of their land in the face of such opposition? To answer these important questions, God stated again His covenant promise concerning Israel's possession of and inheritance in the land, Deuteronomy 30:1-10. We call this the Palestinian Covenant because it answers the questions concerning Israel's relation to the land promised in the Abrahamic Covenant. The Palestinian Covenant reaffirms to Israel their title deed to the land of promise, and in spite of their unfaithfulness and unbelief,

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the Palestinian Covenant confirms their right to the Promised Land. This covenant is a confirmation and enlargement of the original Abrahamic Covenant, and amplifies the land features of the Abrahamic Covenant. Note that the amplification coming after willful unbelief and disobedience on the part of Israel reveals that the covenant was indeed unconditional!

An analysis of Deuteronomy Chapter 30 will show that there are seven main features in the Palestinian Covenant:

1. The nation will be plucked off the land for its unfaithfulness, **Deuteronomy 28:63-68, 30:1-3.**
2. There will be a future repentance of Israel, **Deuteronomy 28:63-68, 30:1-3.**
3. Their Messiah will return, **Deuteronomy 30:3-6.**
4. Israel will be restored to the land, **Deuteronomy 30:5.**
5. Israel will be converted as a nation, **Deuteronomy 30:4-8, Romans 11:26-27.**
6. Israel's enemies will be judged, **Deuteronomy 30:7.**
7. The nation will receive her full blessing, **Deuteronomy 30:9.**

God takes Israel's inheritance of the Promised Land as a matter of extreme importance. He not only guarantees their possession of the land, but also obligates Himself to judge and remove all of Israel's enemies. He will give the nation a new heart, a conversion, before He places them in the land. The same covenant is confirmed at a later time in Israel's history. It became a subject of Ezekiel's prophecy. In **Ezekiel 16:1-7**, God affirms His love for Israel in her infant stage. In **Ezekiel 16:8-14**, God reminds Israel that she was chosen and related to Jehovah by marriage, but in **Ezekiel 16:15:34** she played the harlot. Therefore, the punishment of dispersion was dealt to Israel, **Ezekiel 16:35-52**. However, this is not the final setting of Israel since there will be restoration, **Ezekiel 16:53-63**. This restoration is based on the promise, **Ezekiel 16:60-62**. Here the Lord reaffirms the Palestinian Covenant and calls it an eternal covenant by which He is bound. The Palestinian Covenant is eternal only if its fulfillment is divorced from human responsibility and based on God's Word exclusively. This covenant has the guarantee from God that He will effect the

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necessary conversion of Israel. The Church is not Israel - Israel is Israel - and God's promises to Israel will be fulfilled.

Romans 11:26-27 *and so all Israel will be saved; just as it is written, "The Deliverer will come from Zion; He will remove ungodliness from Jacob. This is My covenant with them, when I take away their sins."*

Hosea 2:14-23 *Therefore, behold; I will allure her, bring her into the wilderness and speak kindly to her. Then I will give to her vineyards from there, and the valley of Achor as a door of hope. And she will sing there as in the days of her youth, as in the day when she came up from the land of Egypt. "It will come about in that day," declares the Lord, "that you will call Me Ishi and will no longer call Me Baali. For I will remove the names of the Baals from her mouth, so that they will be mentioned by their names no more. In that day I will also make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, the birds of the sky and the creeping things of the ground. And I will abolish the bow, the sword and war from the land, and will make them lie down in safety. I will betroth you to Me forever; yes, I will betroth you to Me in righteousness and in justice, in loving kindness and in compassion, and I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness. Then you will know the Lord." "It will come about in that day that I will respond," declares the Lord. "I will respond to the heavens, and they will respond to the earth, and the earth will respond to the grain, to the new wine and to the oil, and they will respond to Jezreel. I will sow her for Myself in the land. I will also have compassion on her who had not obtained compassion, and I will say to those who were not My people, 'You are my people!' And they will say, 'You are My God!' "*

Deuteronomy 30:6 *Moreover the Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, so that you may live.*

Ezekiel 11:16-21 *Therefore say, "Thus says the Lord God, Though I had removed them far away among the nations and though I had scattered them among the countries, yet I was a sanctuary for them a little while in the countries where they had gone." Therefore say, "Thus says the Lord God, I will gather you from the peoples and assemble you out of the countries among which you have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel. When they come there, they will remove all its detestable things and all its abominations from it. And I will give them one heart, and put a new spirit within them. And I will take the heart of stone out of their flesh and give them a heart of flesh, that they may walk in My statutes and keep my ordinances and do them. Then they will be My people, and I shall be their God. But as for*

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those whose hearts go after their detestable things and abominations, I will bring their conduct down on their heads," declares the Lord God.

Just like portions of this covenant have already been fulfilled, such as the dispersion of the Jews as judgment for unfaithfulness and restoration to their land in parts, the fulfillment of this covenant in its entirety still waits for Israel. This means that Israel must be converted as a nation, she must be re-gathered from her world-wide dispersion and installed in her land, she must witness the judgment of her enemies, and she must receive the material blessings graciously promised to her. Since these things have not yet been fulfilled, the Jews still await for the fulfillment of this eternal and unconditional covenant. Whether they should live to see the Messiah confirm these promises, or whether they reach the land through resurrection, these things still await to be seen!

The Davidic Covenant

This covenant was made with David and is taught in **2 Samuel 7:12**, **Psalms 89:3-4**, and **Jeremiah 33:22-26**. The land promised in the Abrahamic Covenant was the main issue in the Palestinian Covenant; the seed promised in the Abrahamic Covenant is now made the center of the Davidic Covenant.

The Davidic Covenant answers many of the crucial issues facing the doctrine of Dispensational Truth and Eschatology:

- Will there be a literal Rapture?
- Will there be a literal Millennium?
- Is the Church the kingdom?
- What is God's kingdom?
- What is Christ's kingdom?
- Will the nation Israel be re-gathered and restored under her Messiah?
- Is the kingdom present or future?

These are many of the crucial issues that are answered in the Davidic Covenant. The Davidic Covenant refutes the theory of no rapture, along with

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the doctrine of the covenant theologians. The promise made by God to David is given in **2 Samuel 7:12-16**.

The provisions of the Davidic Covenant include the following:

1. David is to have a child, yet to be born, who shall succeed him and establish his kingdom.
2. This son (Solomon) shall build the temple instead of David.
3. The throne of his kingdom shall be established forever.
4. The throne will not be taken away from Solomon even though his sins justify chastisement.
5. David's house, throne and kingdom shall be established forever.

This covenant is reinstated and confirmed in **Psalms 89:3-4** and **34-36**. It is also confirmed in such passages as **Isaiah 9:6-7**, **Jeremiah 25:5-6**, **Ezekiel 37:24-25**, **Daniel 7:13-14** and many more passages. As in the preceding covenants, the determination factor is the character of the covenant itself. Is it conditional and temporary or unconditional and eternal? The amillennialists and covenant theologians argue in favor of a conditional covenant and spiritualize its fulfillment. They say that the throne on which Christ is now seated at the right hand of the Father becomes the throne of the covenant. They say the household of faith becomes the house of the covenant, and the Church becomes the kingdom of the covenant. However, the fact is that the covenant made with Israel is unconditional and depends on the performance of God, not man!! This is why it is called an eternal covenant in **2 Samuel 7:13**, **2 Samuel 7:16**, **2 Samuel 23:5**, **Isaiah 55:3**, **Ezekiel 37:25**. The only way it can be called eternal is that it is unconditional and rests upon the faithfulness of God for its execution.

For the Davidic Covenant to be fulfilled, certain things must happen:

1. Israel must be preserved as a nation. This has been done and even today we see the nation wonderfully protected and preserved by God. Although many of their enemies including the strongest of nations and most powerful of empires have perished, Israel still exists.
2. Israel must have a national existence and be brought back into the land of her inheritance. David's kingdom had definite geographical boundaries and those

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boundaries were made a feature of the promise to David concerning his son's reign.

3. The land must be given to Israel as its homeland.
4. David's son, the Lord Jesus Christ, must return to the earth bodily and literally in order to reign over David's covenanted kingdom. The allegation that Christ is seated on the Father's throne reigning over a spiritual kingdom, the Church, simply does not fulfill the promises of the covenant. A literal earthly kingdom must be constituted over which the returned Messiah will reign.

The fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant and its promises implies that the Messianic kingdom is a visible and eternal kingdom, not merely a spiritual one. It does embrace spiritual and divine things, but it is visible and external. This kingdom must become an eternal kingdom. Since the throne and kingdom were all promised to David to be fulfilled in God's perfect timing, then there must be no end to the Messiah's reign over David's kingdom from David's throne.

The New Covenant

The New Covenant guarantees Israel a converted heart as the foundation of all her blessings. The New Covenant promised to Israel was stated in **Jeremiah 31:31-34**.

Jeremiah 31:31-34 *"Behold, days are coming," declares the Lord, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day 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. But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the Lord. "I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, know the Lord, for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them," declares the Lord, "for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."*

There are provisions for Israel, who are the people referred to in the New Covenant, to be fulfilled during the Millennium, which is the period of the New Covenant. The provisions of this covenant are as follows:

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1. It is an unconditional grace covenant resting on the "I wills" of God. Five times (the number for grace) the phrase "I will" is used in **Jeremiah 31:31-34**. **Ezekiel 16:60-62** teaches the same.
2. The New Covenant is an everlasting covenant or is eternal. This is closely related to the fact that it is unconditional and made in grace, **Isaiah 61:8**, **Ezekiel 37:26**, **Jeremiah 31:35-37**.
3. The New Covenant also promises the impartation of a renewed mind and heart which may be called regeneration, **Jeremiah 31:33**, **Isaiah 59:21**.
4. The New Covenant provides for restoration to the favor and blessing of God, **Hosea 2:19-20**, **Isaiah 61:9**.
5. Forgiveness of sin is also included in the covenant, **Jeremiah 31:32**.
6. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit is also included in the New Covenant; not permanent indwelling like the Church-age believer who has God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit within, but the indwelling of the Holy Spirit to teach the believer, **Jeremiah 31:33-34**, **Ezekiel 36:27**.
7. There will be materialistic blessings for Israel in the land according to the provisions of the New Covenant, **Jeremiah 32:41**, **Isaiah 61:8**, **Ezekiel 34:25-27**.
8. The sanctuary will be rebuilt in Jerusalem, **Ezekiel 37:26-27**.
9. War shall cease and peace shall reign according to **Hosea 2:18**. This is also a definite characteristic of the Millennium, **Isaiah 2:4**.
10. The blood of the Lord Jesus Christ is the foundation of all the blessings of the New Covenant, **Zechariah 9:11**.

The New Covenant was made with the Jewish people, and confirmation of this covenant is given in **Isaiah 61:8-9**, where it is called everlasting: For I, the Lord, love justice. I hate robbery in the burnt offering; and I will faithfully give them their recompense and make an everlasting covenant with them. Then their offspring will be known among the nations, and their descendants in the midst of the peoples. All who see them will recognize them because they are the offspring whom the Lord has blessed.

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It is again given in **Ezekiel 37:21-28**: *Say to them, "Thus says the Lord God, 'Behold I will take the sons of Israel from among the nations where they have gone, and I will gather them from every side and bring them into their own land; and I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel; and one king will be king for all of them; and they will no longer be two nations and no longer be divided into two kingdoms. They will no longer defile themselves with their idols, or with their detestable things, or with any of their transgressions; but I will deliver them from all their dwelling places in which they have sinned, and will cleanse them. And they will be My people, and I will be their God. My servant David will be king over them, and they will all have one shepherd; and they will walk in My ordinances and keep My statutes and observe them. They will live on the land that I gave to Jacob My servant, in which your fathers lived; and they will live on it, they, and their sons and their sons' sons, forever; and David My servant will be their prince forever. I will make a covenant of peace with them; it will be an everlasting covenant with them. And I will place them and multiply them, and will set My sanctuary in their midst forever. My dwelling place also will be with them; and I will be their God, and they will be My people. And the nations will know that I am the Lord who sanctifies Israel, when My sanctuary is in their midst forever.'"*

The following points are to be observed:

1. Israel is to be re-gathered.
2. Israel is to be one nation ruled by one king.
3. Israel is no longer to be idolatrous but to be cleansed and forgiven.
4. Israel is to dwell forever in the Promised Land after the re-gathering.
5. The covenant of peace is to be everlasting.
6. God's tabernacle is to be with them, i.e., He will be present with them in a visible way.
7. Israel is to be known among the Gentiles as a nation blessed of God.

Therefore, this covenant has to do with the regeneration, forgiveness and justification of Israel. In addition, there will be the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, with His subsequent ministries, and Israel's re-gathering and restoration to the place of blessing. This covenant is a literal and unconditional covenant, and it is called eternal in **Isaiah 24:5** and **61:8**, **Jeremiah 31:36**, **31:40**, **32:40**

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and 50:5. The New Covenant is a gracious covenant that depends entirely upon the five "I wills" of God for its fulfillment, **Jeremiah 31:31-34**. This covenant does not depend upon man. This covenant amplifies the third great area of the original Abrahamic Covenant, which is the area of blessing.

In review, the Abrahamic Covenant consists of three promises involving land, seed, and blessing. The land is then emphasized in the Palestinian Covenant, the seed is emphasized in the Davidic Covenant, and the blessing is emphasized in the New Covenant.

The New Covenant is largely occupied with the question of salvation and the impartation of the new heart to Israel. Covenant theologians and the amillennial view both teach that the reference to the New Covenant in the New Testament is proof that the Church is the New Israel. Because of this, they teach that there is no need for a future earthly Millennium since the Church is the kingdom now. They use **Hebrews 8:8-12** to justify their erroneous position. In reply to this position, it is necessary to observe certain important facts about the New Covenant.

First of all, it should be clear that the New Covenant was made with Israel, the physical seed of Abraham according to the flesh, and with them alone.

Jeremiah 31:31 *"Behold, days are coming," declares the Lord, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah,"*

Isaiah 59:20-21 *"A Redeemer will come to Zion, and to those who turn from transgression in Jacob," declares the Lord. "As for Me, this is My covenant with them," says the Lord. "My Spirit which is upon you, and My words which I have put in your mouth shall not depart from your mouth, nor from the mouth of your offspring, nor from the mouth of your offspring's offspring," says the Lord, "from now and forever."*

Jeremiah 32:37-40 *"Behold, I will gather them out of all the lands to which I have driven them in My anger, in My wrath and in great indignation; and I will bring them back to this place and make them dwell in safety. They shall be My people, and I will be their God; and I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear Me always, for their own good and for the good of their children after them. I will make an everlasting covenant with them that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; and I will put the fear of Me in their hearts so that they will not turn away from Me."*

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Jeremiah 50:4-5 *"In those days and at that time," declares the Lord, "the sons of Israel will come, both they and the sons of Judah as well; they will go along weeping as they go, and it will be the Lord their God they will seek. They will ask for the way to Zion, turning their faces in its direction; they will come that they may join themselves to the Lord in an everlasting covenant that will not be forgotten."*

Ezekiel 16:60-63 *"Nevertheless, I will remember My covenant with you in the days of your youth, and I will establish an everlasting covenant with you. Then you will remember your ways and be ashamed when you receive your sisters, both your older and your younger; and I will give them to you as daughters, but not because of your covenant. Thus I will establish My covenant with you and you shall know that I am the Lord, so that you may remember and be ashamed and never open your mouth anymore because of your humiliation, when I have forgiven you for all that you have done," the Lord God declares.*

Ezekiel 34:25-26 *"I will make a covenant of peace with them and eliminate harmful beasts from the land so that they may live securely in the wilderness and sleep in the woods. I will make them and the places around My hill a blessing. And I will cause showers to come down in their season; they will be showers of blessing."*

Ezekiel 37:21-28 *Say to them, "Thus says the Lord God, 'Behold, I will take the sons of Israel from among the nations where they have gone, and I will gather them from every side and bring them into their own land; and I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel; and one king will be king for all of them; and they will no longer be two nations and no longer be divided into two kingdoms. They will no longer defile themselves with the idols, or with their detestable things, or with any of their transgressions; but I will deliver them from all their dwelling places in which they have sinned, and will cleanse them. And they will be My people, and I will be their God. My servant David will be king over them, and they will all have one shepherd; and they will walk in My ordinances and keep My statutes and observe them. They will live on the land that I gave to Jacob My servant, in which your fathers lived; and they will live on it, they, and their sons and their sons' sons, forever; and David My servant will be their prince forever. I will make a covenant of peace with them; it will be an everlasting covenant with them. And I will place them and multiply them, and will set My sanctuary in their midst forever. My dwelling place also will be with them; and I will be their God, and they will be My people. And the nations will know that I am the Lord who sanctifies Israel, when My sanctuary is in their midst forever.'"*

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It is called the New Covenant because it replaces the old covenant. And as we have seen, Scripture clearly teaches that the Mosaic covenant, or the Law, was made with the nation Israel only.

Romans 2:14 *For when Gentiles who do not have the Law do instinctively the things of the Law, these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves.*

Romans 6:14 *For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace.*

Galatians 3:24-25 *Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.*

Leviticus 26:46 *These are the statutes and ordinances and laws which the Lord established between Himself and the sons of Israel through Moses at Mount Sinai.*

Deuteronomy 4:8 *Or what great nation is there that has statutes and judgments as righteous as this whole law which I am setting before you today?*

There can be no question that the Law pertains to Israel only, and since this old covenant was made with Israel, the New Covenant is made with the same people.

Jeremiah 31:35-37 *Thus says the Lord, Who gives the sun for light by day and the fixed order of the moon and the stars for light by night, Who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar; the Lord of Hosts is His name: "If this fixed order departs from before Me," declares the Lord, "then the offspring of Israel also will cease from being a nation before Me forever." Thus says the Lord, "If the heavens above can be measured and the foundations of the earth searched out below, then I will also cast off all the offspring of Israel for all that they have done," declares the Lord.*

The sequence of events set up by the prophet Jeremiah in **Jeremiah 32:37-41** is that Israel will first be re-gathered and restored to the land, and then will experience the blessings of the New Covenant in the land. God cannot fulfill the covenant until Israel is re-gathered as a nation. Her complete restoration is demanded by the New Covenant, and has not taken place as of yet. Fulfillment of the prophecies requires the re-gathering of Israel, their spiritual rebirth, and the return of Christ.

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Romans 11:26-27 and so all Israel will be saved; just as it is written, 'The Deliverer will come from Zion; He will remove ungodliness from Jacob. This is My covenant with them, when I take away their sins.'

This New Covenant then will be realized in the Millennial age, **Jeremiah 31:34, Ezekiel 32:25, Isaiah 11:6-9**. The New Covenant can only be fulfilled literally by those with whom it was made, and since the Church is not Israel, the Church cannot fulfill that covenant.

The four covenants made with the nation Israel (Abrahamic, Palestinian, Davidic, New) have been surveyed to show that they are unconditional and eternal covenants, and they are to be fulfilled because of the faithfulness of the One making the covenants, not the ones to whom the covenant is made!!

When these covenants are studied we find seven great features that need to be understood: (1) a nation forever; (2) a land forever; (3) a king forever; (4) a throne forever; (5) a kingdom forever; (6) a new covenant; and (7) abiding blessings.

Regarding the dispensation of the Hypostatic Union, we now address the somatic death of the Lord Jesus Christ. Somatic means that which relates to the physical body, and soma is the Greek word for body. The somatic death refers to the physical death of the body of the Lord Jesus Christ.

John 19:29-37 *A jar full of sour wine was standing there; so they put a sponge full of the sour wine upon a branch of hyssop and brought it up to His mouth. Therefore when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And He bowed His head and gave up His spirit. Then the Jews, because it was the day of preparation, so that the bodies would not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. So the soldiers came, and broke the legs of the first man and of the other who was crucified with Him; but coming to Jesus, when they saw that he was already dead, they did not break His legs. But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out. And he who has seen this testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you also may believe, for these things came to pass to fulfill the Scripture, "Not a bone of Him shall be broken". And again another Scripture says, "They shall look on Him Whom they pierced."*

Remember that the Old Testament rituals so graphically depicting the saving work of Christ pictured His spiritual death. His spiritual death is the source of

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our salvation, so the physical death of the sacrificial animal represented the spiritual death of the Lord Jesus Christ. This analogy will not be confused if we understand the nature of the Lord's physical death and if we see that although it has significance it was not the means of salvation. We must understand that the animal's physical death was not a picture of Christ's physical death. If it were, the animal would have been nailed to a cross, or Christ would have been slaughtered on an altar.

John 19:34 *But one of the soldiers pierced His side;*

This is a Roman soldier stationed at the cross. The Greek word for 'side' is pleura, which refers to the part of the chest where there are no bones, or, the chest cavity.

... and immediately blood and water came out.

This was literal blood - in fact, it was blood clots and serum - which indicates that the Lord Jesus Christ had blood inside of His body following His physical death. The Lord Jesus Christ did not bleed to death! He was fully in control and command of Himself on the cross!

John 10:17-18 *For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life so that I may take it again. No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father.*

The red liquid that ran through the veins and the arteries of Jesus' body is not related to our salvation and there is no Biblical basis for attributing any unusual or magic formula to His blood. Our Lord was minus an old sin nature, but that was because of the virgin birth, along with the decisions of His soul that coincided with the will of the Father. The term 'Blood of Christ' is far more significant than any magical or mystical power falsely ascribed to His physical blood. John tells us that the Lord's literal blood was not a factor in either His spiritual or His physical death.

John 19:30 *Therefore when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And He bowed His head and gave up His spirit.*

After the Lord Jesus Christ paid the penalty for sins, He announced that salvation was finished; then He bowed His head and willfully gave up His life.

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John 19:31 *Then the Jews, because it was the day of preparation, so that the bodies would not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.*

The religious Jews were always up to something; they would strain at a gnat and swallow a camel! This is the typical evil of religion. They were very particular about the superficialities of life, while ignoring or avoiding or even rejecting the things of eternal importance. They had just demanded and secured the execution of the only perfect man who ever lived, their own Messiah! And now in their hypocrisy they are concerned about a man hanging on the cross during the Sabbath.

So, what is meant by the preparation? The Greek word pa-ra-skeu-e refers to the day when the Jews prepared either for a weekly Saturday Sabbath or for a special feast Sabbath. The Jews who were so fussy in observing all of these ceremonial details and rituals that spoke of Christ had just witnessed the Passover right before their eyes! But, did they believe? They did not! Religion blinded them. And blinded by their religion and their superstitions, the Jews failed to understand the real significance of the holy days. Thus we get the principle that ritual without reality is meaningless. Communion without reality is meaningless. Baptism without reality is meaningless. Old Testament rituals without reality are meaningless.

Notice the last phrase in verse 31, ... [the Jews] asked Pilate that their legs [those hanging on the cross] might be broken, and that they might be taken away. It was the Roman custom to leave a body nailed to the cross until the flesh rotted away; however, Jewish law demanded that the body of any criminal be put out of sight during a Sabbath or feast day in order not to pollute the land, **Deuteronomy 21:22-23**. The Romans would break the legs by using a heavy mallet in order to crush the bones and cause the body to hang! These pious, religious Jews certainly did not want their victim, whom they had railroaded through the courts, to be hanging on a cross during one of their high Sabbaths.

John 19:32 *So the soldiers came, and broke the legs of the first man and of the other who was crucified with Him;*

The Roman soldiers went up to the two thieves, one hanging on each side of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in order to be able to take them down before the Sabbath the soldiers pounded their legs until their bones were crushed. Once the bones are crushed, the body hangs and suffocates, and so in deeper shock and unable to force themselves up to relieve the pressure on their muscles, the thieves

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could not exhale from their lungs and died of suffocation. The Jews were waiting for the same thing to take place at the cross of Jesus; but notice **John 19:33**, but coming to Jesus, when they saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs.

The Lord Jesus Christ was already physically dead. And the fact that the soldiers did not break His legs is a fulfillment of specific promises contained in the Old Testament Scriptures, **Exodus 12:46**, **Numbers 9:12**, **Psalms 34:20**, as well as **John 36:37**.

John 19:34 *But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out.*

The soldiers had laid down their mallets when one of them picked up his spear and hurled it into the side of Jesus' body. In doing so another prophecy was fulfilled, **Zechariah 12:10**. The Lord Jesus Christ anticipated that Satan would attack the cross by perverting the meaning of the blood in an attempt to obscure the importance of spiritual death, so while still on the cross Our Lord provided proof that He did not bleed to death, and unlike that of the sacrificial animal, His literal blood has no spiritual significance. Our Lord purposely thrust His body forward to demonstrate for all to see and for John to record that He did not die from loss of blood!

When the soldier's javelin penetrated upward through Christ's rib cage and chest cavity without breaking any bones, immediately blood and water gushed forth. This is possible only under certain conditions. First of all, the word for water, hudor, is used in the medical sense for the grayish-yellow fluid that separates from the clot in the coagulation of blood; so instead of blood and water, a more accurate translation would be blood clots and serum. And for the blood inside the body to develop into clots and serum, death must not have been caused by bleeding. Despite prolonged physical torture during His trials and sufferings on the cross, His physical death came suddenly when, with complete self-control and clarity of mind, Christ sent away His spirit. Yes, He did bleed some since His back was beaten, His hands and feet were nailed through, and thorns were forced into His scalp, but all these lacerations and puncture wounds did not kill Our Lord nor cause Him to bleed to death! External bleeding was not the cause of death! Internal hemorrhaging would have resulted in very little blood remaining in the heart, so the very sight of blood clots and serum is medical proof not only that Jesus was physically dead but also that He did not bleed to death! The Biblical evidence is conclusive, yet the crucifixion accounts fit perfectly with medical knowledge. With Christ's body thrust forward, it remained in the perfect position for the maximum

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amount of blood to settle in the dependent portion of the heart, so that the soldier's spear would provide the evidence to all who witnessed the crucifixion and to those studying the verse as to the exact manner of His physical death, which is recorded forever in the Word of God. Now, don't miss this because if you do, you will not understand the blood of Christ.

In **John 19:30**, the Lord Jesus Christ said, "Tetelesti!", the perfect active indicative of teleo. In the perfect tense, teleo means, 'it has been finished in the past with the result that it stands finished forever'. Our Lord said, "It is finished!" and then He died physically. But when He said finished, His blood was still in His body; therefore, He did not bleed to death.

John mentioned blood and water in his epistle, **1 John 5:6-8**: *This is the One who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ; not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood. It is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth. For there are three that testify: the Spirit and the water and the blood, and the three are in agreement.*

John was dealing with Gnosticism that claimed Jesus Christ was not true humanity. They claimed that the cross was an optical illusion. Therefore, John wrote to refute the blasphemy of this brand of Gnosticism. Our Lord provided salvation while He was yet alive ... not dead. And the saving work of Christ is generally called redemption, reconciliation, and propitiation, and it is blasphemous for anyone to suggest that bleeding to death can provide salvation! The Blood of Christ refers to the saving work of Our Lord Jesus Christ, which He accomplished when He was judged as our substitute, after which He was still physically alive and did not bleed to death, and at which point He said, "It is finished!" He was bearing our sins during those three hours of complete darkness, and that is the saving work of Christ! Again, if there had been internal hemorrhaging, there would be very little blood left in the heart, and the blood clots and the serum would not have gushed out of his chest cavity. So, the spear thrust of the Roman soldier indicated maximum blood still in the body, and therefore the sight of blood and water is not only a witness to the true humanity of Christ but medical proof that Our Lord did not bleed to death!!

Once the Lord's saving work on the cross was finished, a trichotomous separation took place on the cross upon His physical death: His human spirit (pneuma) went to Heaven, His human soul (psuche) went to Paradise to witness of His victory, and His body (soma) went into the grave. Jesus Christ gave up his human spirit and died physically because he had already died spiritually during those three hours on the cross and His salvation work was complete.

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1 Peter 3:18-19 *For Christ also died [spiritual death] for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit; in which [spirit] also He went and made proclamation to the spirits now in prison [Hades].*

Before Christ died there were three areas or compartments in Hades, but the one that is important to our study is Tartarus, or the third compartment. Tartarus is the prison for the angels who were involved in Genesis Chapter 6 with the copulation of human women. These were the only angels who had not observed the cross and the defeat of Satan.

2 Peter 2:4 *For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into Hades [Tartarus] and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment;*

The word if is the first class condition, which means, 'and He did not spare them'. Tartarus is in the heart of the earth and it is a temporary place of fire, suffering and torments.

2 Peter 2:4 *God spared not the angels that sinned but cast them down to Tartarus and delivered them into chains of darkness to be reserved unto judgment; [corrected translation]*

Jude v. 6 *And angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day,*

And, so it was to Paradise (Hades) that the Holy Spirit took the soul of Christ for two reasons: (1) to lead all Old Testament saints from Paradise to the Third Heaven, **Ephesians 4:8-10**; and (2) to preach to the angels in Tartarus.

1 Peter 3:19 *in which [Holy Spirit] also He went [passive voice] and made proclamation to the spirits now in prison,*

He received transportation to Paradise, and preached unto the spirits or angels in prison (Tartarus).

1 Peter 3:20 which were beforetime [Genesis 6] disobedient when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah ... [corrected translation]

The angels in Tartarus are currently reserved or literally, guarded for judgment. They are not yet in their final state, since God has them confined in

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a temporary prison until the appointed time to judge them. There is a time coming when God will haul them out of Tartarus to be judged and thrown permanently into the Lake of Fire, according to **Matthew 25:41** and **Revelation 20**. In the meantime, they are out of circulation.

When Our Lord's earthly ministry was completed, He said, "*Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit,*" **Luke 23:46**. With this, His human spirit ascended into the presence of the Father in Heaven. His assurance to the dying thief is given in **Luke 23:43**, which indicates that His soul descended to Paradise where the Old Testament saints resided until Christ's resurrection. His body, of course went into the grave, **Luke 23:53**. Paradise was the section where the souls of all believers of the Old Testament resided after death. No human being ever went to Heaven until Christ first entered into the presence of the Father and was accepted as a man. And when the Lord Jesus Christ ascended into Heaven, the souls of all believers who had died prior to that time went into Heaven with Him! If the Lord Jesus Christ were accepted in His humanity, it would mean that the Father had accepted His sacrifice for sin! Upon the entrance of Christ into Heaven, the Father said, "*Sit Thou at My right hand,*" **Psalms 110:1, Hebrews 1:3**.

When the Lord Jesus Christ went to Tartarus, He proclaimed doctrine of the victory He procured to all the chained up fallen angels incarcerated there. The content of Christ's proclamation has been suggested in 1 Peter 3:18. It was a testimony relating to the Gospel. He informed these demons that they had failed in their attempts to destroy true humanity and that God's plan had become victorious! He had gone to the cross on schedule and the penalty of sin had been paid for all mankind. What a proclamation!

1 Corinthians 15:55 *O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?*

After the Lord's spiritual and physical death something astonishing took place. God the Father from His omnipotence restored the human spirit to the body of Jesus Christ. God the Holy Spirit from His omnipotence restored the human soul to the body. And God the Son raised His own human body so that the entire Trinity had a part in the resurrection.

In **Colossians 1:18**, the Lord Jesus Christ is referred to as the firstborn from the physical death. He is the first and the only member of the human race so far that has been resurrected. The resurrection gives Christ the privilege of the firstborn.

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After Our Lord said in **John 19:30**, "*It is finished!*" His body went into the grave, **Matthew 27:60**, His human spirit went into the presence of God the Father, **Luke 23:46**, and His soul went to the first compartment of Hades called Paradise, **1 Peter 3:19**, or Abraham's Bosom. He is the firstborn from the physical death, **Colossians 1:18**, and the firstborn of the new creation, **Romans 8:29**. This is why in **Hebrews 12:23** we are called the Church of the Firstborn.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is part of the doctrine of Eternal Security. Because we are in union with Christ, whatever happens to Him must happen to us. All Church-age believers will be resurrected either through dying physically or through the Rapture. Resurrection is not our victory but the Lord's victory.

1 Corinthians 15:55-57 *"O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?" The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the Law; but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through Our Lord Jesus Christ."*

It is His victory and He gives it to us, and that is grace! The resurrected body is a monument to the victory that He won over death. Until Our Lord's victory in His death, burial and resurrection, no one could be resurrected. He had to be resurrected first, the first born from among the dead. And Our Lord could not be resurrected until He became true humanity; therefore the necessity for the physical death of Jesus Christ. Resurrection is the Lord's victory - not our victory - and it is not something we win for being faithful. It is God's victory. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit all played a part in the resurrection of the humanity of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Father raised up the humanity of Jesus Christ, **Acts 2:24**, **Romans 6:4**, **1 Corinthians 6:14**, **Ephesians 1:20**, **Colossians 2:12**, **1 Thessalonians 1:10**, **1 Peter 1:21**. God the Holy Spirit was also an acting agent in the resurrection of the humanity of Christ, **Romans 1:4 and 8:11**, **1 Peter 3:18**. And the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ raised His human body, **John 2:19**, **John 10:18**, **Romans 1:4**.

The next event we need to note in the dispensation of the Hypostatic Union is what is known as the doctrine of Ascension and Session. This is the doctrine whereby the Lord Jesus Christ is seated at the right hand of the Father. The Lord Jesus Christ in His humanity is superior to any member of the human race. Christ in His humanity is different as the God-man from the other members of the Trinity. Christ in His humanity is also superior to angels. Therefore Jesus Christ is the unique person of the universe. He is superior to all men and angels, and when you look at the Godhead and the three members of the Trinity, the Lord Jesus Christ is unique! He is co-equal with the Father

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and the Holy Spirit; however, He is the God-man and He is superior to all the rest of the creation. He is the God-man forever and He will always be in Hypostatic Union form in His session. By becoming a member of the human race, the Lord Jesus Christ did something for the human race that Satan and the fallen angels despise - He elevated all who are born again positionally higher than angels!

The Lord Jesus Christ also did something to the human race that the devil has been trying to do since man was created. Satan has been trying to lift the human race to a plain of dignity and international love, fellowship and friendship, and the devil has never succeeded yet nor will he ever stop trying. But the Lord Jesus Christ did something for the human race that the devil has not been able to accomplish for 6,000 years, that is, He actually provided dignity for the human race "in Himself" and not in anyone else! Mankind has no dignity except for that which is found in the last Adam, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Doctrine of Ascension and Session

Point 1. Definition

The ascension is the doctrine pertaining to the transfer of the Lord's true humanity from planet earth to the Third Heaven in a resurrection body. The word session is defined as the doctrine of Christology pertaining to the glorification of Our Lord's humanity, when He was told to "Sit down at My [God the Father's] right hand until I make Thine enemies your footstool," **Psalms 110:1, Matthew 22:44, Mark 12:36, Luke 20:43, Acts 2:35, Hebrews 1:13 and 10:13.** The humanity of Christ in resurrected body remained on earth for 40 days after His resurrection and could move horizontally and vertically through solid objects, Matthew 28:1-6. He traveled through all three heavens: the atmospheric heaven, the stellar heaven, and the Third Heaven (the abode of God) where He arrived at the Throne Room, which is comparable to the Holy of Holies. His appearance without a doubt received a standing ovation from the elect angels in Heaven. His resurrection and ascension is documented in **John 20:11-18.**

Point 2. The historical account of the ascension is given in **Acts 1:9-11.**

Acts 1: 9-11 *And after He had said these things, He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And as they were gazing intently into the sky while He was going, behold, two men in white clothing stood beside them. They also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand*

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looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into Heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into Heaven."

After the Lord Jesus Christ announced the coming of the Baptism of the Spirit, He was taken right before their eyes.

Acts 1:5-8 *"for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." So when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, "Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?" He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority; but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."*

The humanity of Jesus Christ in Hypostatic Union is now exalted and glorified at the right hand of the Father, **Acts 2:33-35**.

Point 3. The ascension and session is also related to the Angelic Conflict.

The resurrection, ascension and session of Our Lord are based on His victory over Satan on the cross. This is the subject of Hebrews Chapters One and Two, and is very significant because God the Father said to the humanity of Christ, "Sit at My right hand", indicating that it was in a resurrected body as a member of the human race that Christ sat down. And what is the point? Right now you and I are in human bodies and we are physically inferior to angels, but in the future we will have a resurrected body and we will be totally superior to angels. When God the Father said, "Sit at My right hand, until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet", He was talking to a member of the human race, the Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 3:22 *who is at the right hand of God, having gone into Heaven, after angels and authorities and powers had been subjected to Him.*

In His deity Jesus Christ is the creator of angels, but in His humanity He was made lower than angels, **Hebrews 2:7**. However, following His resurrection the humanity of Jesus Christ became higher than angels, **Hebrews 2:7-9**. We as believers in union with Christ are positionally higher than the angels, and someday we will be experientially higher than angels as well. In other words, in our resurrected bodies we will have that same privilege as the humanity of Christ of being higher than angels physically.

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Ephesians 1:22 *And He [God the Father] has subordinated all [angelic creatures] under His feet and He has appointed Him ruler over all things to the Church. [corrected translation]*

The ascension and session of Our Lord Jesus Christ links the dispensation of the Hypostatic Union with the Church-age and is the reason why we call both of these Christocentric dispensations. When Our Lord was seated at the right hand of the Father, He was awarded a third royal title - King of kings and Lord of lords. However, unlike His first two royal titles, He was minus a Royal Family for His third royal title. The Church-age Royal Family of God is being formed and has been provided with infinitely more than any Old Testament saint that ever lived, any Tribulational saint that will live in the future, or any Millennial saint. We are unique! We possess things that are unbelievably fantastic that have never existed before, and following the Rapture of the Church they will never exist again.

Point 4. The efficacy of Christ's sacrifice on the cross

This is taught especially in **Hebrews 10:12**, but He [Jesus Christ], having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God,

Notice that the sacrifice for sins was FOR ALL TIME. The work of Jesus Christ on the cross was efficacious. The word efficacious means to bring to pass or accomplish the exact effect intended, or having the power to produce the exact result required. When Jesus Christ received the imputation of our sins and God the Father judged them, the sin question was settled once and for all. Furthermore, it was a substitutionary sacrifice, which means that He took our place. Therefore, to indicate the efficacy of His sacrifice, Jesus Christ sat down at the right hand of God (doctrine of Session). Some think the expression "God's right hand" is figurative, meaning power. However, the fact that Stephen saw Christ there would indicate that it is a literal geographical location, **Acts 7:56**, and he said, "*Behold, I see the heavens opened up and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.*"

The hand represents divine power conquering power, **Exodus 14:8** and **6:1**; honor, **Psalms 110:1**, **Exodus 13:3**; security and prosperity, **Psalms 16:8**, **109:31**; sovereign disposition, **Psalms 31:15**; divine sufficiency, **Psalms 104:28**. In resurrection, ascension and session, we have the verification of Our Lord's saving work on the cross.

Point 5. Understanding the session has a lot to do with the mental attitude of the Royal Family.

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Colossians 3:1 *Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, [first class condition, and you have]*

This refers to the Baptism of the Spirit and current positional truth.

... keep seeking the things above, [Divine viewpoint and escrow savings account] where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.

Colossians 3:2-3 *Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.*

Point 6. The session and the Royal Priesthood

Hebrews 8:1 *Now the main point in what has been said is this: we have such a high priest, who has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens,*

As a result of the resurrection, ascension and session, the Lord Jesus Christ is seated at the right hand of the Father as our great high priest. As our high priest He prays for us and makes intercession for us at the right hand of the Father. In the Old Testament the high priest of Israel once a year on the Day of Atonement was permitted to enter the Holy of Holies twice, once for himself (for his own sins) and once for the people (sins of the people). That was a type for the Third Heaven. But Jesus Christ as our high priest ascended into the presence of the Father in a resurrected body, and as the high priest He offered Himself as the sacrifice for the people's sins. No high priest can have any efficacy to his ministry unless he has a bona fide sacrifice. Jesus Christ offered Himself and by offering Himself He established Himself as a high priest forever.

In the Old Testament, first the sacrifice was offered outside of the tabernacle on a brazen altar. Then the high priest took the blood of the sacrifice past the first veil, past the second veil and on into the Holy of Holies. The Lord Jesus Christ became our high priest because he had the perfect sacrifice ... Himself! And as high priest He had to get off the altar and into the Holy of Holies, which is the Third Heaven. The only way you can get off the altar and into the Holy of Holies is if you are the sacrifice by resurrected body. So, in the doctrines of Ascension and Session it is imperative to understand the importance of resurrection. Without having a resurrected body, Jesus Christ could not be our high priest, and we as Church-age believers could not be a kingdom of priests. Before the Church-age could ever begin, Jesus Christ had to be established in

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the Holy of Holies forever; He had to be seated at the right hand of God the Father.

Point 7. The Lord Jesus Christ being seated at the right hand of God is documented in many Scriptures.

Psalms 110:1 *The Lord says to my Lord: "Sit at My right hand until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet."*

Romans 8:34 *Who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.*

Ephesians 1:20 *which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places,*

Colossians 3:1 *Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.*

Hebrews 1:3 *And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the Word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,*

Hebrews 1:13 *But to which of the angels has He ever said, "Sit at My right hand, until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet"?*

Hebrews 8:1 *Now the main point in what has been said is this: we have such a high priest, who has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens,*

Hebrews 10:12 *but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God,*

Hebrews 12:2 *fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

1 Peter 3:22 *who is at the right hand of God, having gone into Heaven, after angels and authorities and powers had been subjected to Him.*

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The session of Christ confirms the acceptability of the humanity of Christ, and it confirms the appointment of Jesus Christ as a permanent high priest. The Lord Jesus Christ, by being seated at the right hand of the Father, has the confirmation of His ministry that makes our life meaningful. Why? Because in this dispensation we have been made priests as well. We are part of a priesthood that began on the day of Pentecost and will terminate on earth on the day of the Rapture. It is a dignity that we could never earn or deserve, since every believer has been elevated by grace to be a priest and enjoy the privileges of that priesthood during the Church-age.

By elevating us to the position of royal priest, Our Lord did two things:

1. He called the believer's existence on the earth in the devil's kingdom as royalty to the attention of the devil and the great host of fallen angels. There is a kingdom of priests on the earth today and you and I are among those priests. God has a purpose for your life and my life. But you are never going to understand or appreciate your priesthood until you begin the daily intake of Bible doctrine, and the more doctrine you receive, the more you will understand and appreciate. Understanding the ascension and session should increase your love for the Lord Jesus Christ, Who is seated at the right hand of God as high priest and has a spiritual kingdom of priests in the Church-age. If you really believe that the Lord Jesus Christ exists and that He died for you, and if you really believe the Bible, and that you are a priest in union with the One Who is seated at the right hand of God, then your life would center on the Lord Jesus Christ.

Do you know that the angels envy you? Do you realize that every time the angels go into the Throne Room of Heaven that they see the Lord Jesus Christ seated in His resurrection form at the right hand of the Father? And do you know that He doesn't have any wings? The angels see that He has two arms, two legs and one head. He has hands, feet and eyes - eyes that flash. He has a human resurrected body and it is the only one in existence. Every time the fallen and elect angels meet in Heaven for a confrontation they all stand around a resurrected human body. And they would trade their wings in place of what we have right now, just to be a human being and have what we have! And when they pass over and hear you murmur and complain, or watch you fall asleep or react to your pastor's personality, they think to themselves, 'Those poor idiotic priests'. And they say, 'Here they are with this priesthood and they are going to have a beautiful body like that one in Heaven and they didn't earn it nor deserve it. There was no work done for it on their part. And yet they are bored, discontent, complaining and worried about living in that broken down house called their physical body'.

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2. The ascension and session formed the victory in the Angelic Conflict, and because of this we are in a new part of that conflict. Even though the Tribulation period will be a horrible time on earth and there will be lots of obvious angelic fighting, the Church-age is actually the amplified period of the Angelic Conflict. So, while having this priesthood and being elevated above angels, we are also in a very intensified conflict, **Ephesians 1:20-22** and **4:7-10**.

Point 8. The results of the ascension

1. He gave gifts to men, **Ephesians 4:8**.
2. Because He [Jesus Christ] ascended, the Holy Spirit descended, **John 16:7**, **Acts 2:23**.
3. He demonstrated that sins were purged by sitting down, showing completed action, **Hebrews 1:3**.
4. Because of His ascension we can come boldly to God the Father in prayer, **Hebrews 4:14-16**.
5. Because He has ascended He can now save to the uttermost, **Hebrews 7:25**.
6. His presence in Heaven causes us to draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, **Hebrews 10:22**.
7. We are now positionally seated with Him together in heavenly places, **Ephesians 2:6**.
8. Angels, authorities and powers are now subject to him because of His ascension, **1 Peter 3:22**.
9. Ascension becomes one of the six manifestations of the mystery of godliness, **1 Timothy 3:16**.
10. As a result of the ascension, the Lord Jesus Christ became head over all things to the Church, **Ephesians 1:21-22**.
11. He took up the two-fold priestly ministries of intercession, **Romans 8:34**, **Hebrew 7:25**, and advocacy, **Romans 8:34**, **Hebrew 9:24**, **1 John 2:1**.

Point 9. The ascension and session terminates the dispensation of the Hypostatic Union.

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Ephesians 4:8 *Therefore it says, [then a quotation from Psalms 68:18] "When He ascended on high [or into Heaven, a reference to the Third Heaven], He led captive a host of captives, and He gave gifts to men."* [This refers to His victorious parade into Heaven with the Old Testament saints.]

In Our Lord's ascension He traveled through the first heaven, the atmosphere around the earth, through the second heaven, the stellar universe, and through billions and billions of light years of space, to arrive at the Third Heaven with the Old Testament saints behind Him, straight to the Throne Room of God. And there the victorious parade ended with the command of God the Father to the humanity of Christ, "Sit at My right hand until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet". As God's deity cannot sit, so it was the humanity of Christ that sat down and at that moment He received His third royal title, 'King of kings and Lord of lords, the Bright and Morning Star'.

The Lord Jesus Christ has three titles:

1. Son of God: As God He has a royal family, God the Father and God the Holy Spirit.
2. Son of David: At the moment of the virgin birth, He was born into royalty. He is the line of David and Bathsheba. He was descended from them through Nathan. At that moment He received His second royal title, which deals with His Jewish royalty.
3. King of kings, Lord of lords: At the time He arrived in Heaven after the ascension, Jesus Christ was seated at the right hand of God and given a name, which is above every name, 'King of kings, Lord of lords, the Bright and Morning Star'. But with His having no kings or lords (royal family) to rule, the second Christocentric dispensation began ten days thereafter. The purpose of this dispensation is to 'call out' a Royal Family of God! This dispensation is referred to as the Church-age, and every believer in this dispensation is a member of the Royal Family of God.

Ephesians 4:8 *"When He ascended on high [into Heaven], He led captive a host of captives,..."* [resurrection, ascension, and session is the manifestation of Our Lord's victory on the cross].

All Old Testament saints were transferred from Hades, specifically the area called Paradise, into the Third Heaven. "He led captive [in a victorious parade into Heaven] a host of captives, ..." [a reference to those Old Testament believers]. No believer ever permanently resided in Heaven until the

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resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, the only exceptions being Elijah and Enoch who were translated. And the Lord Jesus Christ is the only member of the human race now in Heaven having a resurrection body.

Spiritual gifts have been given to Church-age believers and these gifts are used to glorify Our Lord's victory. Every believer has received a spiritual gift, and that gift is to be used for the glorification of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ said in **Luke 16:16**, *"The Law and the Prophets were proclaimed until John ..."*. Following John the Baptist, Jesus Christ came in Hypostatic Union. And we must rightly divide the Word of Truth. It is because some religious movements believe that the Christian Church is merely an extension of Israel that we have idols in the Church today. Some churches maintain similar rituals and retain the priesthood with its altars and temple-like buildings, along with sacrifices and sacraments. They also go further and advocate a state church with the Church as the head and claim that all Old Testament promises have been transferred. The purpose of the Church-age is not the conversion of the world but the gathering out of the Church, **Acts 15:13-18**.

When the Lord Jesus Christ walked this earth during the dispensation of the Hypostatic Union, He told the disciples in **Luke 11:13**, *"If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?"* The ministry of God the Holy Spirit toward believers in the Old Testament and in the dispensation of the Hypostatic Union was for the purpose of clothing. In the Old Testament, God the Holy Spirit would clothe certain men and women chosen by God with the power to go forth and serve God; however, in the Old Testament you could lose this ministry or power. This is why David said in **Psalms 51:11**, *"... do not take Your Holy Spirit from me."* But because Our Lord was resurrected and ascended and seated at the right hand of God the Father, a new dispensation with new privileges was about to begin. In fact we are told in **John 7:37-39** that a new ministry of God the Holy Spirit was beginning.

John 7:39 *But this He spoke of the Spirit, Whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.*

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Ten days before the Lord Jesus Christ began the Church-age, He appeared to His disciples and, **John 20:22**, ...*He breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit."* However, this was still part of the dispensation of the Hypostatic Union. The Holy Spirit was upon them until Pentecost at which time the Holy Spirit would come inside them. For ten days God the Holy Spirit sustained the disciples until the day of Pentecost, and at that time a brand new dispensation began with what is known as the Baptism of the Holy Spirit.

We now go from the dispensation of the Hypostatic Union and resurrection, ascension and session to the new dispensation known as the Mystery Dispensation or the Church-age. But before we note some principles of the Church-age, we will note the doctrine of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit:

1. Each individual becomes a member of the Royal Family of God at the moment of salvation through what is known as the Baptism of the Holy Spirit.
2. The Baptism of the Spirit is the means of providing a royal family for the King of kings and Lord of lords.
3. The Baptism of the Spirit provides equal privilege and equal opportunity for every Church-age believer, and creates a brand new spiritual species, a new creature, for the purpose of spiritual living. Every single believer in the dispensation of the Church-age is entered into union with Christ through the Baptism of the Holy Spirit.
4. The Church, or the Body of Christ, is designed to complement the King of kings and the Lord of lords. The head is incomplete without the body; thus, the humanity of Christ who is seated at the right hand of God is incomplete without a royal family.
5. The prophesy of this intimate union with Christ is given in **John 14:20**, "*In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.*" The words "you in Me" refer to the Church-age believer in union with Christ. The words "I in you" refer to the indwelling of the Lord Jesus Christ in every believer during the Church-age dispensation.

God the Holy Spirit is the agent in the formation of the body of Christ, the Church universal, the Royal Family of God. This is all taught in the doctrine of the Baptism of the Spirit.

Doctrine of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit

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Point 1. Definition

The Bible teaches seven different baptisms, divided into two categories - real baptisms and ritual baptisms. The word baptism is actually a transliteration, not a translation. *Baptismos* / *baptizo* / *baptizma* actually means 'identification', in that one thing is identified with another so that it is changed.

For example, in Homer's *Odyssey*, the one-eyed giant Cyclops met up with the crafty Ulysses. Ulysses took an iron tool, heated it up until it was red hot, and when Cyclops the giant came by Ulysses speared him in the eye. Homer, who was one of the first to use the word *baptismos*, said that the pressing of the iron into the eye of the giant Cyclops made a hissing sound like a blacksmith baptizing a piece of steel.

The Spartans are another example. Before they went into war they sacrificed a pig. They would take the pig's blood and put it into a big bowl and every soldier went by and stuck his spear into the bowl. The soldier 'baptized' his spear with blood. His spear was identified with blood and therefore called a warrior's spear. They considered their enemies to be pigs and they were going to get a lot of their blood on the spears; they called this baptism. So, from the earliest use of baptism, the word means 'to identify'.

In the Bible we have four real baptisms; these are what we call actual identification. The first is found in **1 Corinthians 10:2**, referred to as the Baptism unto Moses. Actually, the Jews were baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea. Moses stood at the edge of the sea, the Jews had marched out of Egypt, and Pharaoh and his armored chariots were behind them coming to destroy them. Moses turned around and saw them coming. He had 2,000,000 Jews at his command, most of whom were complaining and whining, and so Moses gave a command, "Stand still ...".

Exodus 14:13-14 *But Moses said to the people, "Do not fear! Stand by and see [watch] the salvation [deliverance] of the Lord, which He will accomplish for you today; for the Egyptians whom you have seen today, you will never see them again forever. The Lord will fight for you while you keep silent."*

Moses was one of the great leaders of all time. He turned away from the people, not asking them what they thought or what their viewpoint was. The Bible tells us he turned toward the Lord. Leadership is not a matter of consulting a lot of people for their opinions; it is a matter of knowing the right thing to do at the right time. The right thing for Moses to do was to turn to the Lord. And, the Lord told him to take his rod and swat the water, and he did and

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the water separated. Then Moses turned around and looked at the Jews and said, "Follow me." Two million Jews identified themselves with one man, a man called Moses. Moses identified himself with the cloud, which was the Lord Jesus Christ, and the people followed or identified with Moses, **1 Corinthians 10:1-4**.

Immediately you should see something. The people were baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea, but they were not touched or identified with water. This was not water baptism; in fact, those who got wet died. This was a dry baptism, not a wet one. Therefore, the baptism of Moses is a real baptism and an actual identification.

The second of the real baptisms is known as the Baptism of the Cross. In **Matthew 20:20-23**, the baptism with which the Lord Jesus Christ was about to be baptized included the sins of the whole world. Baptism means identification, and He was being identified with our sins. This was a real baptism and an actual identification.

The third real baptism is the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. The Baptism of the Holy Spirit is one of the seven ministries of God the Holy Spirit whereby He, invisibly with His omnipotence, takes every believer and enters him into union with Christ. That is a real identification and is how we are placed in union with Christ, which is an actual identification. We do not feel the Baptism of the Spirit, **1 Corinthians 12:13**. The Bible says that we are in Christ. How did we get there? The answer is by the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. **John 14:20** says, "... you in Me, and I in you."

Romans 6:1-6 *What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it? Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? 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. For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin;*

The spiritual baptism that took place at the beginning of the Church-age is vital to understand. Why? Because if I have been baptized by the Holy Spirit, or placed in union or identified with Christ, I can never be judged or condemned, **Romans 8:1**.

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Romans 8:1 *Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in [union with] Christ Jesus.*

Romans 12:5 *So we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.*

2 Corinthians 5:17 *Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.*

Ephesians 2:6 *and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,*

Colossians 3:1-3 *Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.*

Jude v. 1 *...To those who are the called, beloved in God the Father, and kept for Jesus Christ:*

Now if all of this is true, how did we ever get in union with Christ or become identified with Him, the One Who is seated billions and billions of light years away? The answer is the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. God the Holy Spirit, with His omnipotence, did all the work. The Baptism of the Holy Spirit is the great identification for the Church-age believer. It is the baptism that makes you a new creation, Royal Family of God, part of the Body of Christ, and part of the Church or the Bride of Christ. It is a real and actual identification.

The fourth real baptism takes place at the end of the Tribulation at the Second Advent and is called the Baptism of Fire. It is when all the unbelievers who survive the Tribulation are put into the fire of torments, referred to as the Baptism of Fire or Identification with Fire. As a result, only believers will enter the Millennium.

There are also three ritual baptisms, which are representative identifications in which water is used to portray some actual identification. First there is the baptism of John, portraying identification with the kingdom of which John was preaching. Second is the baptism of the Lord Jesus Christ where water represented His identification with God's plan. Third, we have what is called Christian baptism, which had been a learning tool prior to the completion of the canon of Scripture and identified the believer with rejection of human good and the production of divine good inside the predesigned plan of God.

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Point 2. The Baptism of the Holy Spirit is one of the seven ministries of God the Holy Spirit at salvation.

The Baptism of the Holy Spirit is the means whereby every Church-age believer is placed in union with Christ. It is the function of the omnipotence of the Holy Spirit at salvation. The Baptism of the Spirit is not an experience; it is the function of the omnipotence of the Holy Spirit putting every believer into union with Christ, making him a new creature or a new spiritual species. We have a phrase in the Bible, en plus the locative of Christos, which is translated, in Christ.

Romans 8:1 *Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in [union with] Christ Jesus.*

We are sanctified in Christ, **1 Corinthians 1:2**. *If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature,* **2 Corinthians 5:17**. Merrill Unger states that there are approximately 150 passages in the New Testament that deal with the believer in Christ. Therefore, the Baptism of the Holy Spirit is related to the dispensation of the Church only. Every person in the Church-age who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ, **Acts 16:31**, reveals the Baptism of the Spirit, or, in other words, is placed in union with Christ. The Baptism of the Holy Spirit is an act of the omnipotence of God the Holy Spirit, and any time that God uses His divine power, whether it's the omnipotence of God the Father, God the Son or God the Holy Spirit, it excludes any form of experiential cooperation. The Baptism of the Holy Spirit is not an experience nor is it an emotion! It is not something felt, and it is strictly of grace.

There are four Pentecosts that took place in Acts Chapters 2, 8, 11 and 19, illustrating the Baptism of the Holy Spirit at the beginning of the Church-age. In fact, the Baptism of the Spirit was the official announcement of the new dispensation, and the Baptism of the Holy Spirit is also related to the resurrection, ascension, and session of the Lord Jesus Christ.

John 7:37-39 *Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.'" But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive, for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.*

The Baptism of the Holy Spirit could not occur until the Lord Jesus Christ was glorified, or until He was resurrected, ascended, and seated at the right hand of

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God. First came the head who was baptized and filled with the Holy Spirit; then came the body who was baptized or placed in union with the head, Christ. This is how the Church was formed, how the body was formed. This is how the believer becomes a new creature. It is the most important thing that happens to us in distinguishing us from believers of other dispensations. The Baptism of the Spirit makes it possible for us to have equal privilege and equal opportunity in the Church-age.

Ephesians 4:4-5 *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,*

Please notice, one baptism, not water baptism, one baptism, **1 Corinthians 12:13**: *For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.* This is a reference to Spirit baptism; the one baptism is the Baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Point 3. The Baptism of the Holy Spirit produces a new spiritual individual in the following ways:

1. The Baptism of the Spirit means the believer is in union with Christ, **1 John 5:11-12**.
2. It gives the individual the righteousness of Christ, **2 Corinthians 5:21**. The moment we believed in Christ the Holy Spirit entered us in union with Christ and His righteousness becomes our righteousness!
3. It qualifies us to become partners and sharers in the escrow savings account, **Colossians 1:12, Ephesians 1:3-14**.
4. We also have been given a predesigned plan which the Lord Jesus Christ exemplified, **Ephesians 1:5-6**.
5. The Baptism of the Holy Spirit gives us sonship, **Galatians 3:26, Ephesians 1:5**.
6. It gives us an heirship, in that we are heirs of God, **Romans 8:16-17**.
7. We are royal priests through the Baptism of the Spirit, **1 Peter 2:9**.
8. We have been given a kingdom, **2 Peter 1:11**.

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9. We have positional sanctification and eternal security, **1 Corinthians 1:2, 1:30.**

We therefore share everything that Christ has as members of His Royal Family. You should understand why Satan tries to blind the believer from the true meaning of the Baptism of the Spirit. Some say baptism refers to water, others say to tongues, and still others say it is a second blessing. As we noted, God says, ONE Lord, ONE faith, ONE baptism! The Baptism of the Spirit simply means that the head and the body are united into one spiritual entity.

The Baptism was the announcement of the beginning of the second Christocentric dispensation, the dispensation of the Church. The Greek word for church, ekklesia, can mean an 'assembly' or a 'calling out', and is used for all believers on the earth, **Ephesians 1:22-23, Ephesians 5:25-27, Colossians 1:17-18.** Actually the Church is divided into two parts as Paul tells us in **Colossians 1:2**, hagnos and pistos adelphos, i.e., saints (all) and faithful brethren. The universal Church is simply the Royal Family of God. A second meaning of ekklesia is the concept of the local church or the local classroom. Joseph Thayer says that ekklesia as the local church refers to a company of Christians observing their own doctrines, holding their own religious meetings and managing their own affairs according to the regulations prescribed in the Word of God.

It is also important to note that the Church-age or the dispensation of the Church is the dispensation of mystery. We are living in the disposition of the Church-age, which was a mystery to the Old Testament saints, **Romans 16:25-26, Ephesians 3:1-5, Colossians 1:25-26.** The Church was never known before this dispensation. Old Testament writers and communicators never proclaimed its doctrine. In fact, the word 'church' is not found in the Old Testament.

The Church-age is based upon the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ was resurrected, ascended, and seated at the right hand of God. At that time something new was in Heaven - royalty with a resurrected body, **Ephesians 1:18-23.** The only member of the human race in Heaven with a resurrected body is the Lord Jesus Christ. Moses is there but he doesn't have a resurrected body, nor does Joshua or David, and they are unable to obtain a resurrection body at this time because the Royal Family has to be formed first. A new dispensation interrupted the age of Israel, and on the day of Pentecost God began the Church, or the calling out of the Royal Family of God. The Church-age began in Acts Chapter 2 and will continue until the Royal Family is complete. After that will be the Rapture, at which time all believers will

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receive resurrected bodies. The dispensation of the Church-age is a unique dispensation and absolutely different from all others. For instance:

1. All believers in the Church-age are royalty forever. The universal priesthood of the believer makes every member of the Church a royal priest.
2. The Church is a kingdom of royal priests with the Lord Jesus Christ as the high priest and supreme ruler.
3. We have the indwelling of God the Holy Spirit as a sign of the Royal Family of God.
4. We have the indwelling of the person of Christ for fellowship.
5. We have the indwelling of God the Father as a guarantee of escrow blessings and the portfolio of invisible assets, including the predesigned plan of God.
6. We have the instructions of the Royal Family all reduced to writing so that divine revelation is now on the written page.
7. We have a new classroom and a new means of spiritual growth and a new means of communication.
8. We are the personal representatives of the Lord Jesus Christ on earth and are called the Royal Ambassadors of the Lord, **2 Corinthians 5:17-21**.

The first principle we need to note concerning the Church-age is the fact that it is the dispensation of the perfect divine plan. God is perfect and therefore His plan is perfect. What does that mean? It means a perfect God can only design a perfect plan. It would be impossible for perfect God to come up with an imperfect plan; that is blasphemous and unthinkable. Secondly, a perfect plan designed by perfect God demands a perfect system of execution. This means that there is a perfect system of execution or a pre-designed plan for the Church-age believer. Obviously man is not perfect so he cannot use his human power to live in that system or to execute the Christian way of life. Thirdly, the dispensation of the Church or the Royal Family of God is the dispensation where only the omnipotence of God can execute the perfect will of God. For the plan of God to be carried out in the Church-age, it demands that the believer rely on divine power and not human power.

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Point 4. Authority of the Holy Spirit

Even though the Lord Jesus Christ is the ruler of the Church, most believers reject His authority and His power. We are living in a time when the majority of believers have rejected the rulership of Jesus Christ over the Church, although if you made this statement to these apostates they would be shocked. They would say, "you are wrong, I accept the rulership of Jesus Christ", but it is impossible to accept the rulership of Christ without doing things His way. And to do things His way we have to utilize divine power, and to utilize divine power we have to learn some doctrine, and to learn some doctrine we have to sit still in a church under the authority of the pastor-teacher, in the filling of the Holy Spirit, for a long enough period of time to get the point!

The authority of the Holy Spirit is the fact that He is God. He is omniscient, **1 Corinthians 2:1-11**, He is omnipotent, **Genesis 1:2**, He is omnipresent, **Psalms 139:7-10**, He is eternal life, **Hebrews 9:14**, He is truthful, **1 John 5:6**, and He is sovereign, **1 Corinthians 12:11**. While God the Father predesigned the plan for Church-age believers, and Our Lord Jesus Christ executed that plan, it is God the Holy Spirit Who is the revealer of the predesigned plan, having been sent by both God the Father and God the Son for that purpose.

John 14:26 *"But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, Whom the Father will send in My [the Lord Jesus Christ's] name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.*

1 John 2:27 *As for you, the anointing which you received from Him abides in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you; but as His anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you abide in Him.*

Point 5. Pervading Power of the Holy Spirit

Winners accept the power of God, while losers reject the power of God. Winners learn how to use divine omnipotence through the perception and metabolization and application of Bible doctrine. Losers use some category of creature power to replace divine power and the rulership of Christ in their lives. Many use, as their form of power to serve God, emotionalism, morality generated by the cosmic system, or the energy of arrogance motivated by approbation and power lust. They use human love instead of virtue love, and virtue love can only be developed under the pervading power of the Holy

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Spirit. Or they might use a sweet pseudo personality of creature appeal instead of the Spirit-filled personality of divine power. The reason is that they have revolted against the rulership of the Lord Jesus Christ over the Church. Therefore we need to note that there are two times in history when the Lord Jesus Christ rules under a perfect system.

First, in the Church-age we have a perfect system designed by a perfect ruler. The perfect ruler of the Church is the Lord Jesus Christ. The perfect plan is described in **Matthew 7:14**, *For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few [believers with positive volition toward Bible doctrine] who find it.* The Lord Jesus Christ is the perfect ruler of the Church and the Royal Family, **Ephesians 1:22**.

Secondly, in the Millennium we have perfect rulership when Satan is bound for 1,000 years. Now, as in the prehistoric Angelic Conflict, so goes human history in that certain creatures are not content to live under perfect rulership and a perfect plan. Our Lord's rulership was rejected by certain angels, **Revelation 12:4-8**. His rulership is rejected by believers in the Church-age who reject His perfect plan, **Matthew 7:14**. His rulership will be rejected in the Millennium, **Revelation 20:7-8**. Therefore, the majority of mankind rejects the rulership of Our Lord Jesus Christ in two categories:

1. The born again creatures that reject Our Lord Jesus Christ's perfect rulership over the Church are referred to as carnal Christians or cosmic Christians. They will be known as losers at the Bema Seat Judgment, **1 Corinthians 3:15**. They will not lose their salvation, but they will lose the blessings deposited into their escrow savings account. The tragedy of being a loser is the result of rejecting Our Lord's perfect rulership over the Church.

2. Those in the Millennium who reject Our Lord's perfect reign and perfect government are unbelievers who have rejected Jesus Christ as Savior under the evangelism of the Millennium. They have also become dissatisfied with perfect environment and their dissatisfaction is based upon the fact that they have no capacity for that which is provided by God. This lack of capacity for the perfect environment of the Millennium will be just like our original parents, Adam and the woman in the Garden, who also had absolutely no capacity and eventually lost everything they had. Today we are looking for the Garden; we are looking for perfect environment, we are saying, "better environment means I'll be happy" and "oh, if I just had a different environment". We are saying, as believers in the Church-age under the perfect rulership of the Lord Jesus Christ, "I want this, I want that". The best environment in all of history occurs at the time of the Millennial Reign of Christ and there will be a tremendous

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revolution against it. At the end of the Millennium when Satan is released after serving a thousand year prison term, he leads a conspiracy against Christ. It is called the Gog and Magog revolution in Revelation 20. And this revolution demonstrates the fact that mankind, like the angels before him, is never satisfied apart from the divine capacity for life that comes from regeneration and spiritual living - the capacity of the mature believer.

Improved environment, better environment, perfect environment - these are not the solution to man's problems. Even when every desire, every lust, every drive has been satisfied, mankind still wants more, more, more, and more. The carnal believer of the Church-age and the unbeliever or reversionistic believer of the Millennium have one thing in common, an arrogance that destroys capacity for life, and rejects perfect leadership, a perfect policy, a perfect plan, and ultimately perfect happiness, **Ephesians 5:14-17**.

Actually the best time to be alive on planet earth is during Our Lord's rule over the Church. It is far better to be living historically during the Church-age than to be a human being during the Millennium. We have every opportunity during the Church-age to be on top of history, adversity and every situation in life. There is no problem too great for the divine provision of the Church-age.

The main reason why believers today fail and become losers is simply because either they are not aware of, or they reject, what God has provided: the lifestyle of wisdom, the provision of divine omnipotence, equal privilege and equal opportunity, and their escrow account of blessings for time and eternity. The fact that so many believers have rejected the daily intake of Bible doctrine and do not walk wisely as **Ephesians 5:15** commands doesn't mean that there is anything wrong with the plan of God. It simply means that negative volition has overcome too many believers and has produced spiritual slobs! As Royal Family they are not even close to **Matthew 7:14** and the utilization of divine omnipotence, which is available to every Church-age believer who desires it. Christ is head over all things in the Church and yet cosmic believers have yet to discover this, not to mention the existence of His plan! And so they are enemies of the cross.

Never before in human history has life been so important and so meaningful as it is in this dispensation. And, think of it, did you ever ask yourself the question, why am I here now? Why wasn't I following Moses as he crossed the desert in those 40 years?

The Church-age is the mystery dispensation. The Lord Jesus Christ even used the word mystery as He was preparing His disciples for the ministry. The

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Greek word for mystery, *musterion*, denotes the secrets and the doctrines of the ancient Greek fraternities. If an individual wanted to be part of a fraternity, he had to be initiated into that fraternity before knowing its covert activities, which were referred to as secrets or mysteries. The ancient Greek fraternities had a ritual called *mustes*, used to initiate someone into the fraternity. The individual would have to learn the secrets or the doctrines of the fraternity and then pass an examination based on those secrets. The Lord Jesus Christ used the word mystery in **Matthew 13:11**, **Luke 8:10**, and Mark 4:11. The disciples were confused sometimes because Our Lord taught in parables, and so they would ask Him, what are you saying?

Matthew 13:10-11 *And the disciples came and said to Him, "Why do you speak to them in parables?" Jesus answered them, "To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven, but to them [believers during dispensations prior to the Church-age] it has not been granted."*

The mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven have to do with Church-age doctrine. The Church-age was unknown to Old Testament writers, and it was unknown to the disciples. But once the Church-age began, they had a great deal of revelation concerning it. A new system of doctrine was beginning to open up. It was a system of doctrine that dealt with a new dispensation, a system of doctrine that had never been written in Old Testament times. Something startling and absolutely new was about to exist. That is why most mystery doctrines come from the epistles. In fact, there are almost none at all in the gospels, with the exception of John Chapters 15-17, the Upper Room Discourse, where Church-age doctrine is mentioned. Of course the leading proponent of the mystery doctrines is the apostle Paul himself. Mystery doctrine began with the inculcation of the Church-age. The Hypostatic Union was completed, the Jewish age or the age of Israel came to a halt, and on the day of Pentecost in 30 A.D., the Church-age began.

The first Christocentric dispensation ended with a resurrection. The second Christocentric dispensation (the Church-age) will also end with a resurrection, which we call the Rapture of the Church. The very fact that the Church-age was inserted meant that there had to be new doctrine to explain it all. There is no doctrine in the Old Testament that even comes close to explaining anything about the Church-age. This is why we have a New Testament. This is why we have a completed Canon of Scripture. This is why we have the epistles to clarify and to keep us out of the Jewish age. God says in effect, stay out of the dispensation of Israel. Do not try to be a new Israel. Do not try to live by the Mosaic Law or the Levitical offerings, or in a specialized priesthood.

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1 Corinthians 2:7 *But we speak God's wisdom [or God's doctrines] in a mystery [mystery doctrine of Church-age], the hidden wisdom, which God predestined before the ages to our glory;*

The phrase to our glory is a reference to the fact that the intake of mystery doctrine is the means whereby we glorify God. To be minus mystery doctrine is to be minus the ability to glorify God. The Church-age is the dispensation of mystery doctrine, but its doctrine is not to be a mystery in the Church-age itself! **Ephesians 1:3-10.**

Ephesians 1:9 *He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention, which He purposed in Him*

The mystery doctrine is a part of the canon of the New Testament and it is communicated by pastor-teachers who are qualified, which means males with the spiritual gift plus preparation in the form of study and teach, study and teach, study and teach. Verse 9 says, He made known to us the mystery of His will,...; What does it mean by mystery? It simply means that you are in the locker room before the game, you have been taught the mystery or the game plan, and those in the stands who are eating and drinking do not know a thing about the game plan. The game plan is a mystery to the people in the stands and is known only to the team. Since the day you believed in Christ you have been on the team, but just being on the team is not enough. If you do not learn the game plan, you've had it. You will end up being a loser no matter how talented or gifted you are.

Ephesians 1:7-9 *In Him we have redemption through His blood, and forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace, which He lavished on us. In all wisdom and insight He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention, which He purposed in Him.*

Notice the phrase, riches of His grace, which He lavished on us. Now, ask the question, when? The answer is when He made known to us the mystery of His will [or mystery doctrine]. That is when we become super rich and the mystery is revealed. We now know and understand the game plan. And what is the basis for mystery doctrine? It is the fact that every Church-age believer is a member of the Royal Family, a priest and an ambassador. Every believer also has equal privilege and equal opportunity. The lowest to the highest, the dumbest to the smartest ...; every believer possesses the same privileges and the same opportunities. Church-age believers have something that has never been available before, which is why Moses longed to see our day. He knew that

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there was something hidden, but any time he detected a clue about the Church-age, there was a blank wall, a mystery.

Mystery doctrine is predesigned around the Baptism of the Holy Spirit or being in union with Christ, and unfortunately the Baptism of the Holy Spirit is a mystery to most believers today! All of this was part of the victory and the mystery of the Angelic Conflict. Mystery doctrine tells us we are ambassadors for Christ. This makes us something very special, in that we are representatives of the Lord. We are all in full-time Christian service. Because we live in a time after Our Lord defeated Satan and accomplished His victory on the cross, there must be something that complements Our Lord's victory. Right now Jesus Christ is seated at the right hand of the Father. The victory is won, but what are some of the benefits and rewards of this victory? They are you and I - we are ambassadors for Christ. We are very special persons, for we are representatives of the Lord. How can we as His ambassadors complement His victory on the cross? The answer is to reveal that victory on earth, which is why we are here. This is why we need to take in doctrine on a daily basis. It will lead us to spiritual growth that will take us to spiritual maturity. And when we arrive at spiritual maturity, the Lord then complements us. When we reach spiritual maturity and develop a capacity, He gives us great wealth, success, inner happiness, promotion, social prosperity, sexual prosperity, or material prosperity. If we are in a certain profession, He promotes us and prospers the business. He provides His ambassadors, Church-age believers, with fantastic things. This is also a part of mystery doctrine.

Mystery doctrine and its relationship to the Church-age

The Church-age is the dispensation of the formation of the Royal Family of God. It is a new dispensation, where the Jewish believer is no longer emphasized as a Jewish believer but is now Royal Family.

Ephesians 3:1-11 *For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles -- if indeed you have heard of the dispensation of God's grace which was given to me for you; that by revelation there was made known to me the mystery, as I wrote before in brief. By referring to this, when you read you may understand my knowledge [sunesis, meaning my 'categorical knowledge'] into the mystery of Christ, which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit; to be specific, that the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the Gospel, of which I was made a minister, according to the gift of God's grace which was given to me according to the working of His*

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power. To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ, and to bring to light what is the dispensation of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God who created all things; so that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the Church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places. This was in accordance with the eternal purpose, which He carried out in Christ Jesus Our Lord,

We should notice that the distinction between Jew and Gentile has been removed, **Galatians 3:28**. The prophecy of this came when Our Lord died on the cross. The temple veil in the Holy of Holies was torn from top to bottom, indicating the fact that all Royal Family of God now have access to the Holy of Holies, **Hebrews 4:16**. We will live there forever and ever and by positional truth we live there now, even though the Holy of Holies is in Heaven. We are in heavenly places, and our eternal home is the Holy of Holies.

Divine wisdom in hiding mystery doctrine in the Old Testament is very important to understand. Because of the fact that the Old Testament is minus Church-age doctrine, it is also minus Church-age policy. Old Testament prophets were aware of the first and second advents of Christ, but they were not aware of the Church-age. **Romans 16:25-26** is a statement of the blackout of Church-age doctrine in the Old Testament.

Romans 16:25-26 *Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my Gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which has been kept secret for long ages past, but now is manifested, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, has been made known to all the nations, leading to obedience of faith;*

Note that it is no longer a mystery, or let's say, it SHOULD NOT be a mystery.

Colossians 1:25-27 *Of this Church I was made a minister according to the dispensation from God bestowed on me for your benefit, so that I might fully carry out the preaching of the Word of God, that is, the mystery which has been hidden from the past ages and generations, but has now been manifested to His saints, to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the Hope of Glory.*

There are many doctrines referring to mystery doctrine found in the New Testament that are not found in the Old Testament:

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1. The existence of the Royal Family of God: Throughout the Old Testament, when a person was born again the Holy Spirit regenerated him and made him a member of the family of God. When the Lord Jesus Christ told Nicodemus in John 3:3 that he must be born again, He was speaking during the age of Israel and He was talking about a doctrine that everyone could understand. However, the fact that certain people would become royalty at the moment of salvation was a mystery and unknown to the Old Testament saints. This is taught in **Ephesians 3:6** and **5:32**.

2. The doctrine of the Baptism of the Spirit and positional sanctification: The Baptism of the Spirit is being in union with Christ, **1 Corinthians 12:13**. Every believer lives in the Holy of Holies in the Church-age dispensation.

3. God the Holy Spirit indwelling the body of every believer: Beginning on the day of Pentecost, every Church-age believer is indwelt by God the Holy Spirit, **1 Corinthians 3:16, 3:19, 6:19-20**.

4. The indwelling of God the Son: Obviously in the Old Testament there was no indwelling of Christ. Christ primarily revealed Himself in Old Testament times as an angel - for example, the angel of Jehovah. In the Bible we have Theophanies and Christophanies. A Theophany is a manifestation of Christ before the incarnation. A Christophany is a manifestation of Christ after His resurrection. However, now we have something that was never revealed before, which is the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ, the Shekinah glory, would indwell every member of the Royal Family. In Old Testament times, Israel would look out of their tents and see the Shekinah glory in a cloud by day or pillar of fire by night. It meant the Lord was indwelling the Holy of Holies for blessing, but today we have Christ indwelling each believer's body, **Galatians 2:20, John 14:20**.

5. A new contract or covenant: The old contract was the Mosaic Law. The new mystery contract or covenant was never revealed in Old Testament times. There is talk of a new covenant in the Old Testament, but it refers to the Millennium, **Jeremiah 31:31**.

6. A new priesthood: The fact that every believer is a priest is a very unusual and startling change ...; a very dramatic change! In the Old Testament they only knew of a specialized priesthood, the Levitical priesthood or the family priesthood. There was no such thing as every believer being his own priest; this was a brand new doctrine! Every member of the Royal Family of God is his own priest under the high priesthood of Jesus Christ. This universal

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priesthood of the believer was never revealed before, **1 Peter 2:5-9**, **Revelation 1:6** and **20:6**.

7. The new ministry of God the Holy Spirit: For the first time in all of history the Royal Family of God is commanded to be filled with the Spirit. This is a command that was never given before. During Old Testament dispensations the power of God was available to a few believers. The temporary indwelling of the Holy Spirit empowered particular Old Testament believers who held positions of unusual responsibility. God gave these prominent believers access to His power so they could carry out their particular functions, **Numbers 11:16-17** and **27:8-20**, **Judges 3:10**, **6:34**, **11:29**, **13:25**, **14:6** and **15:14**, **1 Samuel 10:6-10**, **11:6**, and **16:13**, **Ezekiel 2:2** and **3:24**, **Micah 3:8**, **Zechariah 7:12**. But in the Church-age there exists the ministry of God the Holy Spirit controlling the soul of the believer. And when the Holy Spirit does not control the soul of the believer, the Holy Spirit is said to be grieved or quenched. Believers grieve the Holy Spirit when they succumb to temptation and allow sin to enter their lives. The Holy Spirit is quenched when the Christian resists or rejects the will of God. A ministry such as this was never ever revealed in the Old Testament. Be filled with the Spirit is a command in the New Testament, **Ephesians 5:18**. Walk by the Spirit is a command in the New Testament, **Galatians 5:16**.

8. The completed canon of Scripture: This radically changed the manner of Divine revelation from God to man. Until the canon of Scripture was completed, there were certain systems of revelation that were very common in the Old Testament and epistles. There were verbal communications, teaching of angels, dreams, visions, trances ... all of these things were used by God to communicate doctrine. Plus, there was no reference to the fact that the time would come when God would no longer speak in dreams, visions and trances, and that the phrase, thus saith the Lord would no longer be used. The canon of Scripture is now complete and closed to any additions, subtractions or revisions, and God only reveals Himself through the written page and no other way, **Revelation 22:18-19**. This was something totally unknown to the Old Testament writers. With the insertion of the Church-age, we have a new set of spiritual instructions in writing that must be communicated by a pastor-teacher in a new classroom, the local assembly. All of these things were totally unknown in the Old Testament.

9. A new type of service: In the Old Testament only certain people were called into service full-time. In the New Testament a unique kind of service exists for the first time in history, in that every believer is an ambassador for Christ and in full-time Christian service. Every Church-age believer from the moment of

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salvation to the end of physical life is an ambassador and a royal priest. He doesn't have to dedicate himself to service and he doesn't walk down an aisle and surrender to full-time service. He IS in full-time Christian service. This was never found in the Old Testament.

10. The mystery of the bride of Christ and His body, **Ephesians 5:32**: We are said to be in God, **1 Thessalonians 1:1**; God in you, **Ephesians 4:6**; In Christ, **John 14:20**; Christ in you, **Colossians 1:27**; a member of His body, **1 Corinthians 12:13**; a branch in the vine, **John 15:5**; a stone in the building, **Ephesians 2:21-22**; a sheep in the flock, **John 10:27-29**; a part of His bride, **Ephesians 5:25-27**; a priest of the kingdom of priests, **1 Peter 2:9**; a new species, **2 Corinthians 5:17**.

11. The communicator of mystery doctrine is the pastor-teacher of the local church: The pastor-teacher is the communicator and the local church is the place of communication. **1 Corinthians 4:1** states, Let a man regard us in this manner, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. [That is, Paul, Apollos, Peter, Timothy and Titus.] The Greek word for steward is oi-ko-no-mous, meaning a 'distributor' or 'one who manages'. This word meant to be a superintendent to whom the head of the house entrusted the management of his affairs. It was someone who was responsible for representing the king. Pastor-teachers are to be distributors of mystery doctrine.

12. The Rapture is a part of mystery doctrine in **1 Corinthians 15:50-52**: The mystery of the Church being a part of the body of Christ and therefore members of the Royal Family is taught in **Ephesians 5:30-32**. Because we live in the Church-age with a new policy called mystery doctrine we should live as honorable, well-mannered people. The honorable Christian lives by a code of honor, in that virtue is his number one priority, he respects authority, he loves God with personal love, and he loves man with impersonal, unconditional love. This love manifests the dynamics of Christian integrity. The honorable believer represents Christ in a gracious style that reflects the Royal Family aristocracy. Aristocracy connotes excellence, achievement, courage, and a sense of responsibility. An important factor of mystery doctrine is that we are spiritual aristocrats. We did not earn our exalted new birth just as no royal infant deserves to be a prince. Our royalty is the result of the accomplishments of someone else.

Jesus Christ founded our royal dynasty nearly 2,000 years ago as a result of His strategic victory over Satan on the cross. That is when He earned the exalted title of King of kings and Lord of lords. At spiritual birth we enter the Royal Family of the Lord Jesus Christ and He has given us a code of honor by which

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to live. Our royal code of honor is taught throughout the New Testament especially in Romans, Chapters 12 through 16. We do not live under systems of legalism or religious traditions. We live in a system where power is available to live in this new royal honor code.

The Royal Family Honor Code is a result of mystery doctrine. Principles of the Royal Family Honor Code are as follows:

1. Respect for the privacy of the royal priesthood. The Christian way of life is a life of freedom, **Galatians 5:1**. Privacy is essential to freedom. The principle of the honor code then is live and let live, **Romans 14:7-8**. This means abstaining from presumptuous sins, from rumors and hearsay, **Romans 14:10-13**. Respect for the privacy of the priesthood also demands toleration of the erroneous opinions of immature believers on non-essential matters, **Romans 14:1-3**. Ultimately, Bible doctrine is essential. Everything else, to a greater or lesser degree, is non-essential, **Romans 14:19**. As a believer grows in the Word, doctrine corrects his opinions; and that is without the interference of the opinions of others. Toleration permits all believers to gather in the local assembly and approach the Word of God objectively. As royal priests representing themselves before the Lord, the immature have the privacy and freedom to grow while the mature have opportunities to develop strength through flexibility.

2. Love all people with unconditional love, **John 13:34**. Unconditional love emphasizes your own integrity. Unconditional love demands that you hold no grudge or resentment against anyone, especially other believers. Why? Because they possess the same imputed righteousness of God that you possess.

Hebrews 13:1 *Let love of the brethren continue.*

1 John 3:11 *For this is the message, which you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another;*

John 15:12 *"This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you."*

Romans 12:9-10 *Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor;*

1 John 4:11 *Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.*

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3. Recognize that all believers have a common objective. God keeps each believer alive to advance to maturity. Under the honor code you must persevere in the perception and application of Bible doctrine. You must submit to the authority of your pastor-teacher, which also means you demonstrate courtesy, thoughtfulness and sensitivity toward those in the congregation who may be at a different stage of spiritual growth, **Romans 15:5-17**.

4. Build integrity. Integrity is the standard of the Royal Family. Integrity is superior to morality. Morality belongs to believers and unbelievers alike. The believer's integrity is rooted in the filling of the Spirit and in Bible doctrine, while the unbeliever's morality is the fulfillment of the divine laws of establishment. Christian integrity therefore exceeds but also includes morality. Morality develops into legalism when it is assumed to be the Christian way of life, **Romans 13:1, 8-10**.

5. Never assume that production is a means of divine blessing. Your talent, personality, I.Q., sacrifice, asceticism, and ability never merit blessing from God. He blesses His own imputed righteousness in you. God recognizes only integrity which is the standard of maturity attained through living as per **Matthew 7:14**, For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it. Divine integrity is the source of all blessing to man. God blesses from His integrity (His perfect righteousness and justice) to integrity (imputed righteousness in the believer), not from His integrity to human works. Production is a result of spiritual advance, never the cause. Once momentum from Bible doctrine is recognized as the cause of spiritual growth and integrity and blessing, then self righteousness is excluded from your life, **Matthew 6:33**.

6. Depend totally on the integrity of God. In order to depend on God you must be intimately aware of his attributes through understanding Bible doctrine. For instance, your point of contact with God is His integrity not His love. The entire Christian life is centered on the integrity of God. This means that we are to be totally dependent on God's justice and righteousness. This is called hope in the Bible, **Romans 15:13**, and it is the confident expectation of blessing. This confidence motivates and sustains your spiritual momentum and you are carried toward maturity by what you think, i.e., thinking under the honor code principle. Right thinking creates right motivation and right motivation leads to right action, **Romans 12:1-2**.

7. Remember the honor code is for all believers. The Royal Family Honor Code is not just for brilliant and accomplished people; it is God's system and

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game plan for all. All believers are to be treated under the Royal Family Honor Code.

Romans 12:3 *For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith.*

Romans 14:1-8 *Now accept the one who is weak in faith, but not for the purpose of passing judgment on his opinions. One person has faith that he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats vegetables only. The one who eats is not to regard with contempt the one who does not eat, and the one who does not eat is not to judge the one who eats, for God has accepted him. Who are you to judge the servant of another? To his own master he stands or falls; and he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand. One person regards one day above another; another regards every day alike. Each person must be fully convinced in his own mind. He who observes the day observes it for the Lord, and he who eats does so for the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and he who eats not, for the Lord he does not eat, and gives thanks to God. For not one of us lives for himself, and not one dies for himself; for if we live, we live for the Lord, or if we die, we die for the Lord; therefore whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.*

8. More is demanded of the strong than the weak. We are all Royal Family, yet no two believers are equal. Some are stronger and more advanced than others, depending on their consistent perception and application of doctrine. Maturity imposes the obligation of honorable generous behavior, **Romans 15:1-4**. The strong are obliged to tolerate the obnoxious opinions and actions of the weak, **Romans 14:1**. A proud person might assume you are weak and might ridicule you because you do not correct the immature believers, but there is no weakness in such flexibility. The mature believer is very relaxed and maintains a sense of humor about himself, about life and about others.

9. Orientation to authority is a part of the Royal Family Honor Code. Arrogant people are weak and the weak resent authority. Authority, however, protects freedom, **1 Peter 2:13-20**. Like human freedom, your freedom as a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ demands privacy and humility. Genuine humility submits to the pastor-teacher who faithfully teaches Bible doctrine, **Hebrews 13:7**. God has delegated His authority to pastors, **Ephesians 4:11**, and always protects His servants as **Isaiah 54:17** states.

10. Support financially for the privilege of hearing doctrine taught. Reciprocate and give with no strings attached. Christian giving is a matter of

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honor under the Royal Family Honor Code. Galatians 6:6: The one who is taught the Word is to share all good things with the one who teaches him. God measures giving by the motivation behind the gift, not by the amount, **Mark 12:41-44**. Also, the Royal Family Honor Code demands a generous attitude in return for the benefits received, **Romans 15:26-27**. However, this generous mental attitude is molded only from within by the gradual buildup of Bible doctrine in the soul. No one can force any believer to be properly motivated to give. The church may make needs known, but must never beg nor manipulate the believer to give. The pastor-teacher's generosity in teaching doctrine deserves to be compensated, **1 Timothy 5:17-18**.

Matthew 10:10 *or a bag for your journey, or even two coats, or sandals, or a staff; for the worker is worthy of his support.*

1 Corinthians 9:14 *So also the Lord directed those who proclaim the Gospel to get their living from the Gospel.*

Galatians 6:6 *The one who is taught the Word is to share all good things with the one who teaches him.*

However, if a believer is not motivated to give, unconditional love is not offended. Giving is commanded but your giving must not be irresponsible, **1 Timothy 5:8**.

Now, recalling Revelation Chapter 2, there are two Christocentric dispensations. The first Christocentric dispensation terminated with a resurrection (that of the Lord Jesus Christ), and the second Christocentric dispensation terminates with a resurrection (the Church), referred to as the Rapture.

Revelation 6:12-17 *I looked when He broke the sixth seal, and there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth made of hair, and the whole moon became like blood; and the stars of the sky fell to the earth, as a fig tree casts its unripe figs when shaken by a great wind. The sky was split apart like a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. Then the kings of the earth and the great men and the commanders and the rich and the strong and every slave and free man hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains; and they said to the mountains and to the rocks, 'Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to stand?'"*

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Note that the wrath of God will be poured out upon the world during the great Tribulation.

1 Thessalonians 1:9-10 *For they themselves report about us what kind of a reception we had with you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God, and to wait for His Son from Heaven, whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath to come.*

1 Thessalonians 5:9-11 *For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through Our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep, we will live together with Him. Therefore encourage one another and build up one another, just as you also are doing.*

The Rapture, or the resurrection of the Church, is God's means of terminating the Church-age and delivering us from the wrath to come. This is why **Titus 2:13** calls the Rapture or appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ our blessed (makarios) hope (elpis) or 'happy guarantee'. All believers can have confidence with regard to the Rapture. The Rapture is a happy guarantee or a doctrine that produces confidence. The confidence is the fact that we have been delivered from the wrath to come. The Rapture is the Lord's victory, not our reward, **1 Corinthians 15:57**. So, the Church-age terminates with the translation of the Church into the Lord's presence. The doctrine of the Translation of the Church is found in the following passages:

John 14:1-3 *"Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. In my Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also."*

2 Thessalonians 2:1 *Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of Our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him,*

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 *But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. For this we say to you by the Word of the Lord, that we, who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the*

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Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words.

1 Corinthians 1:8 *Paul, called as an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother, to the Church of God which is at Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, saints by calling, with all who in every place call on the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God which was given you in Christ Jesus, that in everything you were enriched in Him, in all speech and all knowledge, even as the testimony concerning Christ was confirmed in you, so that you are not lacking in any gift, awaiting eagerly the revelation of Our Lord Jesus Christ, who will also confirm you to the end, blameless in the day of Our Lord Jesus Christ.*

1 Corinthians 15:51-52 *Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.*

Philippians 3:20-21 *For our citizenship is in Heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.*

2 Corinthians 5:1-9 *For we know that if the earthly tent, which is our house, is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For indeed in this house we groan, longing to be clothed with our dwelling from Heaven, inasmuch as we, having put it on, will not be found naked. For indeed while we are in this tent, we groan, being burdened, because we do not want to be unclothed but to be clothed, so that what is mortal will be swallowed up by life. Now He who prepared us for this very purpose is God, who gave to us the Spirit as a pledge. Therefore, being always of good courage, and knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord -- for we walk by faith, not by sight -- we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord. Therefore we also have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him.*

Because the Church and Israel are two distinct groups with whom God has a divine plan, one has to be taken away while the other is dealt with. There are a number of words used in both the Old and New Testaments to describe the

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Tribulational period. It will be a time of wrath, **1 Thessalonians 5:9**, **Revelation 6:16-17, 11:18, 14:19**; a time of judgment, **Revelation 14:7, 20:4, 16:5-17** cf **Romans 8:1**; a time of indignation, **Isaiah 26:20-21, 34:1-3**; a time of punishment, **Isaiah 24:20-21**; the hour of trial, **Revelation 3:10**; the hour of trouble, **Jeremiah 30:7**; destruction, **Joel 1:15**; darkness, **Joel 2:2, Zephaniah 1:14-18, Amos 5:18**. It is a time of great wrath and the Lord has delivered us out from it, **Revelation 3:10**. This period of time is called the time of Jacob's trouble in **Jeremiah 30:7**, NOT the time of the Church's trouble. For God has not destined us for wrath ...;

We have noted many passages in the New Testament, such as **Ephesians 3:1-6, Colossians 1:25-27** and **Romans 16:25-26**, which make it clear that the Church is a mystery unrevealed in the Old Testament. The Church, therefore, could not have been in view in the Old Testament prophecy concerning the Tribulational period, which is to come upon the whole earth. There can be no question that this period will see the wrath of God poured out upon the whole earth. **Revelation 3:10, Isaiah 34:2, 24:1, 4-5, 16-21**, and many other passages make it very clear. However, in **Jeremiah 30:7** this period is specifically called the time of Jacob's trouble. In **Daniel 9:24**, God says that seventy weeks have been determined upon Thy people [the Jews, not the Church] and upon Thy holy city. This whole Tribulation period has special reference to Daniel's people Israel and Daniel's holy city Jerusalem. In the Old Testament, the seventy weeks of prophecy are weeks of years. In **Genesis 29:26-28** and **Daniel 9:24** one week equals seven years, so $70 \times 7 = 490$; God owes Israel seven years. They have had 69 weeks already, i.e. 483, and the Church has nothing to do with this prophecy. Since the Church did not have its existence until after the death of Christ, **Ephesians 5:25-26**; after the resurrection of Christ, **Romans 4:25, Colossians 3:1-3**; and after the ascension of Christ, **Ephesians 1:19-20**; the Church could not have been in the first 69 weeks of this prophecy. Since the Church had no part in the first 69 weeks that are related only to God's program for Israel, it can have no part in the 70th week that is again related to God's program for Israel. Therefore the mystery dispensation must be concluded. The Rapture is the blessed hope or happy guarantee that God is going to take us out from the wrath to come. The Rapture removes sorrow and grief and gives hope.

Revelation 2:22 indicates clearly that the unsaved professing Church will experience the Tribulational period, **Revelation 2:18-22**. Remember, the professing Church is composed of those who make a profession of faith in Christ, however, it is another Jesus they worship, **2 Corinthians 11:4**; another Spirit, **2 Corinthians 11:4**; another Gospel, **Galatians 1:6**; and another system

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of doctrine, **1 Timothy 4:1**. We also need to note that there is a distinction between the true Church and true or spiritual Israel. Prior to Pentecost there were saved individuals but there was no Church, and they were a part of spiritual Israel, not the Church. After the day of Pentecost and until the Rapture, we find the Church, which is His body, but not spiritual Israel. After the Rapture we find no Church but a true or spiritual Israel again.

Quote from J. Dwight Pentecost's Things to Come, p 200:

"Since the Church is the body, of which Christ is the Head (**Ephesians 1:22, 5:23; Colossians 1:18**), the bride, of which He is the Bridegroom (**1 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:23**), the object of His love (**Ephesians 5:25**), the branch of which He is the Root and Stem (**John 15:5**), the building, of which He is the Foundation and Cornerstone, (**1 Corinthians 3:9; Ephesians 2:19-22**), there exists between the believer and the Lord a union and unity. The believer is no longer separated from Him, but brought into the closest oneness with Him. If the Church is in the 70th week, she is subjected to the wrath, judgment, and indignation that characterize the period, and because of her oneness with Christ, He, likewise would be subjected to that same visitation. This is impossible according to **1 John 4:17**, for He cannot be brought into judgment again. Inasmuch as the Church has been perfected and delivered from all judgment (**Romans 8:1; John 5:24; 1 John 4:17**), if she is subjected to judgment again the promises of God would be of none effect and the death of Christ would be ineffectual. Who would dare to assert that the death of Christ could fail to accomplish its purpose? While the members may be experimentally imperfect and need experimental cleansing, yet the Church, which is His body, has a perfect standing in Christ and could not need such cleansing. The nature of the testing in the 70th week, as stated in **Revelation 3:10**, is not to bring the individual to cleansing, but to reveal the degradation and need of the unregenerate heart. The nature of the Church prevents such a testing."

Revelation 13:7 makes it clear that all who are in the 70th week are brought into subjection to the beast and through him to Satan who gives the beast power. If the Church were in this period she would be subjected to Satan, and Christ would either lose His place as Head or He Himself, because of His union with the Church, would be likewise subjected to Satan's authority. Such a thing is unthinkable and blasphemous!

Closely related to the Rapture of the Church is the subject of mystery doctrine. It was no mystery that God was going to provide salvation for the Jews and Gentiles. However, the fact that God was going to form Jews and Gentiles

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alike into one body was a mystery. But remember, this whole mystery program was not revealed until after the rejection of Christ by Israel. It was after the rejection of **Matthew 12:23-24** that the Lord first makes a prophecy of the coming Church in **Matthew 16:18**. And, it was after the final rejection by Israel toward the cross that God called out Paul to be the apostle of the Gentiles, through whom this mystery of the nature of the Church is revealed. The Church is actually an interruption of God's grace program for Israel and it must logically follow that this mystery program must be brought to a conclusion before God can resume His dealing with the nation Israel. And, so a pre-Tribulation Rapture is needed.

Another principle concerning the Rapture is the doctrine of Imminence. Many signs were given to the nation Israel that would precede the Second Coming. This is so the nation would be living in expectancy when the time of His coming should draw near. And, although Israel could not know the day or the hour they could know through these signs that their redemption was drawing near. To the Church however, no such signs were given. The Church was told to live in the light of the imminent return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

John 14:2-3 *"In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also."*

Acts 1:11 *They also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into Heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into Heaven".*

1 Corinthians 15:51-52 *Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.*

Philippians 3:20 *For our citizenship is in Heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ;*

1 Thessalonians 1:10 *and to wait for His Son from Heaven, whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath to come.*

1 Timothy 6:14 *that you keep the commandment without stain or reproach until the appearing of Our Lord Jesus Christ,*

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James 5:8 *You too be patient; strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near.*

1 Peter 3:3-4 *Your adornment must not be merely external -- braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry, or putting on dresses; but let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God.*

Such passages as **1 Thessalonians 5:6**, **Titus 2:13**, and **Revelation 3:3** all warn the believer to be watching for the Lord Himself, NOT for signs that would precede His coming. If there were no Rapture of the Church, the many signs given to Israel would also be given to the Church. The multitude of signs given to Israel to stir them to expectancy would then also be for the Church, and the Church could not be looking for Christ until these signs had been fulfilled. The fact that no signs are given to the Church, but rather she is commanded to watch for Christ, precludes her participation in the 70th week.

Another principle that needs to be noted is the work of the Restrainer in **2 Thessalonians 2:**

2 Thessalonians 2:1-2 *Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of Our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, that you not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come.*

The Thessalonians were concerned that the Rapture had already taken place and the day of the Lord was already there. The persecutions that they were enduring at the time had given them a basis for this erroneous conclusion. Paul writes to show them that such a thing was impossible, in **2 Thessalonians 2:3**, Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction,

First, Paul shows them in verse 3 that the day of the Lord could not take place until there was a departure. In order to understand this we need to note the Greek word for apostasy in verse three. The word apostasia refers to a departure. It could either refer to the departure from the faith or the departure of the saints as mentioned in verse one. Secondly, he reveals that there was to be the manifestation of the man of sin or the lawless one, as described in **Revelation 13**.

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2 Thessalonians 2:4-7 [The son of destruction] *who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God. Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things? And you know what restrains him now, so that in his time he will be revealed. For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way.*

This lawless one could not be manifested until the restrainer is taken out of the way. In other words, someone is preventing Satan from coming to complete power, and He will keep on performing this ministry until He is removed. Now, who is the One that keeps on restraining Satan? He is God the Holy Spirit! As long as the Holy Spirit is resident within the Church, which is his temple, His restraining work will continue. It is only when the Church or the temple is removed that this restraining ministry ceases. In **Daniel 9:27**, Daniel reveals that this lawless one will be manifested at the beginning of the 70th week, and therefore, a pre-Tribulation Rapture is a must.

Next, we need to note that there is a Biblical distinction between the Rapture and the Second Coming, also termed the Second Advent. There are a number of contrasts to be drawn between the Rapture and the Second Advent that will show that they are two totally different events:

1. The Rapture removes all believers from the earth, while the Second Coming removes unbelievers, **1 Corinthians 15:52, Matthew 24:40-41**.
2. In the Rapture, the saints are caught up in the air with Him, while at the Second Coming, Christ returns to the earth.
3. In the Rapture, Christ comes to claim His bride, while at the Second Coming, He returns with the bride.
4. The Rapture results in the removal of the Church and the insertion of the Tribulation, while the Second Advent results in the establishment of the Millennial Kingdom.
5. The Rapture is imminent, while the Second Advent is preceded by a multitude of signs.
6. The Rapture brings a message of comfort, while the Second Advent is accompanied by a message of judgment.

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7. The Rapture is a mystery, while the Second Advent is predicted in both testaments.
8. The Rapture leaves creation unchanged, while the Second Advent entails a change in creation.
9. The Rapture takes place before the day of wrath, but the Second Advent follows it.
10. The Rapture is for believers only, but the Second Advent has its effect on all men.
11. The expectation of the Church in regard to the Rapture is, The Lord is at hand, Philippians 4:5; while the expectation of Israel in regard to the Second Advent is, The Kingdom is at hand, **Matthew 24:14**.

So, these are some of the contrasts that may be presented, to support the fact that the Rapture and the Second Coming are two distinct events and times. In continuing to prove the pre-Tribulation Rapture we need to turn to **Revelation 4:1-3**.

Revelation 4:1-3 *After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in Heaven, and the first voice which I had heard, like the sound of a trumpet speaking with me, said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things." Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne was standing in Heaven, and One sitting on the throne. And He who was sitting was like a jasper stone and a sardius in appearance; and there was a rainbow around the throne, like an emerald in appearance.*

In **Revelation 4:4**, John is given a vision of 24 elders who are seated on thrones.

Revelation 4:4 *Around the throne were twenty-four thrones; and upon the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white garments, and golden crowns on their heads.*

Notice that these elders who are seated on thrones are clothed in white raiment, crowned with golden crowns and in Heaven in the presence of God. Several answers are given as to the question of the identity of these 24 elders. Note first that these 24 elders are NOT angels. What is said of the 24 elders could not be true of angelic beings, for angels are not crowned with victors' crowns [stephanos] received as rewards; nor are angels seated on thrones that speak of

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royal dignity and honor. The 24 elders are resurrected, redeemed men who are clothed in white, crowned, and seated on thrones in connection with royalty in Heaven.

Four inerrant marks identify these elders as representative of the Church:

1. Their position: They are sitting on the thrones which make up the rainbow around the throne in **Revelation 4:3**. To the Church and only to the Church is co-enthronement promised, **Revelation 3:20-22**. At this time, the Lord Jesus Christ is not seated upon the throne on earth, but these individuals have been presented faultless and have already received their rewards for glorifying God.
2. The number of these representative elders: This number is important, especially in the Book of Revelation, where numbers are so great a part of the symbolism. Twenty-four (24) is the number of the choruses into which the Levitical priesthood was divided, **1 Chronicles 24:1-19**, and so the number 24 represented priesthood. Of all the groups of the redeemed, only the Church is a priesthood, **1 Peter 2:5-9, Revelation 1:6**.
3. The testimony of the enthroned elders: This testimony also marks them as representing the Church, **Revelation 5:8-10**. The Church and only the Church can testify to being made a kingdom and priests to our God.
4. Being called elders: Eldership is a representative office for the Church-age, **Acts 15:2, 20:17**.

The elders are symbolically the Church and they are seen in Heaven in the place which the Scriptures assign to the Church before a seal is opened or a woe is uttered and before the wrath of God is poured out. They are in their redeemed state, clothed in white raiment and crowned with crowns. And from this chapter to the 20th chapter, the Church is never once referred to as on earth. In fact, the Church is seen in Revelation 19, coming down from Heaven, following the Lord Jesus Christ. These believers are seen being resurrected, being in Heaven, and being judged, rewarded and enthroned at the beginning of the 70th week. Therefore, we can easily conclude that the Church has already been raptured. If the Church is not resurrected and translated here as some insist, and not until **Revelation 20:4**, then how could the Church already be in Heaven in **Revelation 19:7-11**?

Now, we need to note the problem behind **1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**. The Thessalonians were not ignorant of the fact of resurrection. The problem that they had was their misunderstanding of the relationship between the

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resurrection and the saints who had died before the Rapture (1 Thessalonians Chapter 4). Paul writes not to teach the fact of resurrection, but rather the fact that at the Rapture the living would not have an advantage over the dead in Christ. If the Thessalonians had believed that the Church would be going through the 70th week, they would have rejoiced that some of the brethren had missed the period of suffering and were with the Lord without experiencing the outpouring of wrath. If the Church were going through the Tribulation it would be better to be with the Lord than to have to await the events of the 70th week! The Thessalonians would be praising the Lord that their brethren were spared these events, instead of feeling that the dead had missed some of the Lord's blessing. These Christians believed that the Church would not go through the 70th week, and in their anticipation of the return of Christ they mourned for their brethren whom they thought had missed the blessing of this event.

Our next proof of a pre-Tribulation Rapture is found in the great object of satanic attack. According to Revelation 12, the object of Satanic attack during the Tribulation period is the woman who produced the child. Who is the woman?

Isaiah 66:7 *Before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came, she gave birth to a boy.*

Isaiah 9:6 *For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; and the government will rest on His shoulders; and His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.*

Revelation 12:5 *And she gave birth to a son, a male child, who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron; and her child was caught up to God and to His throne.*

Since this child is born to rule all the nations with a rod of iron, it can only refer to the Lord Jesus Christ, the One whose right it is to rule. And Christ came from Israel, NOT the Church.

At the time Satan is cast out of Heaven, **Revelation 12:9**, Satan goes forth having great wrath, knowing that he has only a short time.

Revelation 12:6-12 *Then the woman fled into the wilderness where she had a place prepared by God, so that there she would be nourished for one thousand two hundred and sixty days. And there was war in Heaven, Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon. The dragon and his angels waged war, and they were not strong enough, and there was no longer a place found for*

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them in Heaven. And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world, he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. Then I heard a loud voice in Heaven, saying, "Now the salvation, and the power, and the Kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, he who accuses them before our God day and night. 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. For this reason, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them. Woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, knowing that he has only a short time."

The reason Satan turns against Israel can only be explained by the absence of the Church. The Church has been the object of Satanic attack throughout the Church-age, so why does Satan turn to Israel? The reason is because the body of Christ, the bride of Christ, the Church, is gone! So, Satan switches his attack to Israel.

Last, we address the promises to the true Church. There are certain passages of Scripture that definitely promise the Church a removal before the 70th week.

Revelation 3:10 *Because you have kept the Word of My perseverance, I also will keep you from the hour of testing, that hour which is about to come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.*

Notice the phrase, ...; keep you from the hour of testing, ...; John uses the word *tereo* for keep. According to Thayer's Lexicon, when this verb is used with *en* it means, to cause one to persevere or stand firm in a thing. When it is used with *ek* it means, to guard by causing one to escape in safety out of. Since *ek* is used here, John is promising a removal from the hour of testing, NOT a preservation through it. This is further substantiated by the use of the words, the hour. God is not only guarding from the trials, but from the very hour itself. He guards us from the very hour when these trials will come on earth. Al Ford points out that, grammatically, when *tereo* is used with *ek*, it means to have perfect immunity from the period. It does not mean protection in a situation, but instead, total exemption from it. Thiessen comments: "It is clear that the context and other statements in Scripture require that the interpretation be complete exemption from that which is predicted". As for the context, note that the promise is not merely to be kept from the temptation, but from the hour of temptation; from the period of trial as such, not only from the trial during the period. *Ek tes horas* means, 'out from that hour', rather than *en te hora*, which means, 'in the hour'.

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1 Thessalonians 5:9 *For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through Our Lord Jesus Christ,*

The contrast in this passage is between light and darkness, between wrath and salvation from that wrath, **1 Thessalonians 5:1-9**. And, **1 Thessalonians 5:2** indicates that this wrath and darkness is that of the day of the Lord: For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night.

Joel 2:1-2 *Blow a trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm on My holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the day of the Lord is coming; surely it is near, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness. As the dawn is spread over the mountains, so there is a great and mighty people; there has never been anything like it, nor will there be again after it to the years of many generations.*

Zephaniah 1:14-18 *Near is the great day of the Lord, near and coming very quickly; listen, the day of the Lord! In it the warrior cries out bitterly. A day of wrath is that day, a day of trouble and distress, a day of destruction and desolation, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness, a day of trumpet and battle cry against the fortified cities and the high corner towers. I will bring distress on men so that they will walk like the blind, because they have sinned against the Lord; and their blood will be poured out like dust and their flesh like dung. Neither their silver nor their gold will be able to deliver them on the day of the Lord's wrath; and all the earth will be devoured in the fire of His jealousy, for He will make a complete end, indeed a terrifying one, of all the inhabitants of the earth.*

Therefore, the darkness mentioned in 1 Thessalonians Chapter 5 is the darkness of the 70th week. Paul clearly teaches in **1 Thessalonians 5:9** that our expectation and appointment is not to wrath and darkness but rather to salvation, and verse 10 indicates the method of that salvation, namely, to live together with Him.

1 Thessalonians 1:9-10 *For they themselves report about us what kind of a reception we had with you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God, and to wait for His Son from Heaven, whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath to come.*

Again, Paul clearly indicates that our expectation is not wrath but the revelation of His Son from Heaven. This could not be unless the Son was revealed before the wrath of the 70th week falls on the earth.

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I have given you eleven reasons why there must be a pre-Tribulational Rapture. We will now address the two Eschatological dispensations. We have studied the Theocentric dispensations in the Old Testament. We have studied the Christocentric dispensations related to the Hypostatic Union and the Church-age. With the Rapture of the Church, we go back to Eschatology.

Eschatology is the theological category of last things or future things. The next eschatological function is the resurrection of the Church. Ever since 96 A.D. the Church-age is the age of no prophecy. We are not waiting for any events to take place except the resurrection of the Church, and once that occurs, prophecy starts up again with the first of the Eschatological dispensations, the Tribulation. The Tribulation begins with the resurrection of the Church, and it terminates with the Second Advent, i.e., the Second Coming of Christ. So, we have the Rapture and the Second Advent, and in between we have a short seven year span called the Tribulation. It is also called Daniel's 70th week, Satan's Desperation, the Day of Wrath, and the Hour of Trial. It is the dispensation of the greatest power struggle in all of history, and it involves not only people but angelic creatures as well.

The Tribulation was prophesied in the Old Testament in many passages:

Jeremiah 30:4-8 *Now these are the words which the Lord spoke concerning Israel and concerning Judah: "For thus says the Lord, 'I have heard a sound of terror, of dread, and there is no peace. Ask now, and see if a male can give birth. Why do I see every man with his hands on his loins, as a woman in childbirth? And why have all faces turned pale? Alas! For that day is great, there is none like it; and it is the time of Jacob's distress, but he will be saved from it.' 'It shall come about on that day', declares the Lord of hosts, 'that I will break his yoke from off their neck and will tear off their bonds; and strangers will no longer make them their slaves'."*

Zechariah 14:1-9 *Behold, a day is coming for the Lord when the spoil taken from you will be divided among you. For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city will be captured, the houses plundered, the women ravished and half of the city exiled, but the rest of the people will not be cut off from the city. Then the Lord will go forth and fight against those nations, as when He fights on a day of battle. In that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which is in front of Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives will be slit in its middle from east to west by a very large valley, so that half of the mountain will move toward the north and the other half toward the south. You will flee by the valley of My mountains, for the valley of the mountains will reach to Azel; yes, you will flee just as you fled before the*

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earthquake in the days of Uzziah, king of Judah. Then the Lord, my God, will come, and all the holy ones with Him! In that day there will be no light; the luminaries will dwindle. For it will be a unique day, which is known to the Lord, neither day nor night, but it will come about that at evening time there will be light. And in that day living waters will flow out of Jerusalem, half of them toward the eastern sea and the other half toward the western sea; it will be in summer as well as in winter. And the Lord will be king over all the earth; in that day the Lord will be the only one, and his name the only one.

Daniel 9:26-27 *Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end will come with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined. And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate.*

Daniel 11:40 *At the end time the king of the South will collide with him, and the king of the North will storm against him with chariots, with horsemen and with many ships; and he will enter countries, overflow them and pass through.*

Zechariah 12:1-6 *The burden of the Word of the Lord concerning Israel: Thus declares the Lord who stretches out the heavens, lays the foundation of the earth, and forms the spirit of man within Him, "Behold, I am going to make Jerusalem a cup that causes reeling to all the peoples around; and when the siege is against Jerusalem, it will also be against Judah. It will come about in that day that I will make Jerusalem a heavy stone for all the peoples; all who lift it will be severely injured. And all the nations of the earth will be gathered against it." "In that day," declares the Lord, "I will strike every horse with bewilderment and his rider with madness. But I will watch over the house of Judah, while I strike every horse of the peoples with blindness. Then the clans of Judah will say in their hearts, A strong support for us are the inhabitants of Jerusalem through the Lord of hosts, their God. In that day I will make the clans of Judah like a firepot among pieces of wood and a flaming torch among sheaves, so they will consume on the right hand and on the left all the surrounding peoples, while the inhabitants of Jerusalem again dwell on their own sites in Jerusalem."*

The Tribulation is also prophesied in Isaiah, Chapters 34 and 63, Ezekiel, Chapters 38 and 39. It is the prophetic subject of Revelation, Chapters 6 through 12. It is one of the greatest periods of evangelism in all of human

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history because millions of people will believe in the Lord Jesus Christ in less than seven years. It is a period of great disaster, but a period of great evangelism under the principle of crisis evangelism. Religion will be vicious during the Tribulation, which is what Revelation, Chapters 17 and 18 are all about. The Tribulation is a period of divine judgment; this is so clearly brought out in **Zephaniah 1:14-18**. The day of the Lord as it is called in this Scripture is that extended period of time beginning with God's dealing with Israel after the Rapture, and extending through the Second Advent and the Millennial age unto the creation of the new heavens and new earth.

There is no better way to come to an understanding of the Scriptural concept of the Tribulation than to let Scripture speak for itself:

Isaiah 2:12-22 *For the Lord of hosts will have a day of reckoning against everyone who is proud and lofty, and against everyone who is lifted up, that he may be abased. And it will be against all the cedars of Lebanon that are lofty and lifted up, against all the oaks of Bashan, against all the lofty mountains, against all the hills that are lifted up, against every high tower, against every fortified wall, against all the ships of Tarshish and against all the beautiful craft. The pride of man will be humbled and the loftiness of men will be abased; and the Lord alone will be exalted in that day, but the idols will completely vanish. Men will go into caves of the rocks and into holes of the ground before the terror of the Lord and the splendor of His majesty, when He arises to make the earth tremble. In that day men will cast away to the moles and the bats, their idols of silver and their idols of gold, which they made for themselves to worship, in order to go into the caverns of the rocks and the clefts of the cliffs before the terror of the Lord and the splendor of His majesty, when He arises to make the earth tremble. Stop regarding man, whose breath of life is in his nostrils; for why should he be esteemed?*

Isaiah 24:1-6 *Behold, the Lord lays the earth waste, devastates it, distorts its surface and scatters its inhabitants. And the people will be like the priest, the servant like his master, the maid like her mistress, the buyer like the seller, the lender like the borrower, the creditor like the debtor. The earth will be completely laid waste and completely despoiled, for the Lord has spoken this Word. The earth mourns and withers, the world fades and withers, the exalted of the people of the earth fade away. The earth is also polluted by its inhabitants, for they transgressed laws, violated statutes, broke the everlasting covenant. Therefore, a curse devours the earth, and those who live in it are held guilty. Therefore, the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men are left.*

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Isaiah 24:17-23 *Terror and pit and snare confront you, O inhabitant of the earth. Then it will be that he who flees the report of disaster will fall into the pit, and he who climbs out of the pit will be caught in the snare; for the windows above are opened, and the foundations of the earth shake. The earth is broken asunder, the earth is split through, and the earth is shaken violently. The earth reels to and fro like a drunkard and it totters like a shack, for its transgression is heavy upon it, and it will fall, never to rise again. So it will happen in that day, that the Lord will punish the host of Heaven on high, and the kings of the earth on earth. They will be gathered together like prisoners in the dungeon, and will be confined in prison, and after many days they will be punished. Then the moon will be abashed and the sun ashamed, for the Lord of hosts will reign on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, and His glory will be before His elders.*

Jeremiah 30:7 *Alas! For that day is great, there is none like it; and it is the time of Jacob's distress, but he will be saved from it.*

Daniel 12:1 *Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people, will arise. And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued.*

Amos 5:18, 5:20 *Alas, you who are longing for the day of the Lord, for what purpose will the day of the Lord be to you? It will be darkness and not light. Will not the day of the Lord be darkness instead of light, even gloom with no brightness in it?*

Matthew 24:21-22 *For then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, not ever will. Unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short.*

Luke 21:25-26 *"There will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and on the earth dismay among nations, in perplexity at the roaring of the sea and the waves, men fainting from fear and the expectation of the things which are coming upon the world; for the powers of the heavens will be shaken."*

Revelation 6:15-17 *Then the kings of the earth and the great men and the commanders and the rich and the strong and every slave and free man hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains; and they said to the mountains and to the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the presence of*

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Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"

From these Scriptures, it is inescapable that the nature or character of this period is that of wrath, **Zephaniah 1:15-18**; judgment, **Revelation 6:16-17**; indignation, **Isaiah 26:20-1**; trial, **Revelation 3:10**; trouble, **Jeremiah 30:7**; destruction, **Joel 1:15**; darkness, **Joel 2:2**; desolation, **Daniel 9:27**; punishment, **Isaiah 24:20-21**. It is a very difficult time to be alive!

We also need to note that the Tribulation is directed to the Jews, **Deuteronomy 4:30**, **Jeremiah 30:7**, **Ezekiel 30:37**, **Daniel 12:1**. In Matthew 24, the Olivet Discourse of Christ was given to the Jews. In **Revelation 7:4-8**, the twelve tribes of Israel are the subjects of the Tribulation. It concerns Daniel's people, the coming of the false messiah, and the preaching of the Gospel of the Kingdom. There is a flight on the Sabbath, plus many more principles mentioned such as the Temple, the Holy Place, the land of Judea, City of Jerusalem, signs in the heavens, the Sanctuary; these all speak of Israel and God's special relationship with her. God's purpose for Israel in the Tribulation is to bring about the conversion of a multitude of Jews. These will be the ones who enter into the blessings of the Kingdom and experience the fulfillment of all Israel's covenants. As John the Baptist preached such a message to prepare Israel for the First Coming, Elijah will preach to prepare Israel for the Second Advent.

Malachi 4:4-6 *Remember the Law of Moses My servant, even the statutes and ordinances which I commanded him in Horeb for all Israel. Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord. He will restore the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers, so that I will not come and smite the land with a curse.*

The Tribulation period consummates with War of Armageddon. The War of Armageddon starts out with four great world powers against Israel: (1) the ten kingdom federation of nations under the beast, which are ten powerful nations with resources joining together; (2) the northern federation (probably Russia and her allies); (3) the kings of the east which are the Asiatic people from beyond the Euphrates; and (4) the king of the south, a north-African power. They will all come against Israel until the Lord and His armies come from Heaven. The coming down from Heaven to the earth is what we call the Second Advent or Second Coming. The Lord Jesus Christ promised He would come back again on the earth, **Acts 1:11**. He promised to come to the same Mount Olivet from which He ascended, **Zechariah 14:4**. He has also promised

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to bring His saints back with Him, **1 Thessalonians 3:13, Jude 14**. We are told that when He comes back every eye will see Him, **Revelation 1:7**; that He shall destroy the anti-Christ, **2 Thessalonians 2:8**; and that He shall sit on the throne, **Matthew 25:31, Revelation 5:13**. At this time all nations will be gathered before him and He will judge them, **Matthew 25:32**. As the Lord Jesus Christ was publicly repudiated and rejected, God at the Second Advent shall publicly present Him. This event ends the first Eschatological dispensation and begins the second Eschatological dispensation, the Millennium.

Millennialism is the teaching that there will be a period of 1,000 years when the Lord Jesus Christ will rule this earth as king. This age will see the fulfillment of all the covenants that God made with Israel. In fact, without the Millennium those covenants would not be fulfilled.

1. The promises in the Abrahamic Covenant concerning the land and seed are fulfilled, **Micah 7:18-20, Ezekiel 34:24-31**. In this covenant Israel's continuation and possession of the land and their inheritance of blessings take place.
2. The promises in the Davidic Covenant concerning the king, the throne, and the royal house are fulfilled in the Millennial age, **Jeremiah 23:5-8, 20-26, 34:23-25, 37:23-24**. The fact that Israel has a kingdom over which David's son reigns as king is based on the fulfillment of this covenant in the Millennium.
3. The promises of the Palestinian Covenant concerning the possession of the land are fulfilled by Israel in the Millennial age. This is taught in **Isaiah 11:11-12 and 65:9, Ezekiel 36:28-29**. These are references to the possession of the land promise and the fulfillment of the Palestinian Covenant in the Millennium.
4. The promises of the New Covenant of the new heart, the forgiveness of sin, and the filling of the Spirit all find their fulfillment to Israel in the Millennium, **Jeremiah 31:31-34 and 32:35-39, Ezekiel 11:18-20, Romans 11:26-29**.

All of this takes place immediately following the point when Satan is bound, and he is bound for one thousand years, which makes up the Millennial reign.

Revelation 20:1-3 *Then I saw an angel coming down from Heaven, holding the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; and he threw him into the abyss, and shut it and sealed it over*

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him, so that he would not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed; after these things he must be released for a short time.

Throughout this age Satan, as the god of this age, has carried on his work to try and defeat the purpose and the plan of God. The Millennial age is to be the age when divine righteousness is expressed to mankind as never before. It will also be God's final test toward fallen humanity under the most ideal circumstances and perfect environment. All outward sources of temptation must be removed so that man will demonstrate what he is, apart from satanic influence, and that is man is totally corrupt regardless of environment! Therefore, Satan is removed and bound and mankind is placed in a fantastic environment for 1,000 years.

It is also evident that there can be no perfect environment apart from the personal manifestation of the Lord Jesus Christ. The whole age depends on His return to the earth as promised. Because of His presence, the curse is abolished, death is overcome, the evils pertaining to fallen man and fallen nature are removed, and great blessings are obtained. The Lord Jesus Christ, who is called and known as the King, the Judge, the Lawgiver, and the Prince of princes, will control everything. During the Millennium, all nations come before the Lord Jesus Christ and worship Him as God, **Psalms 86:9, Zechariah 14:16-19.**

Daniel 7:24-27 describes some of the conditions existing in the Millennium: As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom ten kings will arise; and another will arise after them, and he will be different from the previous ones and will subdue three kings. He will speak out against the Most High and wear down the saints of the Highest One, and he will intend to make alterations in times and in law; for they will be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time. But the court will sit for judgment, and his dominion will be taken away, annihilated and destroyed forever. Then the sovereignty, the dominion and the greatness of all the kingdoms under the whole Heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the Highest One; His Kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all the dominions will serve and obey Him.

Notice the phrase, the greatness of all the kingdoms; that phrase will characterize the Millennial age.

1. There will be world peace. National and individual peace will be the fruit of the Messiah's reign, **Isaiah 2:4, 11:6-9, 60:18, 61:7.**

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2. It will be a fantastic time of inner happiness and joy, **Isaiah 9:3-4, Jeremiah 30:18-19, Zephaniah 3:14-17.**
3. The Kingdom will be characterized by glory, **Isaiah 24:3, 4:2, 60:1-9.**
4. It will be a Kingdom manifested by holiness, **Isaiah 1:26-27, Jeremiah 31:23, Ezekiel 36:24-31.**
5. The King will personally minister to every need so that there will be fullness of comfort, **Isaiah 12:1-2, Jeremiah 31:23-25, Zechariah 9:11-12.**
6. There will be the administration of perfect justice, **Isaiah 9:7, Jeremiah 23:5, 31:29-30.**
7. There will be the most fantastic teaching ministry of God the Holy Spirit, **Isaiah 11:1-2 and 41:19-20, Habbakuk 2:14.**
8. There will be direct instruction from the Lord Jesus Christ as the King of kings, **Isaiah 29:17-24 and 3:14-15, Micah 4:2.**
9. The original curse placed upon creation in **Genesis 2:17-19** will be removed! There will be abundant productivity to the earth, even the animal creation will be changed, **Isaiah 11:6-9, 35:9, 65:25.**
10. Sickness will be removed. The ministry of the King as the healer will be seen throughout the Millennium so that sickness and even death will be removed, the exception being death in dealing with criminal sin or capital punishment, **Isaiah 33:24; Jeremiah 30:17; Ezekiel 34:16.**
11. All of the deformed are healed as well, if they were deformed at the time of the Second Advent they will experience a total healing, **Isaiah 29:17-19, Jeremiah 31:8, Micah 4:6-7.**
12. There will also be a supernatural work of preservation in the Millennial age through the King, **Isaiah 41:8-14; Ezekiel 34:27; Joel 3:16-17.**
13. There will be no social, political, or religious oppression, **Isaiah 14:3-6 and 42:6-7, Zechariah 9:11-12.**
14. There will not be the tragedies of mental illness or of infant deaths, **Isaiah 65:20.**

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15. The earth's population will soar and there will be sex. Children will be born to the believers who began the Millennium, and these children will have a sin nature and therefore need salvation, **Jeremiah 30:20 and 31:29, Ezekiel 47:22, Zechariah 10:8.**

16. There will exist a perfect economic system (e.g. no unions) in which the needs of men are abundantly provided for, **Isaiah 62:9-9 and 65:21-23, Jeremiah 31:5.**

17. There will be an increase of solar and lunar light. The increased light probably is a major cause of the increased productivity of the earth, **Isaiah 4:5, 30:26, and 60:19-20, Zechariah 2:5.**

18. There will be a unified language. The language barriers will be removed so that there can be free social intercourse, **Zephaniah 3:9.**

The entire world will unite in the worship of God, and God's presence will be experienced as never before. The Millennium will be 1,000 years of perfect environment and prosperity, but it will also be a time that is very difficult to survive without capacity. Very few people ever have happiness in prosperity unless they have the capacity for happiness.

The Millennium will demonstrate two things:

1. Mankind cannot be satisfied without a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. Believers can use Bible doctrine and remain faithful even in prosperity. (Very few believers ever survive their first prosperity test, since they usually lose their concentration on Bible doctrine.)

As a result, there will be many unbelievers during the Millennial age that will despise believers and join Satan at the end of the 1,000 years. After 1,000 years of perfect environment Satan will be let loose to lead millions in the greatest revolution in human history. The fact that man has 1,000 years of perfect environment and yet revolts against it is a demonstration of the principle that environment is not the solution to man's problems! Environment is not the basis for happiness. Instead, it is the content of the individual's soul that counts, regardless of environment.

We noted the Edenic dispensation under the age or dispensation of the Gentiles and we noted how they failed. We noted the Antediluvian age under the

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dispensation of the Gentiles and how mankind failed, i.e., operation flood. We also noted the Post-Diluvian age under the dispensation of the Gentiles in which we saw mankind once again fail in the Tower of Babel incident. We noted the dispensation of Israel and how the Jews totally failed no matter what the Lord did. Then in the first Christocentric dispensation we saw how the Lord Jesus Christ came unto His own but His own did not receive Him. So the Church-age began and the Word of God teaches that even in that dispensation most believers reject the Lordship of the Lord Jesus Christ. So another dispensation begins (the Tribulation) with God using crisis evangelism to warn people, but they still reject the Lord Jesus Christ. Finally perfect environment is given for 1,000 years with the question being, will mankind respond to the Lord then?? The answer is NO, illustrating that without a relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, mankind is an implacable, frustrated, miserable, ungrateful, hard-hearted lot! And, as the Bible says, There is none good, not one.

Zechariah 14:1-9 gives us some information concerning the Second Advent. Some believers have fled into the mountains and some are fighting in Jerusalem. At the point when it looks most hopeless and helpless is when the Lord Jesus Christ returns. He comes in judgment with the Word of God as His weapon which He uses to smite the nations, **Revelation 19:15**, and kill the armies, **Revelation 19:21**.

At the Second Advent certain events take place, such as:

1. The fall of ecumenical religion in the Tribulation in one day, **Revelation 16:19 and 18.8**.
2. The imprisonment of the beast, or the false prophet, who is thrown alive into the Lake of Fire, which burns with brimstone.
3. All Old Testament saints are raised from the dead, and they all receive their resurrection bodies, **Revelation 20:4-6**.
4. Satan is bound for 1,000 years, **Revelation 20:1-3**.
5. Demons are removed from the earth, **Colossians 2:14-15**.
6. The Baptism of Fire takes place, **2 Thessalonians 1:7-9**.
7. The re-gathering of Israel takes place at the Second Advent, following which there is a period of 75 days prior to the beginning of the Millennium.

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The Second Advent will also be a day of complete darkness much like the day when the Lord Jesus Christ was on the cross being judged for our sins, **Mark 13:24-27, Revelation 1:7-8**. Suddenly, the Lord will come back and lighten the entire world! The Bible says that every eye will see Him. This takes place because light shines in darkness. This is also the time when the Baptism of Fire takes place, as described in Matthew Chapter 24. The Baptism of Fire is the judgment that comes at the Second Advent, and this is when unbelievers are cast off the earth while believers enter into the Millennium, **Matthew 24:36-41**. **Isaiah 13:9** says, the day of the Lord is coming ...; to make the land a desolation; and He will exterminate its sinners from it.

We also need to note some parables that refer to the Baptism of Fire:

1. **Matthew 13:24-43**, the wheat and the tares. Wheat refers to believers who enter the Millennium, and tares refer to unbelievers who are cast off and burned up.
2. The ten virgins, **Matthew 25:1-13**, in which the wise virgins refer to the Jewish believers who enter the Millennium and the foolish virgins are the unbelievers taken into judgment.
3. The sheep and the goats, **Matthew 25:31-46**, which is for the Gentiles. Sheep represents the Gentiles who enter the Millennium and goats represent the unbelievers taken into judgment.
4. The parable of the talents, **Matthew 25:14-30**, for the Jews. The man with five talents and the man with two talents represent those believers entering the Millennium, and the man with one talent represents the unsaved Jew who enters into judgment.
5. The dragnet, **Matthew 13:47-50**, in which the good fish refers to believers entering the Millennium, and the bad fish refers to unbelievers cast off and taken into judgment.

All of this will take place at the Second Advent of Christ as described in Revelation Chapter 19.