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THEOLOGY
SYNOPSES

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THE MINISTRY OF ANGELS

"Scripture everywhere assumes the existence of angels, both good and evil."¹ In the Bible "angels" are used over two hundred times in 35 books. They are mentioned as messengers with divine revelation and as messengers "on a mission of judgment on sin."² According to Cambron the word angel is translated "ambassador, messenger, deputy, and ministers."³ The scriptures provide a good deal of information concerning angels. The Bible indicates that one of the primary functions of angels is the worship of the Lord. This information appears to be inter-twined in such a fashion as to disclose several attributes or descriptions of angels in one or more passages. A study of angels reveals information or facts concerning their creation, the time of creation, their state, numbers, spirit and much more. Some of these topics are covered briefly for background to provide understanding of their presence at certain events and ministry to certain people.

Fact

According to Col 1.16 God created angels in the same manner that He created all things. "All things were created by him, and for him."

Time

Creation of angels took place before the creation of the world. The book of Job contains an account of their presence at the creation where they shouted for joy (Job 38.7).

State

The state of angels as mentioned in Jude 6 indicates that they had a "first estate." This first estate would have been as created by God. God's creations as originally created were all created "good." When created, angels were created holy for the primary purpose to worship a Holy God.

Numbers

The scriptures indicate that God created angels before the creation of man and that their creation was in numbers which are described as an innumerable company of angels (Heb 12.22). In Revelations 5.11 we read "...and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands."

¹Henry C. Thiessen, Lectures in Systematic Theology (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 133.

²Lewis Sperry Chafer, Chafer Systematic Theology 2 Vols. (Dallas: Dallas Seminary Press, 1948), 1:287.

³Mark G. Cambron, Bible Doctrines (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1954) 231.

Spirit

Angels have been given substance as God wills and according to His plan. Heb 1.14 describes them as having spirit. "Are they not all ministering spirits,..." As spirit they are non-reproductive, do not experience death, are not human and possess great power.

Non-reproduction

Angels have been created a little higher than man and were created innumerable. There is no need for them to be reproductive since that was not a function given to them at the time of their creation. Further, angels are designated by masculine gender, with a few exceptions (Mark 12.25).

No death

Of God's many creations, angels and man will continue to exist for all eternity. Each being a separate and distinct being from the other. They are eternal beings and will not die (Luke 20.36).

Not Human

Even though angels have revealed themselves in human form does not mean that they are human. Ps 8.4-5 plainly describes angels as having been created different than that of man. They are created spirit and as such remain spirit until changed by the will of God for His purpose.

Great Power

2 Peter 2.11 says that angels have great power and might. Some of the occurrences in which this power and might were demonstrated will be discussed below as ministering spirits.

Types

Of the many types of angels, Heb 1.7-14 and Ps 104.4 describes them as "Ministering spirits." As ministering spirits they possess intelligence, emotion and will.

Intellect

Many scripture references indicate the intelligence of angels. However, a clear indication of the content of that intelligence is not often evident (1 Peter 1.12; Mark 13. 32; Matt 24.36). A review of 2 Samuel 14.17-20 gives insight into the knowledge of angels. Some of the knowledge of angels as expressed in the Bible pertains to "know all things that are in the earth."

Emotion

Angels it would appear are given to emotion in much the same manner as humans. At the announcement of the Christ child's birth they are found to be in multitudes, praising God (Luke 2.13).

Will

To describe the will of angels is probably the simplest task of this paper. Evidence abounds that God created angels with a will. The Bible records that they used their will to decide as to good and evil. They used their will to change from their created "first estate" to that of rebellion against their creator. Jude 6 indicates that some elected to leave their created positions and God has placed them in chains and darkness until "the judgment of the great day." A host of others have elected to serve God as originally created and will be found coming and going from the heavens.

PRESENT AT

"Like miracles, therefore, angelic appearances generally mark God's entrance upon new epochs in the unfolding of his plans."⁴ These plans as part of the decree of God include but are not restricted to the Creation, Christ's birth, His temptation, in the garden, at the resurrection, or at the ascension.

Creation

It is not clear as to when angels were created but their creation must have occurred prior to the creation of the heavens and earth as found in Gen 1.1. We find in Job 38.7 that the angels were present at the creation of earth because they "shouted for joy" as God laid the foundations of the earth and placed the corner stone.

Birth of Christ

The announcement of Christ birth was not made in private or in secret and is discussed at length in Luke chapters one and two. The angel Gabriel shared with Mary that she was to become the mother of the Savior. Another angel provided Joseph with knowledge concerning the birth of the Christ child in a dream saying "...that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost" (Matt 1.20). An angel also appeared to shepherds in a field with the glory of the Lord shining so bright that they were afraid. The angel ministered to the shepherds to calm their fears and announced to them that a Savior would be born "unto them." The angel announced the location of the birth and how the Savior would be identified. The angel was then accompanied by what is described as "a multitude of the heavenly host praising God." The angels present at Christ birth must have been totally awe struck as they watched the God they had worshiped since their creation become a man for the purpose of implementing God's plan of salvation.

⁴Augustus H. Strong, Systematic Theology (Old Tappan, NJ: Revell, 1970), 453.

His temptation

Men who have been tempted of the devil should appreciate the temptation of Jesus. Our Lord endured every snare of the devil that He might know our temptations and forgive us of our trespasses of sin. As Christ was tempted the Bible says that the angels could have intervened. Matt 4.6 says "for it is written, HE SHALL GIVE HIS ANGELS CHARGE CONCERNING THEE." After Jesus rebuked the devil and he departed the Bible states that the "angels came and ministered unto him" (Matt 4.11).

In the Garden

As Jesus prayed in the garden that God's will be done the Bible says "And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him" (Luke 22.43).

Resurrection

What a presence and foreknowledge of a great event occurred at the resurrection of Jesus. Matt 28.2 says,

And, behold, there was a great earth-quake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it.

Ascension

The presence of angels seem to open our eyes to events of major importance while at the same time they seem to have an air of wonderment which is projected by the angels present at the event. The ascension of Jesus is one such occurrence of wonderment of angels at the lack of human understanding concerning the divine. "And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel" (Acts 1.10). For the angels to see Jesus ascension into the heavens was perhaps not a special occasion but for mortal men to view such an occasion was something of a miracle. If there be such a thing as angel arrogance it is perhaps exhibited here in Acts 1.11. "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."

MINISTRY TO

Angels in the scripture for the most part are found ministering, and each of the ministries seem to be from a very broad spectrum. One major task of ministry is the worship of God. Some of the other

noted ministries have been to Christ, believers, nations, and unbelievers.

Christ

The ministry of angels to Christ encompassed the prediction of His birth (Luke 1.26.33). As well as, the announcement of His birth (Luke 2.13). Heb 1.6 states "Again, when he bringeth in the first begotten into the world, he said, And let all the angels of God worship him".

One of the ministries to Christ was to protect Him as the Baby Jesus (Matt 2.13).

It is also noted that angels were assigned to minister to Christ by strengthening Him after the temptation. (Matt 4.11). They were even prepared to defend Him if he so commanded (Matt. 28.2).

As Christ sought the supreme will of His Father in heaven angels are seen ministering to Him in the garden of Gethsemane (Luke 22.43). They were even present to remove any barriers to humans that might not allow them to understand that Jesus had risen from the dead. The angels ministered at the resurrection when they rolled away the stone from the tomb, that all might see that it was empty (Matt 28.2). Their continued ministry at this appearance was the announcement of Christ's resurrection from death and the grave (Matt 28.6) At each of these great moments in the life of Christ the angels were sent to minister to Him.

Believers

Jesus went away into heaven, but before He left He told us that He would not leave His saints without a comforter. He provided the Holy Spirit as that Comforter. He also has provided in addition to the Holy Spirit "ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation" (Heb 1.14). This ministry seems to be one of a general ministry of aiding the saints in that if we "suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together" (Rom 8.17). Chafer believes "Though we have been given no communication or fellowship with the angels, yet we should recognize the fact of their ministry, which is constant and effective."⁵ This ministry to the Christian is the involvement of angels in answering prayer (Acts 12.7). They are also, observing the Christians' experiences (1 Cor 4.9; 1 Tim 5.21). Their ministry includes encouragement in time of danger (Acts 27.23-24). Observing evangelistic effort of Christians (Luke 15.10; Acts 8.26). Included in the ministry of angels to the believer is the caring for them at death. "Lazarus was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom" (Luke 16.22; Jude 9).

⁵Lewis Sperry Chafer, Major Bible Themes (Grand Rapids: Academie, 1974), 154

Nations

Much of the ministering of angels to nations is found in the Book of Daniel and Revelation. Michael the archangel seems to have a special relationship to Israel as noted in Daniel 12.1. Michael is also mentioned in Daniel 10.21 as revealing "that which is noted in the scripture of truth" concerning nations. According to several chapters of the book of Revelation, (Rev 8, 9, 16), angels will be used extensively during the judgment period of the Tribulation as the nations of the world are punished.

Unbelievers

Angels have been used to announce impending judgements as they did at Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen 19.13). They will also be used to deliver the gospel to the earth and announced that "the hour of his judgment is come" Rev 14.6-7).

According to Acts 12.23 angels will inflict punishment on those who "gave not God the glory." Angels are also noted at the end of the world as reapers who separate the good seed of the Son of man from the tares of the wicked one at end of the age (Matt 13.39).

WITNESSES

Luke 12.8 give us a good description of the angels as witnessing agents. The scripture states that "Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God."

Angels are described as "watchers" in Daniel 4.17. From the text it would appear that they are present as observers sent by God. Chafer indicates that "angels are watching to see the unfolding of God's redemptive plan"⁶ (Luke 15.10; 1 Tim 3.16; 1 Peter 1.12).

CONCLUSION

The Bible gives ample evidence of angels and their ministry. The ministry of angels began with their creation and will continue forever, since they have been created eternal beings. Their ministry has been to both God and man as many scripture passages testify. Whether or not we choose to believe in angels is a mute question. It should be remembered that much of the evidence of angels and their ministry points directly to the carrying out of God's redemptive plan and that their appearance has been a signal of important events which are about to take place. Chafer makes this point with:

Taken as a whole, angels are important factors in carrying out the plan of God from eternity past to eternity future and for this reason are given a large place in scriptural revelation.⁷

⁶Chafer, Systematic, 1:288.

⁷Chafer, Systematic, 1:287.

Strong makes this point quite clear as he states,

The fact that we do not in our day see angels should not make us skeptical as to their existence anymore than the fact that we do not in our day see miracles should make us doubt the reality of the New Testament miracles.⁸

⁸Strong, Systematic, 453.

THE DECREE OF GOD

Several definitions of the decrees of God have been put forth by noted theologians. Augustus H. Strong, Systematic Theology; Henry C. Thiessen, Lectures in Systematic Theology; and Lewis S. Chafer, Systematic Theology all stress the same premise concerning the decree of God. Though their definitions seem to vary they are likewise similar in at least two points. These two points are; first that the decrees or decree is God's singular complete plan; and second that His plan encompasses the past, present and future that God has decided will happen. Acts 15:17-18 NIV states that "these things...have been known for ages." or as it is translated in the King James version of Acts 15:18 KJV "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world."

According to Lewis S. Chafer, in his book on Systematic Theology, decrees are defined; "In theology divine decrees refer to the total plan of God which includes everything past, present, and future that God has determined will come to pass."⁹

God's total plan is "According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord" Eph 3.11. This plan consists of all things which God causes to occur, as well as, those things which he permits to happen which are caused by entities other than himself. To simply state what the decree of God is; would be to say that it is that which God determined He would permit and will permit to happen now and forever. All that is or will be is part of God's plan (decree).

DECREES

An understanding of decrees should come easily when seen in the light of Eph 1.11.

In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.

This scripture is extremely complete in its coverage of much of what we know of as the Decree of God. It begins with God and progresses through, salvation, eternal life, God's foreknowledge, His purpose, His decrees.

Within God's singular decree, although one decree covers everything, man has placed multiple decrees. It may appear that several events are involved but God determined that His decree would be all inclusive. This is noted in Eph 1.11 as previously quoted above.

⁹Chafer, Systematic, 1:154.

Listed below with a brief description are just a few of the decrees which make up God's decree. Those decrees selected deal mainly with God's sovereignty and man's free will as it relates to sin or salvation.

Omniscience.

When one thinks of the sovereignty of God one must be aware that His sovereignty encompasses or contains the complete knowledge concerning all things.

Divine Foreknowledge.

In eternity nothing existed except the divine mind thus nothing exist without God's prior knowledge. God knows everything and the order in which it will occur as an action or event. His foreknowledge of sin demonstrates His foreknowledge of the necessity of the cross as a redemption for sin. God's divine and infinite wisdom, has provided a plan to cover all circumstances.

Divine immutability.

God's plan is unchangeable and without any dependency on men. God's purpose will be completed and there is no one or nothing that is equal to God. Man may wonder at how God will accomplish His purpose, however Ephesians 1.11 states that His purpose will occur "Surely as I had thought...and who shall turn it back?"

The Lord of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand:...This is the purpose that is purposed upon the whole earth: and this is the hand that is stretched out upon all the nations. For the Lord of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it? and his hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back? Isa 14.24-27.

Predestination

Predestination seems to be one of those decrees that causes men difficulty. It is the knowledge that God has provided for the disposition of those chosen as the elect. This word predestination relates to the destination of all of Gods creatures, angelic or human. Some of the humans have chosen God's redemptive plan and will be glorified. "Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified." Rom 8.30

Election.

Election is for those individuals or nations which God has chosen for his people. This refers to Christians who are striving to serve God and have established a relationship with Him and have been given the assurance of eternal life. This is not as difficult a

decree as many claim it to be. When seen in the light of God's foreknowledge it is understood that God knew who would accept or reject his plan for saving men from their paths of sin. Rom 8.29a "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son,". Man's option in this case is to accepted God's decree.

Preterition.

Preterition or retribution is an action which God determines is necessary to deal with the non-elect. A passing over them because of their attitude toward God. A just God has provided punishment for those individuals who do not elect to receive His plan of redemption.

Additional decrees.

The scriptures point out that everything is included in the decrees. Included are things which we might not consider as included, such as, how does the earth remain in orbit, what is the destiny of nations, how long will man live, how will he die, are men really free agents with the ability to select good or evil? In addition, there are decrees concerning the doctrine of salvation, Christ's kingdom, and the work of Christ to fulfill God's plan. Even though we do not understand why God made decrees, we will know someday in God's time. John 13.7 says "You shall understand hereafter". God's decrees are wise and all knowing and will provide a way which He deems appropriate for saving man from sin.

PURPOSE

Man would like to believe that God's decrees were for man. That all God has done was surely for man and that God's decrees were for the glory of man. Thiessen suggest that "The highest aim of the decrees is the glory of God."¹⁰ and Rev 4:11 states

Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power; for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.

God's purpose should be clear. His purpose was from the beginning of His decree that it would be as He would have it, and that only His purpose would be accomplished. This premise is best explained by Eph 1.9-10.

Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: That in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth.

¹⁰Thiessen, Lectures, 103.

OBJECTION

If one is searching for exceptions or objections to the decree of God, some find the objections with the questions of sin and man's free will. For those individuals who search for problems or incongruities in the decree of God, Chafer calls these objection "the moral problem" and "the human will".¹¹ According to Chafer the moral problem prompts the question, "How can God who is infinitely holy allow sin to exist in the universe?"¹² The answer is evident in that because He is God he not only permitted it, but provided a sacrificial alternate for those caught in it's snares. As a decree of God He provided His Son's death on the cross to cover the sins of the world. All that need be done by man to claim God's salvation decree is to accept Jesus Christ as Lord in their lives. The problem of human will does not undermine God's will as some believe. Human will provides man the freedom to select from two choices. Man must use his will to choose between good and evil, God or satan. God's sovereignty shows that He is able to provide man with free will while maintaining His control of His decree for man. He merely provides man with choice. The choices are part of God's plan. "Wrong is never made right simply because sin was included as part of God's purpose."¹³

CONCLUSIONS

One who is walking in fellowship with God and who accepts Scripture as the inerrant Word of God can only conclude that the God of the Bible is a sovereign God who reigns supreme over all events - past, present, and future.¹⁴

¹¹Chafer, Systematic, 1:157.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Charles Caldwell Ryrie, The Ryrie Study Bible, (Chicago: Moody Press, 1978), 1839.

¹⁴Chafer, Systematic, 1:155.

THE DEITY OF CHRIST

Jesus asked His disciples the question "Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?" Matt. 16.13. Today the same question is asked of men by the Holy Spirit of God. Men may differ in their opinion as to the deity of Christ and have an unwillingness to allow the Holy Spirit to reveal Christ's deity to them but that will not change the fact that Christ is the Son of God and as such is fully God. The most important question which Jesus asked was not "Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?" but it was the question asked directly of Peter "But whom say ye that I am?" Jesus is asking that same question today of everyone. You will need to answer as Peter did "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. Some of the evidence which declares the deity of Christ is ascribed to Him by merely defining His deity. Other evidence which asserts His deity is the attributes which are applied to Him. However, the greatest affirmation of His deity is found in the prerogatives possessed by Him.

Names

Christ's deity is honored by many of the names which have been ascribed to Him. He is the Son of God, Lord, King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Many other names have been given Him but they will not overshadow the name God.

God. It may seem to be a mystery to our minds that Jesus could be God. The mystery is revealed in Heb 1.2 that Jesus is God and has been since the beginning as God knows time. Hebrews 1.2 declares "Hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;"

Son of God. There are many great occurrences which are shared with us through God's word. One of these may very well be the revelation that God is a triune God. That He has three distinct personalities. Even more revealing is that He decreed that He would give a part of Himself for a sinless world that they might have eternal life. The Bible says that Jesus was in the form of God and took upon Himself the form or likeness of men. The manner in which Christ became man is equally incomprehensible. He was born to a virgin while heavenly host made His birth announcement. Philippians 2.6-7 reads,

Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men.

God became man, and the heavenly declaration was "For unto you is born...a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. And...ye shall find...the babe...lying in a manger." Luke 2.11-12.

Lord. Thomas gives us insight into Jesus as Lord when he refers to Him as "My Lord and my God." John 20.28. What makes this so emphatic is that it went unrebuked by Christ and therefore added to our knowledge of His deity. In Hebrews 1.8-10 it is written,

But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever...therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee... and Thou, Lord in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands.

Thomas was clearly on target when he combined God and Lord as names for Jesus. It is right that we call Him God and Lord.

King of Kings. Kingship is ascribed to Christ by Strong as he describes Christ sovereignty. He states that,

By virtue of this kingly office, Christ rules all things in heaven and earth, for the glory of God and the execution of God's purpose of salvation.¹⁵

Jesus is returning with His church triumphant and in Rev 19.16 it states "And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, King of Kings and Lord of Lords."

Lord of Lords. Lord of Lords probably does not completely describe Christ quite as well as He is described in Daniel 2.47 "...Of a truth it is, that your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings". To try to depict a Lord of Lords becomes easy when viewed in the light of God's grace. God having sent Jesus to die for the sins of mankind, sent the Lamb to be slain, and will send Him again as Lord of Lords.

These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him [are] called, and chosen, and faithful. Rev 17.14.

Image

Christ deity is recognized by His image. This image is described as the image of the living God in Col 1.15. "Who is the image of the invisible God, the first born of every creature:". The first born of every creature certainly gives Him deity in that He was born from an invisible source. Hebrews 1.3 describes Him as the express image of God and as having power even to the taking of a seat at "the right

¹⁵Strong, Systematic, 243.

hand of the Majesty on high". The scripture that describes Christ deity in its fullest seems to be Col. 2.9. "For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." This scripture ascribes to Jesus the completeness of the form of God.

Resurrection

Death surrounds us, impinging on every side. If Jesus is not the Christ and if He does not possess deity then we are as Paul said "men most miserable." 1 Cor 15.19. Christ deity is proven by His resurrection. Romans 1.4 states that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. "And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:". The book of Acts aptly describes the process by which Christ was crucified and resurrected by God. These two verses in Acts 2.23-24 are extremely definitive.

Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.

Numerous other scriptures point to Christ deity based on His resurrection, however those cited should be sufficient for a decision.

Reconciling

When one recognizes Christ deity, one can then recognize the necessity for being reconciled unto God as expressed in 2 Cor 5.20. This reconciliation with an almighty God is not possible unless some provision is made for that reconciliation. Christ deity is again expressed in that 2 Cor 5.19 states,

To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

ATTRIBUTES

Omniscience

The scriptures indicate that Christ had not been trained as others had been trained. The Jews asked the question "How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?" John 7.15. Christ replied "My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me." John 7.16. Omniscience is defined as knowing all things. This can be said of Christ as we read in the scripture all of the many occurrences where it was evident that Christ had foreknowledge or future knowledge and

could only possess this ability by being deity. In John 10.15 Jesus proclaims "As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father:" Isa 40.14 aptly describes Christ's omniscience.

With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgement, and taught him knowledge, and shewed to him the way of understanding?

The answer is no one taught him. He was already omniscience, He is God.

Omnipotence

God has been given the attribute of omnipotence. Paul affirms that Christ according to Phil 3.21 is "able even to subdue all things unto himself." and thus has equal power with God. Jesus said in Matt 28:18 "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."

Omnipresence

The scripture offers many occurrences where Christ deity is confirmed by His omnipresence. One such occurrence is His having been with Nathanael under a fig tree when His physical body was in another location. As deity the scriptures affirm many statements of his omnipresence. He has said he will never leave us, nor forsake us. He said that where two or more are gathered He will be in the midst. Of all the assurances of His eternal presence Matt 28:20 declares "I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

Divine Immutability

No greater proof of Christ immutability exist than that which is stated in Hebrews 13.8 "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever." Heb 7.24 states that "But this man, (Jesus) because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood." Parenthesis added from Heb 7.22. Malachi's confirmation of Christ deity is "For I am the Lord, I change not;" Mal 3.6.

Eternal

There can be no greater proof of Christ deity than that of the multitude of clearly enunciated statements which start with or stand alone as "I AM" The Bible abounds with these words of God and words of Jesus Christ. One such occurrence is found in John 8:58.

Others

Chafer list other attributes to affirm Christ deity as "life,

truth, holiness and love".¹⁶ Hobbs adds two more attributes to the many already listed. He adds "self-existent and immense".¹⁷ Strong list a combination of those attributes sighted and list some as others.¹⁸ What is clear in the study of attributes as descriptive for Christ deity is that man has no concept of all of God's attributes nor complete knowledge of His deity.

PREROGATIVES

Forgive Sin

Christ's deity is supported in that he acted directly to demonstrate his power to forgive sin. He had no difficulty with assuming a prerogative that belongs to God. He was able to forgive sin because He is God. One of Christ's confrontations with the scribes was used by Him to demonstrate His authority over sickness but was expressly used to assert his authority over sin.

But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins,... I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house. Mark 2.10-11.

Another such incident is found in the book of Luke. "He said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven." Luke 7.48

Raise the Dead

If Christ had not been raised from the dead, He could not raise mankind from the dead. Clearly, He is alive and has proclaimed of Himself that "I am the resurrection and the Life." He further affirms that "he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:" John 11.25.

Execute Judgment

Of all the assertions of Christ's authority over judgment none seems as strong as that which appears most frequently in the literature of systematic theology. The scripture which clearly defines Christ's judgments is John 5.22. "For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son:".

OBJECTION

Any objection to Christ's deity rest first in the conflict as to whether or not the Bible is without error and if it is the Word of God. One who has had the spirit reveal to them that the Bible is inerrant has no difficulty honoring Christ as deity.

¹⁶Chafer, Systematic, 1:211

¹⁷Herschel H. Hobbs, Fundamentals of Our Faith, (Tennessee: Broadman Press, 1960), 31-32.

¹⁸Strong, Systematic, 243-303.

CONCLUSION

Worship Given

Having come to the conclusion that Jesus Christ is divine and in Him is the fullness of God, then we must give to Him all that is rightfully due Him as deity. We should do as He commands "That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father." John 5.23. He has been worshiped by angels and men and we should all worship Him as declared in Phil 2.10-11

That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

THE PERSONALITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Present day literature concerning the Holy Spirit reveals that little attention has been paid to this important part of the God head. The Holy Spirit is as much a part of the God head as is the Father and the Son. Much can be learned by a study of the Holy Spirit in terms of His personality. A little insight can be gained by looking at some aspects of His personality. For this paper these aspects are His Deity, attributes, actions and the fruits of the Spirit. All of what is known concerning the Holy Spirit is derived from the Bible and is only present in the Christian faith.

We sometimes confuse personality with visibility. Personality is not an attribute of a body; it is the attribute of a spirit. You yourself have never been seen; you are not a body, but a spirit having a body.¹⁹

When one deals with the personality of the Holy Spirit it is likely that they will use "it" to describe Him. The title Holy spirit when replaced by a pronoun is generally masculine. The Holy Spirit is God the great "I AM" and therefore the Holy Spirit can not be "it".

Some confusion surrounding the name of the Holy Spirit may be His lack of a name. He is only known at this time by His title "Holy Spirit". It is purposed that His personality and personal name has been diminished to allow the exaltation of the Son. This in no way diminishes His role as God the Holy Spirit. According to Chafer,

This is because the Spirit does not now speak from Himself or of Himself; rather, He speaks whatsoever He hears... and He is said to come into the world to glorify Christ.²⁰

DEITY

The Holy Spirit is a gift of God to every believer. The unmerited indwelling of the Holy Spirit is just another exhibit of God's grace to man. Christians are set apart as the Holy Spirit touches their lives at salvation to begin their change to a new and spirit filled life. What a treasured gift is the salvation

¹⁹Cambron, Bible, 117.

²⁰Chafer, Major, 87.

experience and the indwelling Holy Spirit at the same instant you believe on God's Son as Savior.

The Holy Spirit is recognized as being God. He is as much a part of God as is the Father and Son. Peter quickly defined the deity of the Holy Spirit when he pointed out to Ananias that He lied to the Holy Spirit. Acts 5.4 states "Thou hast not lied to men, but unto God."

Many of the same attributes of God are contributed to the Holy Spirit. Perhaps, the most significant attributes are those of omnipresence, omniscience and omnipotence.

The work of the Holy Spirit significantly proclaims Him as God since no one but God is capable of the works performed by the Holy Spirit.

ATTRIBUTES

The many attributes of the Holy Spirit are those which are exhibited by the other members of the God head. He posses wisdom and knowledge which He shares with the saved. The wisdom and knowledge which He possess exceeds that of human comprehension. In addition to intelligence, He has a will. His will is to testify of Jesus. (John 15:26) He certainly has power, since it is by His power that many mighty signs and wonders took place at His bidding. Paul was extremely aware of the power of the Holy Spirit as He gave evidence of that power while Paul preached the gospel of Christ. (Rom 15.13,19).

The Bible tells us that it is the spirit of God which reveals knowledge to us. If we are to have knowledge, even knowledge concerning the Holy Spirit then we must receive that knowledge through knowing the Holy Spirit.

Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God." (1 Cor 2.12).

Further indications of His intelligence is given in Isaiah 11.2:

The spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, and the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord.

The personality of the Holy Spirit is described as emblems and symbols in the Bible. Some of these symbols are the dove, water, oil, wind, and fire.

The Dove is a symbol of the Holy Spirit as related to us in John 1.32. "John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him". The dove which was sent from the ark by Moses may be considered as evidence of the Holy

Spirit according to Chafer.²¹ (Gen 8.8-11)

Water is a symbol of the Holy Spirit and His indwelling of believers. John 7.37-39. describes how "living waters flow from within" the believer. In these verses Jesus spoke of this living water as he spoke of the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Other uses of water are noted as cleansing and as being within the believer. Both of these references speak of the work of the Holy Spirit. (Ex 29.4; John 7.37-39) John 4 also is referred to by Jesus to indicate that water is a representation of the Holy Spirit.

The symbol oil when used is represented as many different occurrences of deity. As oil is representative of the work of the Holy Spirit, one example would be the use of oil by the Holy Spirit in the cleansing of the leper (Lev 14.10-32). Many other uses of oil as a symbol of the Holy Spirit can be sighted. However, one of the very important uses of the oil was in the setting aside for service of priest, prophets and kings. Oil was used extensively in the Old Testament and numerous times in the New Testament to indicate that the Spirit was upon Christ. (John 3.34; Col 1.19). In the Book of Leviticus reference is given to the placement of the oil on the body for cleansing purposes. Cambron states,

When the priest was anointed with oil, it took place in this manner: first, his ear - he was always to hear God's Word; his thumb - his actions were to be for God's Glory; his big toe - he was to walk with God.

It is good to know that when one is touched by the oil of the Holy Spirit that one is completely anointed and cleansed by the power of God.

Wind is used to signify the filling of the Holy Spirit or the breathing of God on the disciples and at Pentecost "as a rushing mighty wind" when all present were filled with the Holy Spirit. (Acts 2.2-4)

Fire is used in different ways throughout the Bible but when used in connection with the Holy Spirit it is used to represent purification and sanctification. When a believer is being tried by fire as indicated in 1 Peter 1.7 they are cleansed that they might appear before Jesus Christ filled with the Holy Spirit and purged of all sin.

ACTIONS

Actions of the Holy Spirit describe His personality. Some of these actions are: leads, teaches, reproveth, appoints, and ministers.

New Testament scriptures indicate that the Spirit leads. Gal 5.18 speaks of "led of the Spirit" as does Acts 8.29 which

²¹Chafer, Systematic, 1:253

specifically states "Then the Spirit said..." Romans 8.14 explains how this leading of the Spirit can be possible. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."

In John 14.26 Jesus explains that the Comforter will "teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you". 1 John 2.27 describes the teaching of the Holy Spirit as an anointing which you receive from the Holy Spirit that is in you. "But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you and...but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things".

The Bible is quite clear on the Holy Spirit's action to reprove the world. "And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:" (John 16.8)

The appointments of the Holy Spirit seem to be to specific tasks of ministry. A good example of the Holy Spirit as He appoints men to serve God is: "The Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them." (Acts 13.2; Acts 20.28).

Of the many ways which the Holy Spirit ministers, some are that He baptizes, fills, regenerates us and seals us to the end. These occurrences can be noted in Eph 4.30, 5.18; John 3.6; and 1 Cor 12.13.

Names also express His personality. The Bible mentions two names in particular to describe the personality of the Holy Spirit. They are Comforter and Spirit.

Before Jesus departed this earth He told us that He would not leave us without a "Comforter". He also once again points out that this Spirit will be "within" us providing us with the truth.

And I will pray the Father, and he shall give ye another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world can not receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." (John 14. 16-17).

The Holy Spirit being God is also Spirit just as God the Father and Son are also Spirit. "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." (John 4.34)

FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

Fruit of the Spirit is "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness temperance: against such there is no law." (Gal 5.22-23). What a wonderful scripture which describes how the Spirit can indwell in us to produce a Christ like spirit in us. If we as Christians can live as God would have us to do, we would be able to demonstrate the fruit of the spirit as a product of His filling. It would be difficult for one to exhibit the fruit of the Spirit by doing any work. These gifts appear to be a result of a Christian life not an action which any Christian could purposefully set out to accomplish through himself. The Amplified

Bible translation of this text reads like this:

But the fruit of the (Holy) Spirit, [the work which His presence within accomplishes] - is love, joy (gladness), peace, patience (an even temper, forbearance), kindness, goodness (benevolence), faithfulness; (Meekness, humility) gentleness, self-control (self-restraint, continence). Against such things there is no law [that can bring a charge]. (Gal 5.22-23).

This amplified version points out that the fruit is "of the Holy Spirit" and any work accomplished is due to "the work which His presence within accomplishes". Of all the descriptions listed as representations of the personality of the Holy Spirit, these two verses seem to add much of what may have been lacking in the other references.

BIBLICAL INERRANCY

To begin a study of Biblical inerrancy, inspiration and the truthfulness of scripture, one must first recognize that without the Bible as a complete system of self sufficiency and self proclamation there would be no premise for its inspiration and/or truthfulness. This conjecture simply stated is that the Bible exist and states its existence as created by The Holy God. If an individual is incapable of grasping the Biblical concept revealed by The Holy Spirit that,

God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; (Heb 1.1-2 KJV)

the individual will be unable to accept the statement of God's providentially providing the scriptures complete with inspiration and truthfulness. The scripture that describes the act of providing the scripture to us is that, "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness. (2 Tim 3.16 NIV).

Careful study of Holy Scripture should bring the reader to the conclusion that the scriptures are without error and divinely inspired by the Holy Spirit. To begin one must consider that the Bible is a revelation from God.

Revelation

According to Chafer the term "revelation" is defined "...as the divine act of communicating to mankind what otherwise would not be known."²² This definition then would conclude that the Holy Spirit as describe in the Bible provided that which is now known by a supernatural act. That act is described as breathed.

Holy Spirit Breathed. The Book speaks for itself and declares continually to be revelations from God to man. Such statements as "The Lord said to Isaiah" (Isa 7.3) points to the Bible as inspired and truthful.

Providentially Provided. A review of the Bible quickly gives evidence of its divine purpose which is to direct men to God. Its unfolding guidance of the authors by the Holy Spirit provides clear insight that this book is provided by a loving God for man's redemption to Himself.

The deistic descriptions inside the Bible speak to issues that clearly come from God. Its parts make a totally complete whole even though it had multiple authors and covers hundreds of years.

²²Chafer, Systematic, 1:62.

Revelation of all authors which points to the "scarlet thread" and God's redemptive plan for man should produce the conclusion that the Bible is inspired. Revelation and inspiration are clearly God working to provide His word to man.

Inspiration

The importance of the doctrine of inspiration is that God's influence on the writers of both the Old and New Testament is so evident that one can clearly see that even given each author's personal style and literary individuality that God produced His perfect will in providing His divine word which reflects His message as completely God-given and containing God's infallible word. Unless you accept this as fact and without error you have no basis for your beliefs in a supreme being are in a here-after and consequently have no hope for tomorrow. Only when one can accept that God has revealed Himself to us through His word, and that word is without error, can we then proceed to place our faith and trust in Him to save us according to His word, the Holy Bible, as He revealed it to its multiple authors.

Thiessen explains that inspiration has to do with how the truth was given to the men who wrote the sixty-six books of the Bible. Thiessen indicates that the "Spirit of God moved upon men..." and further states that the "Scripture is fully and verbally inspired; it is God-breathed."²³

Theories.

There have been a number of theories advanced to explain how the Bible can be written by multiple authors and in different time periods and yet be a divine word from God. Some of these theories are Mechanical Dictation Theory, Partial Inspiration Theory, and Verbal Plenary Theory.

Mechanical Dictation Theory holds that God dictated the Bible and thus produced an accurate and infallible word which contains complete inspiration and truthfulness of the scriptures. This explanation suggests it would be impossible for man to provide accurate and infallible information.

Partial Inspiration Theory suggests only parts of the Bible are inspired. Since the scriptures are the source of Christian theology they must be inspired of God and absolutely true. Those who take the partial inspiration point of view believe that only doctrinal teachings and items which human authors can not have knowledge of are inspired. They would indicate that areas not related to theology, such as geography and history are not inspired and left to human interpretation.

Individuals who espouse the Verbal Plenary Theory believe that every word was given by divine revelation and that all of it was inspired. It therefore, is free of error of any kind. This theory seems the most plausible in that, the human authors over the period

²³Thiessen, Lectures, 63.

of time could not have put together such a document unless it were by divine revelation and complete without any mixture of error.

Historical and Geographical Evidence

Much of history and archaeology continue to match with events as recorded in the Bible. Attempts have been made to suggest that some Kings as mentioned in the Bible did not exist and therefore suggesting error on parts of the scriptures. In these circumstances rulers continue to match historical and Biblical accounts as archaeology unearths new findings which verify the authenticity of Bible passages.

The truthfulness of the Old Testament was substantiated when God as Christ in the flesh recognized many key doctrinal elements of the Old Testament as fact. His references to the occurrences as having taken place or as directed by God help to establish the validity of the scriptures.

Archaeology confirms such occurrences as the creation, flood, and battles of the kings by continually finding accounts which describe the circumstances of the events much as they have been described in the Bible. Archaeology continues to confirm the truthfulness of the Bible and its accuracy by continuing to search for evidence of civilizations which have been found by their Biblical references. The Bible has described locations in sufficient detail that archaeologists have been able to find whole nations and have dated them as being in existence at the time described in the Bible.

Writers Qualification.

The truthfulness of the New Testament can be described by several facts. One such fact centers around the credibility of the writers. The accounts which they relate in their writings were direct eyewitness accounts of actual occurrences. The writers had been with Jesus and wrote from their personal experiences. They received the scriptures which they wrote from the Holy Spirit and not of themselves. This spiritual insight and first hand reporting gave evidence of spiritual guidance.

Sincerity and Synchronization.

One cannot doubt the sincerity of the men who wrote the New Testament since much of what they wrote ran counter to established beliefs. To write against the traditional way of thinking took courage because of the consequences of their actions. They must have had great conviction that what they wrote was true since its content could put them to death. If what they wrote was not correct then death would be too high a price to pay for false heresy.

In conjunction with the writers' convictions is the representation of facts which are reported by numerous writers covering the same content or occurrences. This harmonization of the

many books of the New Testament adds proof of divine guidance for the establishment of the scriptures as true and without error.

Historical agreement

As the books written by different authors fit together to support each other so does the content fits the historical period. All of the writers use history and accurate similar accounts to produce a complete picture of Christ deity. They point to historical occurrences as substantiating divine intervention in the lives of men in the past, present and future. A study of the historical events leads one to conclude that there is nothing in history counter to Biblical claims nor does lack of agreement refute God's revelation.

Illumination

As Received.

The total Bible was received by the authors through the power of the Holy Spirit and was provided to them with understanding sufficient for them to write the word of God as God wanted it written. Although they were clearly their own personality and were capable of writing what they wanted to write, the Bible tells us that they only wrote that which they were led of the Spirit to write. They likewise were only given insight into that which they wrote as the Holy Spirit determined it necessary for them to have that knowledge. Circumstances throughout the Bible plainly tell the authors simply to write that which God wanted written and that it was not necessary for the writers to know or be illuminated to its purpose or content.

As Revealed.

1 John 2.20,27 according to Thiessen indicates that "each child of God has illuminating ministry of the Holy Spirit to enable him to understand the Word;"²⁴ Taking this statement to its logical conclusion then, would be that each child of God who spends time with God in his Bible will by the power of the Holy Spirit have Jesus Christ the Son of God revealed to them. This would be the extension of "understand the Word", since Christ is the Word.

Original versus Modern Versions

Original versions of God's Word to man is considered to be verbal, plenary inspiration text by some conservative Biblical scholars. Much debate over certain passages or some words, still cannot sufficiently deny that the word came by supernatural means and that its inerrancy is clear enough for learned men of the Bible to say without hesitation that the Bible as we know it came from God to man and is without mixture of error.

²⁴Thiessen, Lectures, 41.

The modern versions or translations of the Bible today may be regarded by some not to be without error or changes due to translation. If one believes that God using the power of the Holy Spirit illuminated the writers of the Bible, then one can also believe that the Holy Spirit can illuminate the readers to know and comprehend that which he wants understood from the text of present day translations.

THE REASONS

Save Man from Self

Man is a sinner and needs the infallible word of God to instruct him in the way to please his creator and to achieve redemption from his sin nature. God provides the instruction and redemption through divinely inspired written instructions, the Holy Scriptures. No matter what man thinks of the Bible it will not change whether or not the Bible is God's Word. Man deceived by Satan about the scriptures, and their power to reveal God to man for purposes of salvation, will find himself in hell for all his intellectualizing and rationalizing which are in error. God provided His Word to give man an account of Jesus Christ and His finished work on the cross. If man rejects the word and consequently rejects the redemptive message then that will be mans choice, not Gods.

Provide Way to Speak to Man

God has provided a means to save men from their sins. That way required that God speak to man. God chose to speak to man with the Holy Scripture. God has placed within His word the plan of salvation. Man can continue to find error or any other excuse for rejecting Gods way of speaking to man. Man's rejection of the inerrant word will not change God way of speaking to man for salvation purposes.

THE RESULTS

Bible Perseveres

Of the several arguments advanced for the inspiration and truthfulness of the scripture, its "indestructibility" by Thiessen, is proposed.²⁵ If the Bible were not the true and inspired word of God one could say that it would not have survived the many attempt on its systematic destruction. Not all books are subject to systematic destruction as has been the Bible. There has not been a book which has had as much prohibition of reading. There has even been laws passed against its publication. In Spite of the many attempts to destroy the Bible it continues to survive and to point to the divine

²⁵Thiessen, Lectures, 45.

revelation of Jesus Christ as Savior.

Prophecy Fulfillment

The Bible is truthful in its fulfillment of prophecy. A study of just a few prophecies, many of which are extremely complex in nature, proves that the Bible is by divine revelation. Only God can know the future. God's book continues to be proven to possess knowledge of future events which have been fulfilled since its writing. Much of the unfulfilled prophecy continues almost on a daily basis to be fulfilled. One who is familiar with the prophecies in the Bible can clearly see that God has provided the Bible for us to know His true and inspired word.

CONCLUSION

The Scripture is Inspired and True

All of the above singularly should be sufficient proof of inspiration and truthfulness of the scripture but collectively should be overwhelming evidence of inspiration and the truthfulness of the scripture.

THE CREATION AND FALL OF MAN

THE ORIGIN OF MAN (The Creation View)

The origin of man has long been a mystery for those individuals who desire to place man's beginning in the universe as an act of nature. This presumption that man is derived from some form of matter separate and apart from being the divine creation of God is just another example of man being confused by the things of God.

The non-believer spends much time and energy attempting to place the origin of man in a self evolved state of one type or another. Much has been said about even the creation of the earth itself. The big bang theory is just one such example. One of the theories put forth for the origin of man is the one cell approach or evolutionary view that man evolved from one celled creatures to monkeys and then to the present state of man. This theory has been described as "From goo to you by way of the zoo."

The difficulty with these theories is that they are based on erroneous information from the inception of the theory. The attempts at eliminating a supreme being which produces or creates all things makes evolutionist theory untenable and false postulations at best.

The creationist view of the origin of man is obviously the correct view since it begins with the Creator. One cannot have a creation (man) without first having a creator. The Christian's acknowledgment of man being created by God is of course substantiated by the Bible and is detailed enough to dispel the myth of being born in a cess pool. The Biblical account provides sufficient description of the creation process of the origin of man that it should be accepted by all who read it. All intelligent beings should recognize that their intellect must have been derived from a higher intellect than their own. Present scientific evidence indicates that degeneration of intellectual capacity is a regression to the mean. Intelligence does not evolve to a higher form, it dissipates to a lower level.

Evolutionist are devoted to the identification of exactly when did the creation of man occur in time. Creationist believe that the Biblical account is sufficient evidence for the time of creation. The Bible says "In the beginning God created..." and it is clear that He created man both male and female. The anthropological and anatomic arguments are satisfied in that man was made from the dust of the earth and God provided the first breath of life. The "when" is satisfied by God's own good time.

THE ORIGINAL CHARACTER OF MAN

The original character of man immediately brings to mind several premises which should be given consideration. The original character of man is usually interpreted in light of the scriptures "in the image and likeness of God". An understanding of this phrase is necessary to determine what is meant by "image and likeness". Since God is spirit and as such possess no physical body, then man is not made in the "image and likeness" of God as a physical being. If man is not in the likeness of God as a physical being then in what capacity is man like God? According to Hodge

God is a Spirit, the human soul is a spirit" and the "attributes of a spirit are reason, conscience, and will...a rational, moral and...free agent."²⁶

Given this likeness, man then is capable of communication with God Himself. Lower forms of creation not possessing spirit have no such attributes and are considered brute in nature. The "likeness" produces within man the capacity to know God. This capacity for knowing God allows for the regeneration and sanctification according to the apostle Paul in Colossians 3.10.

The evolutionist view of man's capacity to reason is quite different from that of man being created by God. The evolutionist view of man postulates that man was incapable of mental capacities when first evolving and not created as a whole man. Given these two differences in opinions one must choose between scientific speculation and the gift of God. "Goo" or God, you decide.

Along with the mental capabilities provided by the spirit are also moral capabilities or likenesses which as spirit are "created in righteousness and holiness of truth" (Eph 4.24). Man's ability to choose "holiness" places him in a regenerated state and this condition returns man to his pre-sin position with God.

One of the reasons why man can be considered social in spirit is projected because God is social. Evidence of God having fellowship with man in the garden (Gen 3.8) indicates that God was available to commune with his creation man. God demonstrated man's social nature by providing a help mate for Adam. Eve being recognized as part of Adam established early that man should not be alone but should have social companionship. God's endowment of His spirit into man produced human love. Only as God loves man can man in turn possess the same attributes as given by God "in our image, after our likeness" (Gen 1.26).

²⁶Charles Hodge, Systematic Theology 3 vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1952), 2:96-97

TWO VIEWS OF MAN'S BEING

Man has a material and an immaterial nature. The material nature is his body while the immaterial nature is his soul and spirit. Depending on whether one believes that the soul and spirit are one, or if soul and spirit are separated determines whether one's view is that of dichotomy (soul & spirit combined) or trichotomy (soul & spirit separated).

The dichotomy view has as its base Gen 2.7 in which God breathed into man "the breath of life and man became a living soul." Other proof scriptures seem to indicate that "life" and "spirit" or "soul" and "spirit" are interchangeable. Matthew and Mark's gospel both indicate if one loses the soul, they lose everything. Thiessen adds an additional argument for dichotomy, in that man's consciousness can only discriminate between the material and immaterial parts of man's being.²⁷

The trichotomy view holds that man is three different parts. The parts are body, soul and spirit. Using the same base Gen 2.7 as proof text the trichotomist point out that the text is plural and translate a "breath of life (lives)." In 1 Thess 5.23 the apostle Paul considers man's nature to have body, soul and spirit. Hebrews 4.12 speaks of "dividing asunder of soul and spirit".

Most Scripture indicates that soul and spirit are synonymous. Dichotomists only need to explain 1 Thess 5.23 and Heb 4.12 while the Trichotomists must explain several dichotomist proof text.

MORAL CONSTITUTION OF MAN

The moral constitution of man consist of the ability to make right and wrong decisions. Much of what scholars believe makes up the moral constitution of man is primarily man's intellect and sensibility, as well as to use one's conscience and will. The first two, intellect and sensibility are used to identify right and wrong, and to use man's sensibility to decide to do right or wrong. According to Thiessen intellect and sensibility must of necessity be accompanied by conscience and will.²⁸ Conscience according to Romans 2.15 is to bear witness. This may be a good description of conscience. Conscience being the knowledge of right and wrong. It is a moral standard against which man measures his actions. Man's conscience then bares witness to whether or not the impending thought or action is morally correct. Will is man's ability to do anything which is within his nature. He is not free in his will to do that which is contrary to his nature. Man's will allowed Adam to decide to sin or not to sin. Our will allows us to make a similar decision. The Holy Spirit provides opportunities for man to exercise his will to follow God's will.

²⁷Thiessen, Lectures, 160.

²⁸Thiessen, Lectures, 162.

PROBLEMS WITH MAN'S FALL

The fall of man seems to have some difficulties involved with it. There seems to be what Thiessen calls three principals which are open for discussion.²⁹ These three principals or problems are as follows. Can a holy being fall?, why would a just God allow man to be tempted?, and why so great a penalty for disobedience?

First, can a holy being fall? Yes a holy being can fall if he fails to differentiate between that which is holy and unholy. God created man and woman in a sinless state with free will and moral abilities to choose to sin or not to sin. Satan arranged a temptation which would cause them to sin and Adam made the decision to disobey his creator. When he did that, he took upon himself the responsibilities for his actions. We today may not comprehend how a holy being can sin, however, it is clear that Adam acted against the true nature of God and placed himself in direct disobedience with God. Man revolted against God of his own free will. Satan could only use that which was available to him for use to tempt man and woman. He could only use those things in the garden. According to Genesis 3.6 Satan used man's God given desires for food against him in order to cause man to disobey God. The driving force was man's desire to know that which God did not desire him to know at that time. Rebellion against God had a price.

Second if God is just, why did He permit the temptation? Man was created a being which had been given the will to make a decision concerning serving God and serving self interest. Man's God given ability to make such a choice separates him from all other creations of God. Even though God had foreknowledge of man's inability to make the appropriate decision, a just God, by being just had to allow man's decision. Being a just God, God provided an immediate counter action to man's poor choice. God's decree was a Savior for man's sin against Him.

Last, does the Creator have the right to set the penalty for disobedience? Eminent authority must rest with God. God used material things to bring man to the understanding that having all knowledge gained from the forbidden tree does not make him like God or God. Man still remained the created being and not the Creator. God's command was a serious command. It was a decision to choose death or life. To choose between God or self. Adam choose to place his trust in himself. Man still has the same decision to make today. Man may choose life and Christ or man may choose death and the devil. The forbidden tree is still in man's garden.

THE NATURE OF ADAM'S SIN

The nature of Adam's sin is in most part involved in a discussion of "what is sin?". There are several definitions of sin which have been put forth and most of them contain some form of the

²⁹Thiessen, Lectures, 175.

following premises. Understanding these premises can provide insight into the nature of Adam's sin.

Sin by many has been described as transgression of the law's of God; selfishness; nature that is sinful; different kinds of evil; and depravity. According to these definitions one can clearly see the nature of Adam's sin.

Sin is the transgression of the law's of God and therefore when Adam chose not to conform to God's will regarding Adam, then Adam sinned against God. The Bible calls this action, sin, disobedience, godlessness and even unholiness.

Sin is selfishness and was found to be in Adam when by free election he chose to put himself before God and went his own direction. Isaiah 53.6 describes the action as "turned every one to his own way." Proof that selfishness is a part of sin rest in "the fact that all the forms of sin can be traced to selfishness as their source."³⁰

Man having a nature that is sinful can bring forth sin. 1 John 1.8 clearly dispels any myth of not having a sin nature. "If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us." Man's conscience even speaks to man and when it does it speaks of self not God.

Sin has been described as different types of evil. One of these types is moral evil. This evil is found in man himself and is his sins of omission and commission. He elects to do evil or not to do evil by his very nature of rationalization.

Depravity seems to be the lot of sin. Sin according to the Bible effects the whole man and only by the shed blood of Jesus Christ can man have hope to be cleansed from "all sin." 1 John 1.7.

Much of what represents what sin is not is that, sin is not forever; is not unlimited; and sin does not begin as a sensuous nature. Accordingly, Adam's sin was not part of the definition of what sin is not.

EFFECTS OF THE FALL ON ADAM AND EVE

The immediate effects of the fall on Adam and Eve were their "relationship to God, on their nature, on their bodies, and on their environment."³¹

One of the immediate effects of the fall on Adam and Eve was the establishment of a different relationship to God than had been prior to the fall. God was a God to commune with prior to the fall, where as, after the fall Adam and Eve sought to hide from the face of God. Their relationship to God had changed from that of fellowship to that of disobedience and guilt. Their sin was compounded with accusations of blame on the God, the serpent and each other.

Another effect of the fall was on Adam and Eve's nature. They

³⁰Thiessen, Lectures, 174.

³¹Thiessen, Lectures, 182.

no longer possessed a sinless nature. They were naked before God and themselves and placed upon their descendants a sin nature. Man became a sinner by birth.

The effect on their bodies was surely immediate as the body became corruptible. Man must "surely die" according to Genesis 2.17. Their bodies would never be as created, incorruptible, immortal. Physical illnesses and maladies would be the pain of a dying body. A body weakened by sin and subject to decay. As they were "dust, and to dust you shall return." Genesis 3.19.

The immediate effect on their environment is seen in that the serpent was cursed, that the cattle and beast of the fields would suffer. That the animals would seek to destroy those of lesser ability to survive. That the earth itself would be caused to bring forth thorns and thistles as was not its nature prior to the fall. All of the creation must now be made to exhibit a world full of sin and suffering.

CONCLUSION

What can one do to reverse the situation which is described as the fall of man? According to God's word man must be made righteous again before God. God will not accept man's righteousness since in the sight of God, man's righteousness is as filthy rags. Jesus Christ, God's Son is the only righteousness God will accept. However, the payment for sin requires death. Therefore, Christ has already provided the payment for the penalty of sin. Christ died on the cross, the wages of sin is death, but the gift of life is eternal, provided for all those who will accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

THE DILEMMA OF SIN

ADAM'S SIN AND THE EFFECT ON THE HUMAN RACE

The effect of Adam's sin on the human race was that of passing on to his descendants sin. His selfish act placed all human kind in sin. Romans 5.12 states that,

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

Along with the sin came death and changes in the environment in which they had been created. Man's new nature became depraved and prone to sin and death passed on to all men.

Adam's sin changed the way men sin. Since Adam chose to sin he then passed on to his descendants the nature to choose sin. Chafer puts it like this, "They do not become sinful by sinning, but they sin because by nature they are sinful."³²

There were penalties assessed for Adam's disobedience and they were physical death, spiritual death, and the second death for those that warrant it. The physical death was eminent since God said, you will "surely" die (Gen 2.17). The spiritual death is that of the lost or separated from God due to Adam's sin. The third death which was passed on is the second death and for those who elect to continue in their sin will find that they are eternally separated from the love of God.

According to the Biblical doctrine of sin man sins in several ways. Man sins because he disobey the laws of God, because sin is part of the nature of man, because Adam's sin imputed to all men death, and accordingly then all men are "under sin" Gal 3.22.

Man sins first because he does not measure up to God's standard and falls short of the Glory of God. In the second, man's nature has been changed and he has become "children of wrath". Third, in Romans 5 it states that because of Adam's sin, now man's sin must be paid for by imputing on Jesus the sins of mankind. And fourth, being under sin can only be changed by Jesus Christ placing a repentant soul under His grace.

SECULAR THEORIES CONCERNING SIN IN THE RACE

There are a number of secular theories concerning sin in the race. Some of these theories of imputation of Adam's sin to his

³²Chafer, Major, 176.

posterity are "The Pelagian Theory", "Arminian Theory", "Federal Theory", "Mediate Theory", "Augustinian Theory" (Corporate Personality Theory), and "New School Theory". At issue is Romans 5.19 "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners." Because Adam and all his descendants are of the same creation (all men) then the sin of Adam is the sin of the race.

The Pelagian Theory was devised by a British monk named Pelagius and he spread his theory in 409 AD. His theories were reviewed by the Council of Carthage in AD 418 and determined to be condemned. Pelagius believed that everyone is created innocent by God as Adam was in the garden. That man is free from a depraved state and able to make their own transgressions of God's laws. According to Pelagius, Adam did not pass anything but a bad example on to his descendants. Pelagius further said that physical death was not a consequence of Adam's actions but rather an act of nature. He used the same scriptures others use to interpret entirely different position one from another. He used Romans 5.12 and interpreted it to say that all men will incur death by sinning and will do so as Adam was their example. Really going a field, Pelagius states that man can be saved by law and that some individuals have been so saved because they have obeyed God perfectly. These individuals according to Pelagius can be saved by grace but that is not entirely necessary since they have remained perfect and therefore have been saved by their works of perfection.

The Arminian Theory expounded by Professor Arminius places man in a position of being destitute of original righteousness and that Adam has passed upon his descendants misery and death. Arminian theory states that God has given all people from their immediate creation a consciousness of the Holy Spirit and can with this help counteract the inherited depravity and can obey God should they chose to do so. Death passes on to all men not because of Adam's sin but because God decreed that all men should suffer the consequences of Adam's sin. This theory has several difficulties. To name just two, they are, the improper use of the Holy Spirit and contradiction of Scripture.

The Federal Theory briefly stated is a theory of Covenants as espoused by Cocceius and Turretin. According to these two scholars God made a covenant with Adam. The terms of the covenant was that Adam would be his race's representative and any actions which Adam would take would place on his descendants the same penalties. The descendants of Adam would receive eternal life if Adam was obedient to God. The descendants would become corrupt and would experience death if Adam sinned. Since Adam did sin, God placed Adam's transgression upon all mankind as defendants of a sinner.

The Mediate Theory according to Professor Placeus is that all men are born physically as well as mentally depraved. That depravity is a native depravity and is itself sin. It is an inborn depravity by virtue of propagation from Adam and is passed to all of his descendants.

The Augustinian Theory according to Augustine states that God imputed Adam's sin immediately to his descendant because Adam was the head of the whole race at the time that he transgressed God's law. Adam's action constituted the will of the race to go against God and therefore corrupted itself by Adam's sin.

The New School Theory finds its roots in old Puritan anthropology and according to this theory all men are born with a predisposition to sin. The theory further states that with this predisposition to sin man actually sins as soon as they are morally capable. This action is labeled as "vitiosity of nature" because it leads to sin. God does not impute to Adam's descendants Adam's sin but imputes to each man his own sins and transgression. These theories have been discussed briefly, since it is known that these theories have multiple facets and space in this paper does not allow the expounding of their errors.

THEORIES OF IMPUTATION OF SIN

According to Chafer, three theories of imputation are set forth in the Scripture. They are,

The sin of Adam is imputed to his posterity. . . the sin of man is imputed to Christ. . . and the righteousness of God is imputed to those who believe."³³

According to Romans 5.12-14 Adam's sin is imputed to all men. Since all men have the Adamic nature and are "in Adam" then they are said to have sinned in Adam.

Adam being the federal head of the race placed sin upon all members of the race and death passed to all, for all have sinned. The other occurrence of a sinful nature in Adam's descendants comes by inheritance of a sinful nature through the generations of Adam. Men by the very nature of birth in the Adamic line are sinful. The penalties for sin are physical death, spiritual death, and the second death. Man must do something with the sin nature of his inheritance. Man can accept God's decree to believe in Jesus Christ as Savior upon whom God has imputed man's sins.

Since God imputed Adam's sin to man, God also provided a way to escape the three types of death. This way was the imputation of man's sin on Jesus. The Bible says in Isaiah 53.5,6

He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities. . . and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

God further places His righteousness on us if we will believe that He imputed our sins to His Son Jesus. Thus God imputes righteousness in Christ upon those who will believe.

33Chafer, Major, 175.

WHAT IS DEPRAVITY AND THE SIN NATURE?

Depravity and the sin nature is man's lack of righteousness and holy affection for God, combined with his corrupt moral nature and bent to evil. Thiessen says that "The Scriptures speak of human nature as wholly depraved."³⁴ This wholly depraved nature is not in the sense of a complete opposition to God. It does not mean that man is totally and completely prone to commit all the sins. Many Bible passages indicate that man is not totally depraved but that some keep the law, while others go from bad to worse in their evil ways. Other scriptures state that man given a choice between himself and God will choose himself. Still other scripture indicate that man at times has an enmity toward God. Romans 7.18 tells us that man is similar in nature as the apostle Paul when he said,

For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me: but how to perform that which is good I find not.

Depravity has produced an inability in man to give up self and to find God's way acceptable to him. Being in sin has caused the free will of man to choose between two evils. He may need to choose the lesser of two evils or the greater of the two evils. This freedom also allows man to respond to the grace of God and will aid him in repentance and belief in the Son of God to be saved.

THE PROBLEM OF SIN IN THE INDIVIDUAL

Mankind by his very nature is capable of determining his ability to sin or not to sin. Mankind as a whole has determined that "No one is perfect." The Bible says "For all have sinned" Rom 3.23. This existence of sin in each of us has been called the "Universality of Sin". This sin has been determined to exist in everyone and according to Rom 3.10 "THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NO, NOT ONE:"

This nature of sin is not just participating in the sin of the world but must be understood to be present in each of us as a propensity to sin. This is to say that man is not limited to the acts of sin but by his very "nature" sinful. Many Scriptures address this nature. Some are Ecclesiastes 7.20 "For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not," 1 John 1.8 "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us," and Romans 3.12 THEY ARE ALL GONE OUT OF THE WAY. . . THERE IS NONE THAT DOETH GOOD, NO NOT ONE." The problem of the existence of sin in the individual may best be described by the classic passage found in Romans 5.12-14

³⁴Thiessen, Lectures, 191.

As by one man sin entered into the world. . . death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression.

Sin exist in the individual by the declaration of both man and God.

THE PROBLEM OF GUILT

Guilt is clearly a part of sin. The sin nature of man would not be complete without the guilt nature of man to convince him of his inabilities to please God. Accordingly, one finds in 1 John 3.20 "For if our hearts condemn us, God is greater than our hearts, and knoweth all things." This condemnation is our guilt nature and we by our very being experience our guilt as through the heart.

Guilt according to the Scriptures indicate that guilt is in degrees and is relative to sins committed. The Old Testament Mosaic law described different sacrifices for different violation of the Mosaic law. New Testament indications of degrees of sin are represented in such Scriptures as John 19.11 "he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin," and Romans 2.6 "Who will render to every man according to his deeds."

According to Thiessen there are four degrees of guilt.³⁵ Man is by his nature a sinner and when they reach the age of accountability man's nature causes him to personally transgress God's law. That guilt is determined by the degree of knowledge concerning God and actions taken against God's law. Degree of guilt is determined by the sin committed. These sins may be those of willful indulgence as compared to that which Peter experienced when he denied Christ even though he did not wish to do so. The fourth degree of guilt is the condition of the heart. The Bible says that man can harden their hearts to the will of God. This hardening of the heart can cause the soul to ignore the wooing of the Holy Spirit and to not accept God's redemptive grace and pardon for sin in Christ Jesus.

CONCLUSION

No matter what theory is expounded or by what expert, sin is real, and guilt is just as real as sin. God in His wisdom placed within sinful man guilt. Guilt requires a reconciliation. The only reconciliation which will wash away sin and guilt is the blood of Jesus Christ. Man may accept Christ's death on the cross for forgiveness of sin and removal of guilt for past sins. Whether, he elects to remain full of sin and guilt is up to him. The great hymn asks and answers this question concerning sin. What can wash away my sin?/nothing but the blood of Jesus.

³⁵Thiessen, Lectures, 193.

SALVATION AND SECURITY

SALVATION - GOD'S PLAN AND PURPOSE

Salvation is the work of God to redeem man from his sin. Jesus Christ was the "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Rev. 13.8) and for the purpose of redemption of man by the shed blood of Jesus Christ. God's foreknowledge of man's inability to be holy even as He is Holy allowed Him to provide a way for man to be reconciled to God.

God's plan of salvation for man has several factors. These factors are first and foremost that God has only one plan. This plan has several parts, such as, it is God's plan; it is for man's reconciliation; it is God's conditions, not man's; and it is to be accomplished in the manner in which God prescribes. Being just one plan, it provides salvation for all people who will believe. It has no special conditions for certain people. It has no time barriers, since it spans man from the garden to the grave.

God's purpose is found in two parts; man's nature and what the Scripture has to say concerning God's purpose. In man's nature the tragedy of man's fall is that his nature changed from innocence and holiness to that of a sin nature. In the change God allowed man to retain spiritual knowledge of God and to know that apart from God man was of a sin nature and could not please God. Man was given knowledge of his sin and of his need to please God.

In the scriptures we find that God appeared to man to provide for him a way to acknowledge his sin. God provided punishment for disobedience of God's laws concerning sin and the Bible says "Through the Law comes the knowledge of sin" (Rom. 3.20). The scriptures also indicate that the coming of Christ for man's sin was foretold by the prophets and that through the prophets we can know God's purpose of redemption for man's sin.

DOCTRINE OF ELECTION

The Doctrine of Election has been embroiled in extremes on either side of the issues or questions which this doctrine causes to surface. As part of God's salvation plan, man attempts to dissect every word and part, consequently, many questions arise. Some of the questions are stated below with Biblical responses.

The first question which needs to be asked is; What is election? According to Thiessen,

In its redemptive aspect, election means that sovereign act of God whereby he graciously chose in Jesus Christ for salvation all those whom he foreknew.³⁶

³⁶Thiessen, Lectures, 258.

As each question is posed it brings forth another supposition which must be answered.

What is the foreknowledge of God?

The foreknowledge of God is God foreseeing those who will respond to the gospel.

What is predestination and fore ordination? This answer involves the elect as those who accept God's Son for salvation. God's predestination and fore ordination accomplishes God's plan. According to the Apostle Paul in Romans 8.29 God "Whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son."

Is grace available to all men or just the elect?

Although man lost much of God's favor in the fall in the garden, God continued to provide man with the ability to choose God. This choice, God's grace was for all men and not because one man was something more than another. All had sinned.

Did Christ die for all?

Many scriptures point to this answer as an empathic "Yes!". Many text indicate that Christ died for everyone, that God was not willing that any should perish and salvation was offered for "whosoever".

Is God's call for everyone?

This seems to be an extension of the question above. But Titus 2.11 answers it thus "For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men".

Is God arbitrary?

God in His foreknowledge knows how man will respond to the gospel, but God does not cause the decision. The response belongs to man.

Is God just?

God is just and has provided salvation by grace to all men and will restore everyone who response to His Son Jesus into the fellowship of God. Some men of course, by their own volition, reject God's favor.

THE CROSS - SALVATION BEFORE AND AFTER THE FINISHED WORK OF CHRIST

Salvation is God's way of providing a way for man to be reconciled to God. The two factors which are clear in the salvation process is that God provided a way to redeem man from sin both before and after the cross. God further emphasizes salvation as a finished work performed by God's Son to take away the sin of mankind.

Before the cross, the Bible is clear that a blood sacrifice was necessary on the part of sinners for the atonement of the penalty of

death. The death of animal sacrifice in no way took away the sin of man, God merely accepted the blood sacrifices as a covering for sin until such time as Christ would bring sin and death into submission to Him. The New Testament provides an explanation for atonement and covering mentioned in the Old Testament. This passing over occurred for those who believed God would provide a sacrificial lamb to be slain for their sins. God sent His beloved Son to the cross to be that Lamb slain before the foundations of the earth for the sins of man both before and after the cross.

After the cross, stresses a finished or completed work. The Lamb has been slain. Mankind does not need to look forward to God providing an adequate sacrifice, because the sacrifice has been provided and Christ has shed His blood for the remission of sin. Individuals no longer need to bring an animal blood sacrifice to God for the remission of their sins. God has provided His own and most worthy sacrifice. Man only has to repent of his sin and turn to Jesus and believe that Christ has paid the ultimate price for man's sin. The finished work is not just a phrase used to conclude Jesus earthly mission. The phrase uttered by Jesus on the cross of Calvary was "It is finished" and represents Christ giving of Himself in man's place for the sin of the world. The finished work was that of the cross and was not finished until Jesus died. An understanding of the finished work is not sufficient to save man from his sin. It is necessary that man recognize that Jesus paid the ultimate price to ransom man from his sin and man must believe that Christ's death satisfies God's holy judgment against man for his sin. Once man believes in Christ's finished work on the cross, he should be justly overwhelmed that God would send His only begotten Son to pay the wages of sin, death for our salvation.

SOTERIOLOGY TERMS

Any discussion of Soteriology requires the understanding of such terms as call, repentance, faith, conversion, regeneration, adoption, redemption, assurance, and justification. These terms are discussed as follows:

Call.

Salvation is by grace through faith in Jesus Christ and His finished work on the cross for the sin of man. Call is that grace which is extended to man as an invitation to accept by faith God's plan of salvation in His Son Jesus Christ. Ephesians 2.8-10 states that this call is a gift of God.

For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workman-ship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

Repentance

The Scripture stresses that salvation is accomplished in man after he repents. Paul indicated that repentance is of paramount importance. The Book of Matthew stresses that it is fundamental to faith "when you had seen it, repented, not afterward, that ye might believe him" Matt 21.32.

Repentance is a change of mind but must be considered as a complete change in an individual which consist of how he sees, feels and believes. Repentance as a change of the way man looks at sin is different. Man must see sin as something which is his and for which he is responsible unless God provides away for him to transfer that sin to another.

Repentance in man must also have some element of distress which can be recognized as regret for his sin and a true desire to be forgiven of his sin.

The third element is that action which makes confession of sin a desire to turn one's life over to God. True confession is accomplished by faith in God through Christ Jesus by acknowledging that forgiveness is nothing of ourselves.

Faith

Faith is the starting place for salvation and is an important concept within the area of conversion. The Bible says one is saved and kept by faith. Much is said about faith and how to live but the Bible says that "without faith it is impossible to please God." Faith has no easy definition, since it is not a singular word in its usage. The word faith is used in many different context with many different meanings. In conversion, faith is used as a moving of the soul toward God. This faith requires according to Thiessen an involvement "in intellect, an emotional, and a volitional change."³⁷

Conversion

Conversion is considered as man turning to God in response to the call to repent and accepting salvation through faith. Conversion is a complicated term which encompasses two other terms. The terms are repentance and faith.

Regeneration

Regeneration may have several definitions which can communicate its meaning but it is the exchanging of an old nature for a new nature. Regeneration is the new birth. Jesus talked about it as a need to be born again. Being born again is the beginning of a new creature in Christ Jesus.

Adoption

This Pauline doctrine is translated from the Greek as "placing as a son," a change from ones past position to a new position in Christ

³⁷Thiessen, Lectures, 271.

Jesus. This change is from an old family, the devil, to the new family of God. This adoption is necessary to make us sons of God.

Redemption

According to Ephesians 1.7 "We have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace". The definition therefore of redemption is the giving of Christ blood to ransom mankind from sin. The further need existed that a Holy God forgave mankind of his sins in light of the shed blood of Christ. God was able to redeem mankind because of His great riches, God's grace.

Assurance

It is important to distinguish between assurance and eternal security. Assurance is a realization within oneself that they possess salvation. That it is part of them and that they are complete in Christ, that they have an experience which assures them of a proper testimony of that assurance and that by faith they have assurance that they have accepted the promises of salvation. It can be described as the Spirit of God within each individual giving evidence of that indwelling which can only be described as a spirit presence thus, providing assurance of salvation.

Justification

Justification is the need for God to place a previous child of the devil and transgressors of God's laws into a right relationship with Him because man has believed in Jesus Christ. God declares man to be righteous because through man's new relationship with Jesus Christ man has a need for righteousness.

RIGHTEOUSNESS

Biblical evidence of righteousness seems to be separated into four types. These are: The righteousness of God; Man's self-righteousness; God's imputed righteousness; and the righteousness giving by the Holy Spirit.

The Righteousness of God.

The righteousness of God is declared to be that which permits man to obtain a right relations with God. Romans 1.17 declares that the righteousness of God is revealed by faith to those who will live by faith. Paul says that man can only be righteous in the sight of God by believing in God's provision of a sacrificial lamb to cover man's sin. In God's righteousness He provided a means whereby the sinner can obtain righteousness. This means is God's plan to save sinners by the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

Man's self-righteousness.

The Bible is extremely plain concerning man's righteousness.

The Bible says that man's righteousness is as "filthy rags" in Isaiah 64.6. Man certainly thinks of himself as righteous but the Bible in Romans 3.9-18 declares that man is sinful and list many types of sin and behaviors which are present in man. Accordingly, Romans 3.10 states "There is none righteous," and God in His righteousness provided Jesus righteousness to cover man's need for righteousness.

God's Imputed Righteousness.

Man has a need for righteousness which can only be supplied by God. God imputes on all who believe the righteousness of Christ. This is accomplished because God accepts the sin offering paid by Christ for the whole world. This is only possible since Christ is worthy to be slain. By being saved man can be made righteous. Further, those saved become a part of Jesus. This becoming part of Jesus is called "union". The union takes place as man puts his faith and trust in Jesus and are saved. This is when man then becomes "in Him". Also, the Bible speaks of a covering which is provided. This covering according to Revelation 19.8 is a wedding garment which is the righteousness of God. Last, when one is said to be righteous then one is said to be justified since the words are the same usage in the New Testament. God seeing Christ righteousness covering man's sin justifies man bestows on man the merits of Christ. Man is then said to be "in Christ" and has been justified by faith in the sight of God on the basis of Christ imputed righteousness.

Righteousness giving by the Holy Spirit.

Truly born again, justified and righteous man will when filled with the Spirit of God exhibit works of righteousness. This is not a work for salvation doctrine, but a doctrine of salvation which gives evidence of righteousness in Christ by doing work which is recognizable as "fruits of the Spirit. A life that is changed by Christ and fill with the Spirit demonstrates the righteousness of God which is imputed to man in Christ by "walking not after the flesh but after the spirit".

SECURITY OF THE BELIEVER

Two views of the "security of the believer" or "Can one who is saved be lost? exist. This is a vital view of one's salvation and one which has great impact on where one might spend eternity. Depending on one's view, it is a question that must be answered.

Can one who is saved, be lost again and again and again . . .?

The two opposing views are that of the Arminian view and the Calvinistic view. These views are so named because of the role each man played in the espousing of their beliefs.

Taking the Arminian view first seems appropriate since this view believes in a conditional security. The proponents of this view cite some eighty-five passages of scriptures to demonstrate that they have

the correct view. The scripture being true and every man a liar must then speak for itself. There is no confusion in the scripture, but a confusion concerning the interpretation of cited passages. The cited passages raise questions like how to identify one who is really saved; man's works; superficial belief; rewards; fellowship; chastened; fallen; out of context; misinterpretations; and who does the work for salvation.

The Calvinistic view or the view or one saved always saved has as its basis scripture passages which are plain and clearly interpretable without danger of previous cited confusions.

Four positions have been established for each member of the God head in relationship to the security of the believer. True believers have eternal security because:

The Father.

He provides a promise of redemption. John 3.16 and other passages describe the promise as "whosoever believeth . . . have everlasting life."

He has the power to do what He promises. Jude 24 says,

Unto him that is able to keep you from falling and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy.

He is able to fulfill His purpose. Romans 5.8,9 clearly states that,

God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.

He provides the righteousness necessary for redemption. God forgives man's sin on the basis of Christ finished work on the cross. Christ righteousness provides man's eternal security. Not anything man can do by works is sufficient for salvation or the forgiveness of sin.

The Son.

He gave His life for man and His death on the cross covered all sin. Romans 8.1 is testimony to Christ saving and keeping power. "There is now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit".

His resurrection assures eternal security. Jesus conquered death and for those "in Christ" death is no longer a threat. They are covered by grace and have inherited eternal life.

He is our advocate before God the Father.

For each believer Christ shows His Father that the debt of sin has been paid at Calvary and that true believers are no longer guilty.

This assurance of an advocate is found in 1 John 2.1 "if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous".

He is our intercessor. He intercedes for "the weakness, ignorance, and immaturity of the believer - things concerning which there is no guilt."³⁸

The Spirit.

His work of regeneration is irreversible. 1 Peter 1.23 assures irreversibility. "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever."

His indwelling of believers is forever.

Titus 3.4-6 says that "according to his mercy, he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost."

The Baptism of the Spirit.

The Holy Spirit places us "in Christ" and 1 Corinthians 12.13 declares "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body".

The Sealing of the Spirit.

Eternal security of the believer is not a work of man but is a work of God. The Spirit keeps the believer to the end. According to Ephesians 1.13,14 you "were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise. . . until the redemption".

It can be concluded from this body of scriptures sighted that eternal security is not a work of man but of God. Man's eternal keeping of those who have believed unto salvation has not been trusted to man. God the Father does all the keeping by the Spirit "in Christ Jesus".

SANCTIFICATION

According to Chafer the New Testament doctrine of sanctification falls into three divisions. These divisions are "Positional sanctification, experiential sanctification and ultimate sanctification."³⁹

Positional Sanctification.

Positional sanctification has nothing to do with the saint and everything to do with the Savior. It is the shed blood of Christ that provides the separation unto Christ of every true believer. No matter what each saint's gifts or use of gifts to demonstrate their righteousness each saint has the same position before God. They are sanctified in Jesus Christ.

Experiential Sanctification.

Experiential sanctification differs from positional

³⁸Chafer, Major, 226.

³⁹Chafer, Major, 206.

sanctification in that positional sanctification is wholly of the Lord, whereas, experiential sanctification is of the believer. This may be how he yields to the Lord, or his ability to shun sin, or even his growth in the Lord. His yielding to God's indwelling of the Holy Spirit provides a greater peace and joy because he believes he has been set aside. One can be set free from the shackles of sin and have victory over sin by the power of the Spirit.

Following the Word of God, knowing of Christ interceding, and possessing the power to put sin out of your life by the indwelling spirit are three examples of God's keeping power of His saints from sin.

To grow in grace and knowledge of the Lord is Christian growth and is demonstrated as we attempt to be more like Jesus. Our changing lives experience experiential sanctification when we strive to be holy and set apart even as God is Holy.

Ultimate Sanctification.

Being covered by Christ righteousness and striving to live righteously will some day become ultimate sanctification when by the power of God we will be changed to true righteousness in that we will be "like him".

Ultimate sanctification is again as free as salvation and is a continuing demonstration of God's saving grace. We who are unworthy are made righteous by Christ blood even to being brought before all mighty God as a spotless bride. A life of power over sin is given by accepting Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Simultaneously, believers are provided with provisional sanctification, experiential sanctification and ultimate sanctification.

CONCLUSION

Individuals who are saved should possess a fear and love to serve our Savior with all their hearts. Christians should draw on the Spirit of God within them to live a life which demonstrates sanctification and power over sin which the indwelling Spirit provides. Recognizing one's uniqueness in Christ Jesus believers should especially strive to put sin as far from them as possible. Turning to the Spirit provides the power of experiential sanctification. Christians are provided with the ability to live as if they are soon to receive ultimate sanctification.

THE CHURCH

Providing an amplified definition of the church requires background concerning its beginning and development. As the beginning and development are unfolded the definition of the church should emerge.

The beginning of the church is found in the New Testament and is considered to be a divine revelation. Before Pentecost with the coming of the promised Holy Spirit both Jews and Gentiles had no real concept of what constituted worship with one another as the saved and as a part of the same body of believers. When the Holy Spirit came He brought together both Jew and Gentile into one body in Christ.

The Bible recognizes three distinct parts of the family of God. The Jews, the Gentiles, and the Church of God are the three groups represented in the Bible as church.

The Jews.

It is not to be forgotten that God has a divine purpose for the Jews and that He has promised them as a nation great things. Much of the future of Israel depends on God's eternal plan for them and can be fulfilled as God dictates.

The Gentiles.

The Gentiles are the many non-Jews that are predicted by the Old Testament to have a special blessing in the kingdom to come and in this present age.

The Church.

The Church of God is of course not a club to join or an organization in which to maintain membership. It is every redeemed person who has been saved in this present age of grace. It consist of Jews, Gentiles, and all who have placed their faith and trust in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. This company of believers are those which are truly saved and look forward to Christ coming to claim His Church of which they are a part.

With this background as a foundation an amplified definition of the church would be: Groups of believers both Jew and Gentile who have been called out of the world and joined together as one group in Christ by the baptism of the Spirit of God to the glory of the Father based on their acknowledgment that Jesus Christ paid the price for their sins.

THE FOUNDING OF THE CHURCH

The church is a term which is used to encompass or explain two types of churches. These two types of churches are the universal church and the local church. Any study of the founding of the church

needs to differentiate between the two types of churches.

Universal Church

The universal church consists of everyone in the age of grace who have truly been born again. They have been filled with the Spirit of God and have been baptized into the body of Christ. This universal church is not a building but a body of believers with Christ as its head. It is the Ekklesia or called out people.

The local church

The local church is used to define the local body of believers at one place. As the apostles established churches throughout the areas of the known world they were establishing local churches.

The Founding

Different points of view exist concerning the founding of the church. Looking at several aspects and building on the Biblical account of the church several things can be noted.

Different times of founding

There are differing opinions concerning the time of the founding of the church. There are those who believe that the church is a continuation of Israel of the Old Testament. Others believe that when Christ started preaching that the beginning or founding took place. Some believe that Peter is the rock upon which the church is founded. Others believe the rock of Peter's confession is Christ. Some believe that the church in Acts is not the church today. Others indicate that the church was founded when Paul in Acts 13.46 declared a turning to the Gentiles.

Actual founding

The universal and local church was according to the Bible founded on the day of Pentecost. This is found in Acts 2 and is expressed by Paul in 1 Corinthians 12.13 when he said,

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.

Paul is of course referring to the universal church and local church when he mentions "the body". Numerous scriptures concerning the event of Pentecost are found in all four Gospels, in Acts, in 1 Corinthians, and Ephesians. The local church specifically was waiting according to the Bible 120 strong and were the first to be baptized with the Spirit.

THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH ORGANIZATION

The Organization.

The church in Jerusalem from its start appears to have been established around some type of organization. According to Acts 2:41-46 the church "received his word were baptized...added (to the church)...continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." The scriptures indicate that after Pentecost that the apostles were the leaders of the church. As needs arose to add additional personnel to assist with the needs of the poor, others were added. Meetings according to Acts 2 took place in the upper room, in some homes and some even at the temple.

Allowance for Further Development.

The early church forms of organization as presented above gave rise to at least three types of further development. They developed episcopalian forms of government which today are represented by the Roman Catholic Church, the Episcopalian Church and the Methodist Episcopal Church. The representative form of government is the found today in the Reformed and Presbyterian churches. The congregational form of government is represented by churches of Congregational, Disciples, and Baptist.

Extensive church governments which exist in almost all churches today may be an outgrowth of the established local body of believers of the early church. Much can be said about the early church organization in the way of development. It would appear that the local church government developed into a congregational form of government as the need for apostle's authority waned. Local government still seems to be the method of church organization in some denominations, however a large organization of "support" offices and personnel seem to be creating a large "non local" superstructure of church government above the local level. These superstructure hierarchies of government have different names but are local, regional and national in scope.

Scriptural Offices.

The scriptural offices of the early church according to Thiessen are the offices of pastor, elder, overseer; deacons; and deaconesses.⁴⁰

Pastor, Elder and Overseer.

The terms pastor, elder, overseer seem to mean the same thing according to the scriptures. The references made to these offices are found in the scriptures as they address those present at the churches. The names used to refer to the officers known to be present do not necessarily conform to one of the three terms pastor, elder, or overseer. The following names are used to mean leaders of

⁴⁰Thiessen, Lectures, 320.

the church, such as pastor, elder, or overseer. They are called, elders, overseers, bishops, shepherd, pastors, and apostles interchangeably.

Deacons.

The office of deacon according to its usage and translation appears to be that of a "servant" or "minister". These terms are used to denote the functions of the deacon which appeared to be spiritual but not in the same sense as one called to preach the gospel. The duties seem to be that of meeting the material and financial needs of the church.

Deaconesses.

This office of deaconesses was a part of the early church organization and can be noted in Romans 16.1 when Paul addresses Phoebe as servant or deaconess. In Paul's discussion of the early church officers Paul lists women in 1 Timothy 3.11. The work of the deaconesses though not clear may have been in areas where men would not have been the best servant. This may have been with matters relating to the needs of the local church women of a personal nature.

NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH ORDINANCES

The New Testament Church Ordinances are baptism and the Lord's Supper. These ordinances or sacraments are generally accepted by Baptist Churches, however, the Roman Catholic Church added five other sacraments. The difficulty with the ordinances as related to the Roman Catholic Church is the declaration that the sacraments confer or increase grace. Within the Southern Baptist Churches the term sacrament is not widely used but is generally referred to as an ordinance. Baptists do not believe that baptism or the Lord's Supper imparts any grace. Baptists do however consider the two ordinances as a command of Jesus Christ.

Baptism.

The unique thing about baptism is that it is one of Jesus' commandments which is found in the Great Commission. Go and make disciples, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (Matt 28.19,20). Many of the Jesus followers baptized the believers. Peter preached not only repentance but baptism as well. Act 2.38.

Lord's Supper.

The Lord's Supper as an ordinance of the church is found in the three gospels, Matthew, Mark and Luke, and was much a part of the early church as was baptism. Paul in his establishment of churches clearly provided instructions on this event in the life of the early church, since references in the scriptures discuss its practice. The ordinance of the Lord's Supper is an opportunity to bring to mind

Jesus Christ. Jesus said, "Do this in remembrance of Me." 1 Cor. 11.24.

THE MULTI-FACETED MISSION OF THE CHURCH

The multi-faceted mission of the church should be based on the scriptures which command the called out to live their lives which would be pleasing to God. The scriptures demonstrate that the church should proclaim God's greatness; build itself in love; have no spot or wrinkle; equip the saints; go into all the world; hold forth the Word to the world; and do good to all men.

Proclaim God's Greatness.

Many scriptures show that one of the primary missions of the church to be to glorifying of God. Romans, Ephesians, 2 Thessalonians and 1 Peter are definitive as to our glorifying God. These Bible references point out that the church should worship for who He is, praise Him, pray to Him, give thanks for what He has done for sinners, and live according to His commands.

Build itself in love.

The church has a giant task to complete in the building up of the saints in love. Included in this task is the mandate of Ephesians 4.12-16, which requires the equipping of the saints, building up the body, attain unity of the faith, gain knowledge and mature as a body in Christ, and have growth which builds the church in love.

Have no spot or wrinkle.

Today the church may have spots and wrinkle but they have been instructed to make themselves ready for the coming of Christ. The church today as the "bride" should continue steadfast in the teachings of the Bible and should not allow any ungodly heresies into the body, the church.

Equip the saints.

Jesus gave the church the "Great Commission" and the church should be carrying it out. Part of the commission was to make disciples and teach them to observe the doctrines of God. By teaching the church the saints will be better able to answer when called upon concerning their beliefs.

Go into all the world.

The church will never be able to convert the whole world to Christianity according to the Word of God, however, the church has been called to take the message of Christ to the whole world. This is called missions and should be one of the facets of the mission of the church. The mandate of God is to take the gospel to every

nation. The church is to start in their town and go outward from there with the good news that Christ has redeemed mankind from their sins. The every widening circle of missions should be reaching the lost for Christ.

Hold forth the Word to the world.

The world is waiting for the church to be what Jesus asked it to be. The world waits for Christians who are the salt and the light of world. God continues to wait on the Christians to use the age of Grace to reach lost people for Him. Without the Christians in the world, the world would not be a people of God, and God would destroy it, as He has done in the past. Christian influence is a matter which Christians should not take lightly. Christians should be demonstrating God's love to an unrighteous generation.

Do good to all men.

Christians have a ministry not only to each other but to all people. Galatians 6.10 states, "So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith." Christians should follow Christ example of meeting the needs of mankind. Christians will meet people's needs as they give testimony to what God has done in their lives and as to what God in them will do to meet their needs. It should be sufficient to say that any doing good among Christians should glorify God. To many times Christians are not doing "good to all men, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith".

STEWARDSHIP IN THE CHURCH

Stewardship in the church is more than money and how one uses it. Stewardship is the Christians responsibility to properly use what the master provides for them and to return as would please the master that portion of His goods to His good purpose.

A steward is one who is a slave of another and is put in charge of his masters possessions. The apostle Paul believed that God has put Christians in charge of all that which God provides them. The Bible indicates that Christians are responsible for everything God gives them. They are responsible for their time, talent and all that they own. Christians must recognize that all they possess comes from God. That all they possess here on this earth is temporal and will not last. Paul said, "I am debtor" in Romans 1.14. and his debt was to God not man.

Christians according to the scriptures are to share that which they receive from God with all people. Christians have received eternal life and as stewards of the "good news" should work diligently to share it.

When stewardship is mentioned, money immediately becomes the object of discussion. People today, Christian and non-Christian place too much emphasis on money. Certainly, if money is one of the

Christian's possessions he should seek God's will on how it should be used. God would rather money be used to lay up treasures in heaven rather than on earth. The Christian needs to be God's slave and truly call Him master, so as not to follow after mammon. Christians should not be concerned after material things but should use material things to further the Kingdom of God. Money given from a willing heart clearly becomes money which can be used by God to meet people's needs. Too often money is not given from a willing heart, such as the widows mite and consequently is not blessed.

The true measure of stewardship is not one of obligation, duty, or law but is one of love of God and giving to support God's work in the world. Scriptures can be found in both the Old and New Testament which instruct concerning stewardship but none of the instruction can replace or supplement a willing heart to please God. Acts 20.35 defines a good steward when it states, "remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive."

WORSHIP IN THE CHURCH

The various aspects of worship in the church include prayer and thanksgiving. True worship is the believer praying and giving thanks to the Father, in Christ name, through the Holy Spirit.

Prayer.

Prayer as an act of worship between God and man developed in Old Testament times through individuals, the patriarchs, priests, and rulers. During Jesus time here on the earth He taught His disciples to pray. It is noted as well that Jesus prayed on many occasions, including the prayer of inter-cession prayed in John 17.

Prayer in worship is now complete as one is able to pray in the name of Jesus Christ as our mediator and God. Prayer in worship allows believers to intercede for others and to bring their own request to God. Prayer using the name of Jesus Christ changes prayer to a new level of existence. Prayer can be for "whatsoever" as long as one recognizes that their hearts must be in the will of the Savior.

Prayer to have meaning as worship should be a part of each individuals relationship to God. A daily time of prayer, praying as God instructs will find the throne of God. For prayer to be effective worship it must be done out of love and thankfulness for God's grace.

Thanksgiving.

This form of worship, heartfelt thanksgiving to God, is in grateful acknowledgment of what God has done for man. Thanksgiving is noted frequently in both the Old and New Testament. The apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians 9.15 said, "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift." As each individual praises God and gives thanks to God it should be two fold. It should be without ceasing and "Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the

name of our Lord Jesus Christ."

True worship accordingly must be from the heart of the Christian and is accomplished with much prayer and thanksgiving to God for His great gift to mankind of eternal life through Jesus Christ.

FIGURES OF SPEECH FOR NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

A study of the scripture reveals figures which represent Christ and His church. According to Chafer they are "the central revelation concerning God's purpose and plan for the church."⁴¹

The Shepherd and the sheep.

The figure of speech in John 10, which references the Twenty-Third Psalm, established Christ as the Shepherd and His church as the sheep. The church referenced in John 10 includes Israel with the Gentiles and is the flock which is of this present age. The sheep are those who have heard the Shepherd's voice and have followed Him.

The Vine and the branches.

Here it is noted that Christ represents the Vine and believers are the branches. This figure demonstrates that the believer apart from Christ cannot maintain fellowship with the Savior.

The Cornerstone and the stones of the building.

This figure is Christ as the Cornerstone of the church which He is presently building. He is building today's church from living stones, the believers. The believers are the stones of the building. All believers as stones must rely on a firm foundation and in this case that foundation is the Cornerstone Jesus Christ.

The High Priest and the kingdom of priests.

The Bible says that the church is a priesthood of believers. This being the case then Jesus Christ is the High Priest of His church. The kingdom of priests should be performing their duties as priest which consist of presenting themselves before God "as living sacrifices" and as priest they should worship Him in praise and in intercessory prayer.

The Head and the body.

The church is an every developing body of believers and as such must have a Head which is Christ Jesus. The figure here is that Christ is the Head of the body and the body is bound together by its relationship to the Head.

The Last Adam and the new creation.

Christ here is the figure of a new order. Christ having been resurrected starts all things new. The church is thus established in Christ by the position it occupies as baptized believers. The old

⁴¹Chafer, Systematic, 2:249.

Adam and the old nature of creation are replaced by the Spirit of God to make the believer a new creature in Christ Jesus.

The Bridegroom and the bride.

This last figure is a representation of that which will be in the future as the fulfillment of prophecy. Here Christ is the Bridegroom being presented with a virgin bride the Church. The implications of Israel's unfaithfulness to God is contrasted here as the Bridegroom claiming a spotless bride the church at the Rapture. 2 Cor. 11.1,2.

BIBLICAL DESTINY OF THE CHURCH

The Biblical destiny of the church is twofold. The present church and its position of influence on the lost and the church as a bride with Christ as revealed in Revelation.

Influence on the lost.

Paul's writings indicate that as the end time appears that there will be fewer followers of the faith. Scriptures speak to the church as having little or no influence on the people, nor an ability to win them to Christ. Matthew in his gospel states "And because lawlessness is increased, most people's love will grow cold." Matt. 24.12. Jesus said that life would be much like in the days of Noah. In the days of Noah according to the Bible people were oblivious to the things of God and God destroyed them.

Church as a bride.

Fortunately, the believer has in Christ Jesus eternal life and will some day be united with Him as His bride. Revelation provides a picture of a sweet union with Jesus Christ as Lord and shows the fellowship with Him forever. Many incidents in Revelation describe a life in Christ Jesus in Heaven as reigning with Him, ruling with Him, Judging with Him and forever being with Him.

END TIMES OR LAST THINGS

THE NATION ISRAEL IN GOD'S PROPHETIC PLAN

God's prophetic plan for the nation Israel did not begin in the garden as is often assumed. The time period between Adam and Abraham is a time when all people were Gentile. It is only after the call of Abraham that insight into Israel's special relationship is revealed.

The Abrahamic Covenant God provides a view of how God will deal with Israel as history unfolds. These prophecies or promises are in force as long as the Nation Israel is true to God. When Israel is in sin God chastises Israel and the blessings of the covenant are set aside. The Abrahamic Covenant begins the promise of Israel having a land which God provides especially for them.

There is prophecy concerning the dispersion of Israel and their return to the land. There has at this time been three of these dispersions and two returns. Israel now is in a waiting state until the second coming of Christ when they will be delivered as promised.

The present period of grace is also available to Israel and they can obtain salvation with the Gentiles. When Christ returns Israel will have a prominent position in the new land with Christ as their King.

There are four more covenants concerning Israel and prophecy which are the Mosaic covenant; the Palestinian covenant; the Davidic covenant and the New covenant. These covenant each delineate a relationship between Israel and God. All of the dispensations and covenant are significant in the life of Israel, however, the final dispersion and gathering is being fulfilled as God makes provisions for Christ return to this world. When Christ returns He will gather Israel to Him and place His people in the land which He had promised them.

According to end time prophecy concerning Israel, they will go through several stages of preparation prior to the return of Christ. These stages are the reconstitution into a political state; an agreement with a Gentile ruler; the breaking of this agreement with persecution; and the restoration of Israel during Christ thousand year reign on earth.

The distinction between Israel and the church in these events are found in "end time" prophecy. The church age which began at the first coming of Christ will have several transitional period prior to the second coming of Christ.

Many of the prophecies predicted in the scriptures have been fulfilled and evidence of the end time is clearly at hand. At present it is noted that apostasy within the present church is growing. This final prophecy is noted in new age movements which are denying the deity of Christ and His work on the cross. Moral decay is running rampant and the rapture of the church is at hand. This rapture will result in the Church being removed from this earth and will start the Second Coming.

THE GENTILES IN PROPHECY

The Gentiles in prophecy according to Chafer is "the outline of world history, which explains many events of the past and casts a shadow on the future."⁴² An outline of world history starts with Gentiles in the Garden of Eden. Early prophecy indicates that God destroyed the human race except for Noah and his family and later brought judgement upon the Gentiles at the Tower of Babel.

According to scripture the Gentile nation was divided when God promised Abraham that He would make of him a great nation. Some of the great Gentile nations of history were Egypt, Assyria, and the Babylonian empire.

Daniel prophesied concerning the Gentiles and their dominance over Israel as God revealed to him that four great empires would be over Israel. These Gentile empires which were prophesied were Babylon; the Medes and the Persians; Greece; and Rome. Daniel's prophecy concerning these nations has for the most part been fulfilled. Some scholars believe that a resurgence of the Roman empire will take place after the Church is raptured and will fulfill the prophecy that relates to the "end time". After the rapture Gentiles which were saved during the age of the Gentiles and the Church age will enjoy their reward with God. Those Gentiles remaining during the millennial kingdom will also be blessed by God.

Gentile prophecy concerning this present age is right on target with that which was predicted as end time events. Gentile prophecy did not seem to be a major emphasis of the Old Testament as did that of the prophecies concerning Israel. Much of what is known concerning Gentile prophecies is part of the overall prophecy which God is working out to do His will in the lives of His people. Although Gentile prophecy is intertwined with that of Israel it is none the less an important part of God total plan of redemption for both Jews and Gentiles alike.

The Bible indicates that the Church Age suspends the Gentile period. This period is from Pentecost to the Rapture and will begin again in the seven years after the second coming of Christ when the Gentile nation will no longer exist. Even though Gentile prophecy

42Chafer, Major, 299.

indicates a judgement of the Gentile world, those which have been born again will be part of the millennial kingdom. The role of the Gentile and prophecy does not end with the Gentile world's destruction because prophecy indicates that those Gentiles which are saved during the Great Tribulation will be blessed and preserved as a people of God along with Israel, God's chosen people.

THE RETURN OF CHRIST

The rapture of the church is an end-time event as prophesied in the Bible. Several views of the rapture are interpreted incorrectly and are shared below.

Pentecost and the Holy Spirit.

One view of the return of Christ is the Holy Spirit coming at Pentecost. Several scriptures are used to interpret this event as Christ return. Matthew 16.29 and John 16.16 are two such scriptures.

Conversion experience.

Some view the promise of the Holy Spirit as Christ filling the believer and consequently returning to earth. This interpretation is from passages of scriptures which identify Christ as Spirit. Acts 16.7 and Romans 8.9.

Jerusalem.

A view concerning the destruction of Jerusalem is confusing since many of the writers of the second coming wrote of the occurrence after it had already occurred. This view of a future destruction which already had occurred would be erroneous.

Death.

There are those who interpret death as Christ's coming by using Matthew 24.42. Most Bible scholars do not attribute Christ return as death but as life and therefore this does not seem to be the appropriate interpretation of Matthew 24.42.

The whole world will be saved.

The view which state that as individuals are saved Christ comes is one of the views which uses Matthew 6.10 as a reference. This view of "Thy kingdom come" is not in keeping with the terrible occurrences prophesied in the Scripture concerning the wicked last days. The Bible is clear on this point, that in the last days there will be a falling away.

When looking at Christ second coming two views which have some credibility are the pre-tribulational view and the post-tribulational view. Only one can be correct however.

Post-tribulational view.

The post-tribulational view indicates that Christ comes for His saints and with His saints is one event. This view leaves no room for those predicted events between Christ coming for His saints and coming with His saints. One of these events is the Marriage Supper.

Pre-tribulational view.

The Bible has predicted many events and these events have been fulfilled. The events which have been fulfilled have been fulfilled literally as prophesied in the Bible. The rapture being a prophecy which is unfulfilled at this time should also be considered as literally interpreted. This end-time event when literally interpreted will occur as follows: Christ will come in the air to receive His own; the dead in Christ shall be raised; the living saints will be caught up into the air and changed; all those in Christ will be taken heaven for the marriage of the Lamb; there will be a believer's judgment and rewards; during this time Satan will run wild; then Jesus will come to the earth again.

JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST AND MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB

Marriage of the Lamb.

The coming for the saints of God by Jesus Christ is described in the receiving the saints unto Himself as a groom would receive his bride. After the rapture of the church, both the living and dead in Christ the marriage of the Lamb takes place. According to Revelation 19.6-8 the marriage of the Lamb will occur when Christ takes the church to be His bride. The bride will have been changed and Christ will "present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing" (Eph. 5.27). The bride will be dressed in "fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints" (Rev. 19.6b).

Judgment Seat of Christ.

The judgment seat of Christ has two parts. These parts are the judgment of the believers and the believers rewards.

The judgement of the believers.

The Bible says that when Christ comes again that he will come to judge the works of the believers and to give them their rewards for the deeds which they have done as Christians. This of course has nothing to do with earning one's salvation since you can not become a Christian by works.

The believer will not be judged for their sins according to John 5.24, since the judgment of sin occurred on the cross. The judgment of Christians will be to determine what the Christian has done with the gifts of God to them who believe. They will be judged on the use of their talents, time, energy and all that has been given to them as children of God. The passage which seems to fit this circumstance

best comes from Matthew 6.20 where Christians are admonished to "lay up treasures in heaven".

The reward.

There will be rewards in the form of crowns for several reasons. There is the crown of life which is rewarded for faithfulness. The incorruptible crown for living set apart lives for Jesus. A crown of rejoicing for the soul winner. The crown of Glory for pastors. the crown of righteousness for who love Christ second coming.

THE SEVEN-YEAR TRIBULATION

The seven-year tribulation period is that period of time between the rapture and the revelation. The rapture is the return of Christ in the air to receive His bride and the revelation is when Christ returns in glory. This tribulation is know as "great tribulation", "that day", hour of testing", and even as a "time of Jacob's distress".

Described in Daniel.

The seven year tribulation is described in the book of Daniel and is interpreted to be the period between the sixty-ninth and seventieth week in Daniel's chronology of events. Bible scholars believe that the "week" as reported in Daniel is the seven years of tribulation.

The period.

The seven year period is divided into two three and a half year periods. The first three and a half years are filled with political confrontations which the ten kingdoms of the Old Roman Empire will rule. There will be a time for the "antichrist" and the false religions which he will establish. Israel will return to Palestine as God will take up Israel as a people according to Romans 11.29. The one ruler will control all buying and selling. Commercial and economic welfare will be based on worship presented to him. This is a capsule account of the great tribulation period and in no way describes the period of time in which people will be crying for death. Satan will be at work in his fullest and will provide the "antichrist with all the power necessary to amass an army from all the kings of the earth against Christ. This period ends as Christ comes in glory.

THE RESURRECTIONS

Knowing that one will live forever should place a different light on their view concerning a resurrection of the dead. Some resurrections mentioned in the Bible have already occurred and point to the fact that there are resurrections. Some individuals believe in only one resurrection but the Bible is clear in it's prophecy that

there is not a general resurrection of all mankind.

The specific resurrections mentioned in the Bible are the resurrection of Christ; the saints after Christ resurrection; the church; the Old Testament saints; the tribulation saints; the millennial saints; and the resurrection of the unrighteous.

The resurrection of Christ.

Biblical prophecy of the Old Testament and the fulfillment of the resurrection of Christ in the New Testament is clear to the Christian that the resurrection of Christ has occurred. Christ's resurrection provides according to Paul a clear and certain hope of the resurrection of those who are in Christ Jesus.

The resurrection of the saints after Christ resurrection.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ was emphasized by the resurrection of a number of saints from the dead. Matthew 27.52-53 reports that graves were opened and bodies came out of the grave and went into Jerusalem and appeared to many in the city.

The resurrection of the church.

This resurrection is the rapture of the church. The dead in Christ will be resurrected and those Christians who remain will be caught up into the air to all receive a resurrection body like that of Jesus after His resurrection.

The resurrection of the Old Testament saints.

Old testament prophecy such as is found in Job and in Daniel puts the time of the resurrection of the Old Testament saints at the time of the second coming of Christ to earth.

The resurrection of the tribulation saints.

Martyrs in the tribulation will have their resurrection at the establishment of Christ kingdom in the second coming. John in Revelation 20.4-5 describes the martyrs of the tribulation in detail, even to the completion of the first resurrection which is for those in Christ Jesus.

The resurrection of the millennial saints.

This resurrection is not based on prophecy but on conjecture that people will not live a thousand years and will need to be resurrected to determine their fate.

The resurrection of the unrighteous.

The Bible states in Daniel 12.2 that all men will be raised from the dead. Daniel indicates that some will be raised "to shame and everlasting contempt". This resurrection of the unrighteous is the raising of men which will stand judgment at the great white throne. These will be resurrected to condemnation and cast with the devil and his angels into the lake of fire.

THE LITERAL MILLENNIUM

Millennialism today has three major views. These views are pre-millennial, amillennial, and post-millennial. Each of these views differ in the interpretation of a literal millennium.

Post-millennial view.

The post-millennial view believes that the world will eventually here and believe the gospel and become so good that the millennial kingdom will have occurred. The culmination of this millennial kingdom will be the second coming of Christ.

Amillennial view.

The amillennial view holds that there is no literal millennium and Christ second coming occurs with the beginning of the new heaven and the new earth.

Pre-millennial view.

The pre-millennial view finds scriptural support that after Christ second coming there is a literal thousand year reign of Christ on this earth. This literal millennium is mentioned in both the Old and New Testaments. The literal millennium will have Jesus Christ as the head of its government and ruling with a force which will bring disobedience into obedience. Interpretations of passages of scriptures from Psalms, Isaiah, Daniel lend themselves to a kingdom that is real, right here on the earth after the second coming of Christ.

The literal millennium will have Christ as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Revelation points out that the steps to Christ second coming includes coming to earth to reign. Support of a literal millennium on earth is supported in the declaration that David will be resurrected to rule with Christ as a prince. This hierarchical structure of a literal kingdom will certainly be part of a literal millennium.

The government will according to the Bible has Christ as sovereign ruler with absolute rule. Psalm 2.9 states that this rule will be "with a rod of iron". Opposition to this form of government will not be tolerated. The government under the Lordship of Jesus Christ will be according to Isaiah 11 and Psalm 72 as a millennium of righteousness and peace.

This millennial government will restore to favor Israel and provide for them the promises of God as extensively described in the Bible. The Gentiles have not been forgotten and will receive from God those blessings which have been prepared for them which will fulfill the prophecies concerning the gentile nation.

The literal millennium will of course be a theocracy and as such will be filled with all types of spiritual blessings and fellowships with God. Much of what is considered spiritual today may very well

be as a grain of mustard seed when compared to the spiritual filling which will take place in the saints during the millennium.

Scriptural support for a literal millennium can be found in Zechariah 14.4 where the earth is physically changed by a great valley where the Mount of Olives is presently located.

A literal millennium can not be denied without denying a literal interpretation of the scriptures. The scriptures are clear as stated above that a literal millennium will occur as predicted in the Bible. Any non-literal interpretation does not seem to be the appropriate view of the Bible.

JUDGMENTS

According to Thiessen there are eight judgments.⁴³ One judgment has already taken place in Christ, the other seven are future judgments.

Present judgment.

The various judgments begin with the judgment for the sin of all mankind. Jesus Christ died for the believer that they might not come into condemnation or be judged for prior sins. The believer has been judged in the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross. Christ has paid the penalty for the sin of mankind and mankind has been set free.

Future judgments.

The seven future judgments are the believers; Israel; Babylon; beast, false prophet, and armies of beast and false prophet; nations; Satan and his angels; and the unsaved dead.

Believer's Judgment.

The believer's judgment will occur when Jesus returns to judge them for their works. They will all have to give account for what they have done with the gifts God has given them. With this judgment goes rewards or crowns for those who have been faithful.

Israel's Judgment.

This judgment appears to occur when after the return of Christ. The Israelites returning to the holy land will be purged and will not be permitted to enter Israel.

Babylon's Judgment

This judgment occurs before Christ return to the earth. This is judgment of the kings which over throw the woman for the religious power of the world.

Beast, False Prophet and their Armies Judgment.

God will bring judgment on the false prophet, the beast and

⁴³Thiessen, Lectures, 389.

their armies by placing the beast and the false prophet alive in the lake of fire and destroying the armies with the sword from Christ mouth on his return to earth.

Nation's Judgment.

This judgment takes place after the judgment of the armies. The nations are judged for sending their armies against God. This is a separation time of the sheep and the goats. The sheep will go to eternal salvation while the goats will go to eternal condemnation and separation from God.

Satan and his angels Judgment.

After the millennium Satan will be loosed to deceive the nations of the earth. Satan will bring an army against God which will be destroyed by fire from heaven. Satan will be judged and cast into the lake of fire. Satan's angels will be judged at this time since Matthew 25.41 declares that the fire has been prepared for "the devil and his angels".

Unsaved Dead Judgment.

The judgment of the unsaved dead will occur after the millennium and will be the second resurrection. This judgment will be at the great white throne and all of those present will be judged guilty of rejecting God's plan of Salvation and His Son Jesus Christ.

THE FINAL STATE

The final states which are mentioned in the Bible are the final state of Satan, the final judgment, the final kingdom, and the final state of the new creation.

Satan's Final State.

Satan's final state will be his placement alive in the lake of fire with his angels to ever be in torment for the deed which he committed against God. This final place after his judgment shall be for all eternity.

Final Judgment.

The need for judgment ends here with the final judgment. The final judgment according to Scripture is the great white throne judgment of the second resurrection. These individuals are those which died as unbelievers and as unbelievers will be judged by determining that their names are not written in the Lamb's book of life. They will be casted into the lake of fire along with death and Hades. This will be their eternal punishment for rejecting Christ as Savior and Lord.

Final Kingdom.

When the kingdom comes to an end the Bible states that Christ

will return it to the Father. 1 Corinthians 15.28 describes the state of the final kingdom like this: "And when all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him, that God may be all in all".

The Final State of the New Creation.

The creation of the new heaven, the new earth and the New Jerusalem is the final state of the new creation. After the creation of the new heaven and the new earth the creation of the New Jerusalem will take place. The New Jerusalem will come down from heaven and will be the throne of God. The Bible declares that the saints of God will be with Him in this new creation forever and ever.

CONCLUSION

All mankind will have a final state. What this final state will be is for each person to decide. Prior to the end times and the subjection of eternal beings to their final state, each individual must choose life in Christ or eternal damnation with Satan. The most important decision one makes may very well be the last thing they do.

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