



Confronting The Cloudiness

(Seeking God's Point of View)

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Prologue

What is Truth? Many throughout the ages at one time or another have pondered the famous question, "What is truth?" From hoary antiquity, to the Greek scholars and thinkers, all the way to our modern day, some have seriously asked, "What is truth?"

I think back to Jesus according to John saying to Pilate while he was being questioned, "Everyone who is of the truth hears my voice." And Pilate replies, "What is Truth?" That is an interesting thought. What was Pilate saying? Was he asking that question rhetorically? Or rather what is John saying when he writes this in his gospel, "What is Truth?" Philosophers have studied, pondered and discussed the question of truth as though it were a definable abstract subject. But I have been pondering this question in the sense of trying to place myself in Jesus' shoes, not presumptuously nor with arrogance, but rather in sharing his point of view and learning his mindset.

He was raised in a certain time, among a certain people of a certain mindset, with certain customs and religious practices. There were ideas of what is right and wrong, what is good, what is bad, what is to be believed, what are doctrines of faith. This is very much the condition in which I find myself with my church and community. But I must refine my focus. For Jesus the question was: "What is true and what is not?" It is not so much truth as a concept, but rather "What is real, and what is not real?" So I am addressing this thought from this point of view having observed in the world teachings of all kinds, philosophy, and religion: Is there a real God? There are all kinds of concepts and definitions of God. But when I think about it, if there is a real God, then there is no point in me, little human being, defining Him. If there is a real God, then it behooves Him to define Himself to me. And if He does not define Himself, then the question of His reality remains a stagnant point of contention.

That has been the "burr under my saddle" for a long time. My main motivating purpose has been to find the real God, not being satisfied with religious ideas about Him. Coming from my background, raised in a devout christian family, drawing on scriptures of old, at one point, I had to make a decision. This information which was recorded in this book commonly called "The Holy Scriptures", or "The Holy Bible", I had to decide whether I believe it to be true or not. Is it real, is it true, or not? If God is real, and has been defining Himself and revealing Himself to His creation, Man, then ultimately the onus is on me to seek to find the source of the Divine Revelation. I must dig with persistence into available evidence to get to know the Source of that revelation. I do not wish to imagine, to create nor cling to my own ideas about Him. Man from the beginning has been busy doing that, imagining God, imagining definitions of God and creating religions around those man-made ideas about God. There have been so many religions. Is it not better to receive the understanding of that which already is then to imagine that which is not?

So I declared to myself a starting point, a rule pertaining to seeking: I accept that God is real. There is one God, and He is real. Initially, who He is, I do not know. So I need to find Him, and I need to get to know Him. I can't discover Him unless He desires that I do so. The scriptures can be misleading, or they may be the guidance toward finding God. They can be misleading if we cannot accept what they say. We naturally approach the Scriptures with our human predispositions and prejudices requiring that they reveal to us that which is acceptable and pleasing to us rather than accept what they say.

So I go back to a place where Jesus says that "God is One". In the old Scriptures, God said to Moses, "Tell the people that I Am That I Am." Just "I Am, in spite of any human concepts, thoughts or ideals, I just Am. It does not matter what people think, I just Am." So with that as a background, I would like to proceed and systematically go through some of the testimonies.

God reportedly revealed Himself to Mankind through select individuals over the ages. And the records we have in Scripture should pass that information on to us. As Jesus said, "All those who are of the truth hear my voice." So if I am "of the truth", or rather genuinely desiring the true or the real, I will hear his voice. I am going to use that foundation as my starting point. I am going to listen to his voice, and I am going to hear his voice to see where he leads me.

A Visit With John

Introduction

In visiting the writings of John, I have concluded that all of the information that we have about God and about Jesus comes through men. The christian world has set its eyes on Jesus Christ and has granted him pre-eminence and authority to reveal that which is true, what is real and what is not. So coming from that background, my experiment is with this idea. Yes, Jesus was for real. But the Jesus that really was has been debated for years since he came. Who was he really? What did he say? What did he really do? We have today, and it is the reason that I ponder this question, many competing versions of Jesus Christ, the “only begotten son of God who died for our sins” and all that. Christianity has a variety of versions of Jesus Christ. I grant that there are many similarities, but that there are equally many divergences of who he was, what he did, and what he asked of us to do.

Now in a court of law, when a matter is disputed, witnesses are scrutinized and heavily evaluated for authenticity, for what they personally saw, heard, or experienced. And the courts do not give credence to hearsay or opinions. They are simply disallowed. Therefore, for a long time I have been focusing upon the credibility and authenticity of source and of witness. This Jesus, did he live in a vacuum? Was he not real? Did he not live among real people? We have available to us today the information about Jesus that has been handed down to us from various writers, reports, opinions and such. But standing out from among all of these are what are called the Four Gospels. And without discrediting anyone, when I want to focus on authenticity and legitimacy, and seek to refine it as much as possible, I tend to focus on two of those gospels. There are four gospel writers, Mark, Luke, Matthew, and John. And out of those four, Mark did not know Jesus personally, and neither did Luke. So these two gathered much information about Jesus and recorded it to pass it on to us today. And without rejecting their testimony outright, I choose to suspend their testimony and lay them aside and say to myself, “The other two, Matthew and John, they knew Jesus personally. They spent much time in his company and learned from him directly. They heard, saw, touched, lived with, and experienced him first hand. They got to know him.” So, with this in mind, and for this reason, I have suspended all other testimonies about Jesus, and focus on John and Matthew for the time being as the foundational testimonies. Other testimonies could enlarge, but other testimonies should not contradict, John and Matthew.

I will, therefore, begin my exercise by visiting firstly with John the Apostle. I will examine John and I will record my thoughts as I listen to him, trying at the same time not to allow other information that I have been given over my lifetime that would change or discredit what John says. Not only that but, in the translations, going back to the Greek, I will try to listen to John attentively as a learner, a child if you will, receiving what he has to say in his language and not imposing my own ideas and the ideas of subsequent translators that could distort his original teaching and therefore the teaching of Jesus Christ whom he represents. I seek to hear what he said rather than what the translators wanted him to say.

Now I pray that God will inspire me and guide my hand, my friend, as I read and commit this to paper.

According to John

Chapter 1

I have many times visited with John. One thing I found remarkable about John is that in his writings, he puts emphasis on sending us back to the beginning, to the foundation, to the beginning of time. For instance he starts his gospel by writing a verse. According to the Greek text, the literal translation would be like this:

“In beginning was the Word, and the Word was toward the God, and God was the Word.”

It is the first verse. Now, as I think about this, when John says “in beginning”, what does he mean by “in beginning”? The beginning of time? OK. In the beginning of time... But before our fleshly existence, what was there? Did not God pre-exist time? God invented time. In Genesis, it is said that “God created the heavens and the earth”. I accept that God is, and that He is real and always will be, and is in fact the creator of all. He is alone, as He says through Moses, “and beside Me there is no other God.” Before the existence of anything with which we are familiar and with which we identify, the creation as we know it, what existed? My mind can easily think, before the world was, before the sun was, before the moon was, before light was, before darkness, before anything, what was there? There was God. But what does He look like? What is He like? I can imagine (again, God gives us imagination), I can imagine God being an all encompassing entity, outside, above and antedating creation. He is not tangible, but then what is He? John says “Word”. What is word? It is the expression. The expression of what? It is the expression of an individual’s thoughts and personality. The word is “logos”. There is God. He is alone. And there is no other God other than Himself. To whom is He going to speak? With whom will he converse and commune? There is no one else.

From where does the “logos” originate? Upon reflection, where does my “logos” originate? When we utter words, from where do they come? They come from somewhere inside us. Where is the place in which words reside? Words are expressions of thought. And where is the source of thought? Thought is something that takes place within the mind. And being created in His image, as it says in Genesis again, I conclude the same being for God. I can therefore envisage God as being first and foremost a mind, thinking. So with that, I can take another look at the first verse in John and it could say, instead of “In the beginning of time”, the following:

“First and foremost was the Mind, and the Mind was God thinking to Himself, and Divine was the Mind.”

OK. It would be “divine” as in nature and character of God. The second verse reads:

“This was in beginning toward the God.”

Now, since there is no one with which to communicate, He is communicating with Himself, very much like a man does. So the second verse could mean this:

“This was originally God reflecting.”

In the third verse:

“All through Him came to be, and apart from Him came to be not but one.”

One could read:

“All through It came to be, and apart from It came to be not but one.”

What is “It”? The Mind, the thought of God. We could therefore say:

“All through It were created and apart from It none were created which were created.”

There seems to be an allusion here to, not so much things, but rather to people, persons, men:

“In It was life...”

In the mind of God and in His intent, there is life, the source of life.

“...And the life was the light of men.”

I see that he singles out men here, not just the creation of things, but of men.

“And the light shines in the darkness and the darkness did not grasp it.”

Proceeding to the next verse, verse 6, we read from the Greek text:

“Came to be man having been sent forth beside God name to him John. This one came into witness in order that he might witness about the light in order that all might believe through him. Not was that one the light but in order that he might witness about the light.”

OK. A man was created who was set apart by God whose name was John. In the first chapter of John, there seems to be an uncertainty as to who this John was. There is John, the writer of this gospel, and there is reference to John the Baptist. This John who came to be a witness, is he John the Baptist or John the Apostle the writer of this gospel? The traditional understanding of this John is that he be John the Baptist. But the writer is John the Apostle. And who is the witness about the light? Is it the Apostle, or the Baptist? Let us consider that it be the Apostle, the writer introducing himself and setting the foundation of the document that he is introducing.

“This one was given first hand experience in order that he might bear witness about the light and in order that all could be believing through him.”

Is this John the Apostle or John the Baptist? Did John come to bear witness to the world about the light or did he come to bear witness about Jesus? Did he come to introduce Jesus? Did John know Jesus? Did John the Baptist know Jesus? The point here is that John the Apostle is writing from first hand experience. He knew Jesus. He was his disciple. He knew him and this qualifies him to bear witness about him. Therefore I am inclined to conclude that the John to which is referred here is the Apostle and not the Baptist.

“That one was not the light...”

John the Apostle himself does not claim to be the light,

“...but was sent to bear witness about the light.”

And who is it that bore witness about the light first? Traditionally we acknowledge that Jesus was set apart specially to bear witness about the light. And we also acknowledge that John the disciple knew Jesus and got to know the light of Jesus. He could bear witness of it. We also know from the writings that John the Baptist preceded Jesus and was aware of the special status and the special purpose of Jesus and was the one to introduce him. But John the Baptist himself said that he did not know him but just knew that he was to be pointed out and announced to the public. So he is not here to bear witness about Jesus as such but to introduce him.

In verse 9:

“Now this light, it was the authentic light which is enlightening all mankind coming into the world. It was in the world, and the world through it was made and the world was not aware.”

If we look back at the Old Testament in the beginning, in Genesis, God created light and separated darkness from light. So John is saying here that God introduced the light. It was in the world but the world did not grasp it. The whole story of mankind is a struggle of man existing in this world having chosen independence rather than dependence on God. Therefore the light was very dim or obscured. Occasionally God would send representatives to bring light but men always

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rejected the light. In verse 11:

“Now the light, it comes unto its own and its own receive it not. But to all those who receive it, it gives authority to generate children of God, to those believing into His name, who not of natural bloods (blood-lines), nor of natural will, nor of man’s will but out of divinity were born.”

And John writes here that anyone who lived since the beginning could have in fact accepted the light, received the light, and would become or generate or be transformed into a child of God.

He sends me back to the beginning again. The book of Genesis says that “in the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.” When I hear him say this, and I tie it in with what John writes, I understand that in the beginning God created two realities or two realms, the heavenly and the earthly. Jesus refers at length in his teachings about the heavenly and the earthly, about the above and the below. (John 8:23) “I am from above, and you are from below.” Jesus is telling us of two realms. There is the earthly realm, and there is the heavenly realm. It is not two different physical locations. Because we are human beings, we see the earthly realm because we are in it. We are part of it. We are of it. So we can examine, we can study, we can ponder, we can scientifically scrutinize. We can experience that which we can perceive with our senses. There is something in us which aspires for something different, or higher if you will, something beyond the natural, earthly realm. Our mortality invites us to face this. John is telling us, or rather Jesus is telling us through John, of two realms, two realities. There is the reality of God which supersedes the reality of the world. God is not real because of the world. The world is real because of God. God’s Mind is behind the world. The Scriptures tell us this in different ways. For instance, in the book of Job, the stars and the planets are all held in a perfect balance and things are in order because God keeps them in order. But I keep returning to the fact that God is not limited. God did not create a world outside of Himself because there is nothing outside of God as far as we are instructed. In my childhood even as a young man, I imagined God standing back and creating a universe outside of Himself. If God is everything, then He is responsible for all of creation. I can perceive Him as a mind, a thinking personality. We all exist within Him and cannot exist outside of Him. Today, we are given a beautiful model for this phenomenon, our modern day computers. God is the One who is real and we are, collectively, the product of His imagination. It takes humility to accept this. I am persuaded and believe it to be true.

In verse 14, it is literally translated to something like this:

“And the Word flesh became and tented among us and we viewed the glory of him, glory as of only begotten beside of father full of undeserved kindness and truth.”

This is interesting because if we continue the concept of the mind, the Word is rather the Mind, the source of the Word, and the Mind is made tangible and dwells in us. In other words the mind of God is the spirit being and the spirit mindset, the nature of God. Divine nature is divine mind; human nature is human mind. To those who receive the light, the transformation is possible. It is not only possible, but to those receiving the light, according to the Scriptures, the mind is transformed and has a new dimension to it: a spirit dimension. As Jesus says later on, (John 3:6 and John 6:63) “that which is flesh is flesh, and that which is spirit is spirit,” and spirit nature or divine nature does not necessarily reside with human or earthly nature. It has to be acquired. A transformation is required for this to be. Therefore John is telling us here about his own personal experience:

“The mind is made tangible and dwells in us and we behold its esteem (glory) an esteem as that of a monogenic son in relationship with a father full of genuine rejoicing.”

To those who receive the light are given the power, or the permission to become children of God. Religion has been teaching us that Jesus is the only begotten son of God. The word “monogenic” (“monogenous” in Greek) has been traditionally translated as “only begotten” as a father having only one son. Yet John tells us that all those (in the plural) who receive the light

have the power to become children of God. So if we unequivocally say that there is only one son of God it is a contradiction of what John says just a little bit earlier. If only the one is a son, then what are all the others? If God can only have one son, then there is no hope of me becoming one myself. And I must completely disregard everything that John says in his gospel. Either I receive what John is saying or I do not receive. I choose to receive what he says and trust to become a member of God's family who has as many sons as will receive His light, even as John says. This is a beginning of the difficulties I have had with traditional christian teachings. By reading through John, by examining John, we are gradually going to see how John and John's knowledge of Jesus testifies of a Jesus who taught of a God desiring more than just one son. He taught of a firstborn of many sons, many children.

So what does "monogenous" mean? In English, the word "monogenous" is literally "monogenic" meaning "the product of a single source". This leads me to conclude that monogenic in this case does not mean "an only son of a father", but rather, "a son of only one father (parent)".

Verse 15 says:

"John is witnessing about him and he has cried out saying, 'This one was of whom I say, "The one behind me coming in my presence was created since before me he was".' "

Dropping this statement out of nowhere does not make any sense to me except for this reason. Due to the prejudice and teachings of traditional Christianity, John the Baptist was the one to whom these statements were attributed. Someone along the way may have inserted this statement to force John the Baptist to say those preceding verses rather than John the Apostle because it appears to be a forced statement and out of context. In my opinion, this statement may belong after verse 18 and before verse 19 if anywhere at all. This verse 15 is again stated later on. Why then repeat it? Whereas here it appears out of context because John the Apostle is testifying in verse 14 about the indwelling, the making tangible of the divine Mind or Word within him and others with him (us). And earlier, he teaches of how those who receive the light are transformed into sons of God, monogenic sons. A monogenic son does not mean a father with only one son, but rather it means a son with only one progenitor or father. But the nature of man is to heap to himself many fathers therefore having no father at all except himself as a father. Our independent attitude predisposes us to pick and choose what to believe, what to receive, what to adopt from many teachers and masters. Whereas, Jesus tells us in Matthew 10:24-25 that it is sufficient for a student to be like his teacher or a servant his master, not teachers and masters. Master, servant; teacher, student; apostle, disciple. These are all expressions of a very limited relationship between two people, the leader and his follower; the son and his father. It could be said that it is the revised father/son relationship which the Prophet Malachi foretold (4:6), "*I will turn the hearts of the fathers to the sons, and the sons to their fathers, lest I smite the earth with a curse.*" But if his father is an earthly father it is not sufficient in God's opinion. That is why Jesus introduced the apostle, disciple relationship, to undo the straying of man from the beginning. Man does not wish to have a father because by nature he does not desire to be under authority. He wants to be in authority. Man wants to be the father. He does not want to be a son to a father. This summarizes the sin in the garden of Eden. Adam chose to be the husband and father rather than be the son of God. And every man since then shares in this same tendency. We are all looking forward to leaving our father and mother to be the head of our own house. Do we not all covet the place of king or nobleman? The last want to be first. This summarizes the theme of all of the teachings of Jesus. If we were to leave aside the insertion of verse 15, and we were to go from verse 14 directly to verse 16, what does it say?

"...the monogenic son in a relationship with a father full of genuine rejoicing. Out of the fullness of it, (this relationship) we all receive and grace replacing grace, since the law was given through Moses, the approval and legitimacy through anointed Jesus were generated (came to be)."

Grace replacing grace... The grace that Jesus brought was the grace of the reconciled condition whereas the grace that Moses brought was an introduction, the invitation and the expressed condition to reconciliation. It was a grace that was yet to be completed. It was not yet

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full. That is why he says, “having received the fullness through Jesus.” Jesus spoke of nothing except of his father. Jesus’ whole attention was on his reconciliation with the Father. He said “his father” because he chose to identify with God the Father. He chose to adopt Him as his sole source of teaching and life. And rather, he chose to be His son and to belong to Him exclusively. He inquired and asked what the condition of sonship was, and he accepted the terms given to him from above. Therefore he devoted his life to the process of reconciliation and was encouraged from above to continue in that endeavor.

“Out of the fullness of it we all receive...” John the Apostle is saying this. As we will see later on, by his own admission, John the Baptist did not claim to have received the fullness. Therefore it can not be John the Baptist saying that he had received the fullness. “Since the law was given through Moses, the approval and legitimacy through anointed Jesus were generated.” Through Moses the process of reconciliation was given, but Jesus lived it, therefore demonstrating the fulfillment of that reconciliation.

In verse 18:

“No one at any time has seen divinity...”

Traditionally they say, “No one has seen God.” But in the Greek text it simply says, “God no one has seen.” In Greek, when the article is not present, we must assume that the writer means either “a god”, or simply, “pertaining to God” or “Divinity”.

“No one has seen divinity except the being a monogenetic divine one in the bosom of the Father reveals this.”

The outsider looking in does not see divinity. Jesus says later in chapter three, ¹ “Unless one is begotten from above one cannot see the kingdom.” As outsiders we can not see divinity. We can see effects of divinity but we can not perceive divinity. What he does say is that no one has seen divinity, but divinity is revealed to monogenetic progeny in the bosom of the Father. Receiving the light and becoming transformed, being granted by God the divine nature and condition, one can begin to see, to perceive, and to experience divinity.

In verse 19, John changes over and now introduces John the Baptist. So why would he have inserted an introduction of John the Baptist earlier if it is here that he introduces him? John writes:

“And this is the witness of John when sent forth toward him the Jews out of Jerusalem, priests and Levites in order that they might question him, ‘You, who are you?’ This is the testimony of John the Baptist when the Jewish priests and Levites of Jerusalem sent him a delegation that they might ask him, ‘Who are you?’ And he confirms and does not deny but avows, ‘I am not the anointed’.”

By saying this, he is confessing that he has not received the fullness of God.

(21) “So they asked him, ‘What then? Are you Elijah?’ ‘I am not.’ ‘Are you the Prophet?’ He answers, ‘No.’ They say to him therefore, ‘Who are you that we might give an answer to those who sent us? What are you saying about yourself?’ He declared, ‘I am a voice crying out in the desolate place, “Make plain the Lord’s way!” as Isaiah (40:3) the prophet says’.”

Make plain the Lord’s way. Do not confuse the issue, simplify, do not invent anything, seek the authentic way.

(24) “And out of the Pharisees having been commissioned, they ask him, ‘Why then are you baptising if you are neither the anointed, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?’ John replied, ‘I am baptising in water the one in your midst whom ye have not known, coming behind me of whom I am not worthy to loosen the strap of his sandals’. These things occurred in Bethany on the other side of the Jordan where John was baptising.”

Again in verse 26 more directly translated from the Greek, "Answered to them the John saying, 'I am baptising in water. Middle of ye one is standing who ye not have known behind me coming one of whom not am I worthy in order that I might loose of him the lace of the sandal'." In other words, John is saying, "I am baptising to flush out the one concealed in your midst, though he is greater than I, that I may manifest him openly to the people. He is hidden and anonymous as of yet. But my given task is to reveal him." And when he says that he is not worthy to loose the lace of his sandals, he is referring to the Old Testament law pertaining to the next of kin making a claim of entitlement over the property of the next of kin (Deuteronomy 25:9). If a man had no actual son, the next of kin could make the claim of inheritance. He would symbolize that claim by picking up the sandal of the person in question. Therefore John is confessing that he is not prepared to the level of this one to whom he is referring. He makes a humble statement, "I do not have what he has."

This could be referring to Adam having been the original repudiator of the sandal. John the Baptist was stating that he did not see himself qualified to "pick up the sandal", ADAM'S SANDAL. But John was prophesying that one was in fact coming after him who would actually PICK UP ADAM'S SANDAL.

(29) "The next day, looking at Jesus coming toward him, he says, 'Behold the lamb of God, the one dealing with the erring of the world. This is the one about whom I said, "Behind me is coming a man who before me has been generated since he belonged ahead of me".'"

This is the statement used earlier in verse 15 which seemed to there have been inserted to force the identity of the John to be the John the Baptist instead of the Apostle.

And John continues by saying in verse 31:

"And I did not know him..."

Why did John say this? If he had had the fullness, why would he have said this?

"But in order that he might be manifested to Israel, for this I came baptising in water."

Therefore John is saying that he had a simple role to play. His role was to identify this mysterious individual and to reveal him to Israel. He was to point out the Anointed One, the legitimate teacher of Israel, and say, "Listen to him."

In verse 32, John bore witness saying:

"I beheld the spirit descending as a dove out of heaven..."

What is the spirit? The spirit is the divine nature, the light, the approval of God. John has observed something special about Jesus, and that is how he describes him. He uses the analogy of the dove as a picture to describe the lighting upon him with all of the symbolism that the dove includes, especially peace and purity:

"And it remains on him..."

It does not come to only visit, rather it remains on him. He repeats:

"And I did not know him but the very One sending me to baptise in water said to me, 'Upon whomever you should perceive the spirit descending and remaining, this is the one baptising in holy spirit'."

The holy spirit would be simply "divine nature". How can one be a son of God unless one be of the same nature? How can one be a son of God and still only remain of earthly or human nature? Verse 34:

"And myself I have seen, and have witnessed that this (one) is the son of God."

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At first glance we assume that it is exclusively John the Baptist saying this. But upon closer examination, it could be John the Apostle adding his own testimony to John the Baptist's in confirmation. Verse 35:

"Again the next day John, standing with two of his disciples, and looking at Jesus walking about, said, 'Behold the Lamb of God.' So the two disciples hear him speaking and they follow Jesus."

If John the Baptist had the fullness, would these two disciples have reason to leave him to follow Jesus?

(38) "But Jesus, having turned and noticing them following, says to them, 'What are you seeking?' These then say to him, 'Rabbi (which means "teacher"), where are you staying?' He says to them, 'Come and you will see'."

Were they only asking him where he was physically residing as in a house or hotel, or was this a question of deeper significance? "Rabbi, where do you abide spiritually (in the heavenly realm)?" But Jesus answers, "Come, and you will see for yourself whether I am of the earthly or of the heavenly," remembering that John is writing this story from his own point of view.

"They go and then perceive where he is staying, and they stay with him that (very) day."

In other words, from then on, they stay with him. They remain with him. They are drawn to him. They perceive where he is staying, that he is in a different place. They see that he is not of the normal, earthly, human realm. He is in another realm. His mindset is different. They go with him from then on. They are with him in the condition where they can receive the light from him, to receive his nature, to be taught. So they become his disciples.

"It was the tenth hour."

It is strange that John bothered to write that it was the tenth hour. Normally we see the eleventh hour as being the last hour before a major event. The tenth hour is the second last hour before an event. It is interesting that this statement be made here, not that it is important.

From verse 40:

"Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, was one of the two who hear John and follow him (Jesus). Andrew first finds his own brother, Simon, and says to him, 'We have found the Messiah (which means "anointed")'. He brings him to Jesus. Looking at him, Jesus says, 'You are Simon, the son of John; you will be called Cephas (which means "Petros" in Greek, and "Stone" in English).'

The next day, Jesus decides to go into Galilee. Encountering Philip, he says to him, 'Follow me'."

For Jesus to say to anyone, "Follow me," he has to be confident in where he is going. Where is he going? Was it an expression of going from this physical place to another physical place? From this city to that city? Or was he not referring to, "Follow me from the earthly realm to the heavenly realm"? In Jesus' mind, we learn that it is exactly what he means. From verse 44:

(44) "Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip finds Nathanael and says to him, 'We have found the one of whom write Moses in the Law and the prophets: Jesus, the son of Joseph from Nazareth!' So Nathanael says to him, 'Could anything good come out of Nazareth?' Philip replies, 'Come and see.' Noticing Nathanael coming toward him, Jesus says about him, 'Behold! With certainty an Israelite in whom there is no guile.' Responds Nathanael, 'From where do you know me?' Answered Jesus, 'Before Philip was to summon you under the fig tree, I noticed you.' Nathanael exclaimed, 'Rabbi, you are the son of God, the king of Israel!' Jesus answered him, 'Just because I said that I noticed you under the fig tree, you are believing? You will see greater things than this.' And he added,

‘Amen! Amen! I am saying to ye, ye will be seeing heaven having opened and the messengers [angels, “aggelos” made of two Greek words, “age”, to lead, and “agele, a herd (that which is led)] of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man’.”

Here, Jesus makes the first reference to the Son of Man. Who is this “Son of Man”? We will come back to this statement later. Traditionally, the church has considered the Son of Man to be synonymous with Jesus the Son of God. Yet he did not say “the Son of God”, but rather “Son of Man”. There seems to be two statements being made by Jesus. One is “Son of Man” and some times he says “Son of God”. What is the distinction? Again consistent with John’s subsequent writings, Jesus’ teachings, there are two natures: the earthly nature and the divine nature. The Son of Man is the earthly nature of man; the Son of God is the divine nature of man. Therefore the transformation of a son of Man to a son of God is the process on which he is going to be focusing. The “Son of Man” is man being addressed by God invited to be transformed, and the “Son of God” is the reconciled Son of Man.

Chapter 1 footnotes:

¹ John 3(3).

Chapter 2

(1) “Now on the third day a wedding was held in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there; Jesus and his disciples were also invited to it. When the wine ran out, the mother of Jesus said toward him, ‘They have no wine.’ Jesus replied, ‘What have I to do with you, woman? My hour is not yet come.’ His mother said to the servants, ‘Whatever he says to you, do.’ Now there were six stone water jars sitting there, used for purification by the Jews, each able to hold two or three measures. Jesus said to them, ‘Fill the jars with water,’ and they filled them to the brim. Then he said to them, ‘Now draw some and bring it to the director of the feast;’ so they did. When the director tasted the water now turned into wine, not knowing its origin (but the servants who drew the water knew), he called the bridegroom and said to him, ‘Everyone sets out the fine wine first, and only serves the inferior after the guests are intoxicated; but you have kept the fine wine until now.’ This beginning of signs Jesus does in Cana of Galilee and manifests his status, and his disciples believed into him.”

It is an interesting observation to make here. The very first “miraculous sign” according to John is one that takes place at a wedding feast. It is as though God is placing special emphasis on the wedding concept for us to examine. Throughout the Bible, all the way to the very end, there are repeated references to weddings and marriage. So what is a marriage? Is it not the closest representation of God’s intent for mankind? Is it not the picture that best describes the Gospel that Jesus was now preaching? Marriage, according to the Biblical model, is the joining of one person to another’s household.

One question that comes to my mind when I read this is this: the answer that Jesus gives his mother, “What have I to do with you, woman?” What is he saying? What could he be meaning? This seems to be a statement of disrespect or of disdain. Is he showing disrespect towards his mother? It is an interesting question. And it is very significant in the whole of Jesus’ teachings. If I place myself in Jesus’ place, having experienced life even as I have, Jesus is looking at his mother, and if I think back at the creation of Adam and Eve, Adam was created first and he was given a commandment. He was given the commandment to not eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. And the woman, Eve, brought him counter instructions causing him to doubt. The woman in this case seems to represent the human nature, the earthly nature, because man is born of woman. Later on, Jesus says of John the Baptist, “Of all the men born of women, none is greater than John the Baptist. But the least in the kingdom is greater than he.” So again he is

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making allusion to the distinction of the two natures, the earthly nature and the heavenly nature. Jesus, through this, is saying to us, "Caution; I am not meant to follow the leading of the woman, but the leading of the father. The mother's leading is only valid when it coincides with the father's, when it supports the father in the reconciled state, not in the corrupt state." So Jesus is saying, "What have I to do with you, woman?" I see Jesus having learned, having received from God the anointing, the teaching, and the light. But it did not come from any woman; it came from God. It came from the scriptures. His mother was a participant in this by nurturing him and exposing him to the scriptures. So that's fine. But he can not subordinate himself spiritually to the woman, not because it is impossible to do, but because it is God's plan.

He says, "My hour is not yet come." He is beginning his public ministry here, and he is not sure, humanly speaking, of what he has to do. But he knows that his role of reconciliation with the Father is primordial. It is required. And the evidence of this is to be seen outwardly. So here he is willing, if God wants, to do something special, and we see the changing of water into wine as the first sign that God is vindicating or confirming what Jesus is all about, what he is driving at. It is interesting. Referring to the changing of water into wine, later on, Jesus says, "Unless we are born of water and of spirit..." Wine is considered to be "spirit". Alcohol is a "spirit" because it modifies nature or behavior. And the changing of the water into wine, to me, seems to symbolize the need to change, the water, which represents the human nature, into wine, which represents the heavenly nature, the spirit nature.

From verse 12:

"Later he went down to Capernaum, he, his mother, his brothers and his disciples. They stayed there just a few days.

The Jews' Passover was near, and Jesus went to Jerusalem. He found in the temple those selling cattle, sheep and doves, and the coin dealers sitting. He made a whip out of ropes, and chased them all out, the sheep and the cattle. And of the money changers, he even spilled the coins and overturned the tables. To those selling doves he said, 'Take these out of here! How dare you make my Father's house a market place?' And his disciples remembered the Scripture (Psalm 69:9), *'The zeal of your house has consumed me'.*"

Jesus lived in a community of religion. The Jewish or Hebrew community was considered to be, believed to be, and was designated by God through the Scriptures to be the community through which God chose to manifest Himself. He singled out a community, set it apart in the world to demonstrate the transition, the transformation that He wants man to experience, to pass from human, fleshly nature to divine nature. So Jesus is living in the midst of this, the Jewish community of that day. It was very religious minded and was caught up with all kinds of rituals, religious feasts, observances and such. But he is saying here that he is very upset over what he sees taking place. God had invited man to transform, and man chose to play religion. Jesus comes face to face with this and finds it unacceptable. He can not be part of it, nor condone it. You could say that he confronts the cloudiness. So he begins a reactionary movement to set the record straight: what God is really about. God is not about religion. God is. God invites man to leave the earthly and to join Him in the heavenly realm. But the human tendency, rather than seek to transcend the earthly to the heavenly where God dwells, is to deal with spiritual matters from a human point of view and to bring God down into the earthly. And that is what religion seems to do continually. It tries to force God down into the earthly. So he is saying, "God is not a business. Divine nature is not a business. God is." God owns everything. So the business that was taking place among men using God as the leverage offended Jesus. It is the ignoring of God and using Him for personal gains. In my observation, things have not changed much since Jesus' day. I was born and raised in the christian church which is an extension of the Jewish community, and the offspring of the Hebrew faith of Jesus' day. In fact, it is very much the same. Christianity appears to function as a business. It talks about God. It tries to use God. Is it all about profit, and selling? Is it all about selling "doves"? Earlier we read that John says that the spirit descended "as a dove". It is interesting that he is singling out the doves. Are christian leaders selling "doves", what they consider to be "holy spirit"?

Are they marketing it for their own gain?

(18) "The Jews challenged him, saying, 'What sign are you showing us, since you are doing this?'" By what right are you doing this? "Jesus answered, 'Dismantle this dwelling and in three days I shall raise it up.' So they said, 'It took forty-six years to build this dwelling, and you will raise it up in three days?' But Jesus was talking about the dwelling of his body. When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the Scripture and the word of Jesus."

(23) "While he was at the Passover Feast in Jerusalem, many believed into his name, beholding the signs which he was doing; Jesus, however, was not entrusting himself to them, because he knew them and had no need that anyone bear witness about mankind, for he knew what was in man."

He didn't know just by looking outwardly, Jesus knew what was in man because he was a man. "I know man, because I am Man." He understood their tendencies because he faced them inside himself, just like I do. This is not to degrade Jesus in any way, but rather to enhance the challenge that he himself had to face in view of his relationship with God.

Chapter 3

(1) "Now there was a man named Nicodemus. He was of the Pharisees, the rulers of the Jews. He came to Jesus by night and said to him, 'Rabbi, it is clear to us that you are a man of God and a teacher. No one is able to do these signs which you are doing unless God be with him.' (3) Jesus answered, **'Amen! Amen! I am saying to you, unless one be reproduced from above, one is not able to see the kingdom of God.'** [Reproduced as in born as an offspring (in like kind)] Nicodemus said toward him, 'How can a man be reproduced when he is old? Shall he enter into his mother's womb and be born a second time?' Answered Jesus, 'Amen! Amen! I am saying to you, unless one be begotten out of water and out of spirit, one is not able to enter into the kingdom of God. The one reproduced out of flesh is flesh, and the one reproduced out of spirit is spirit. (This is a clear statement of distinction between the two natures.) You should not marvel that I said, "One must be reproduced from above." The wind blows where it wills, and you hear its sound, but you do not know from where it comes and to where it goes. Thus is everyone reproduced out of the spirit'."

(9) "Nicodemus said, 'How can these things be?' Jesus answered, 'You are the teacher of Israel and you do not know these things?'"

Nicodemus was an eminent member of the group of Pharisees teaching Israel. And Jesus is saying that he doesn't know these things. In other words, "You are totally immersed in religion yet you've missed it. You don't get it." So being immersed in religion doesn't make us get it necessarily. Jesus continues:

(11) " 'Amen! Amen! I am saying to you, we proclaim what we know and we bear witness of what we have seen, and you do not receive our testimony. If I tell you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you ever believe when I tell you heavenly things? No one is ascending into heaven except for the one descending out of heaven, the SON OF MAN. Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, thus it is necessary that the son of man be lifted up (that is, manifested in plain sight), so that everyone trusting in him may have life everlasting. For God loves the world **thus**: He gives the monogenic son, so that everyone believing into him might not be destroyed but might be having life everlasting. God sets the son apart into the world

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not to judge the world, but rather to deliver the world through him. The one believing into him is not judged. The one not believing is judged already, because he has not believed into the name of the monogenic son of God. This indeed is the judgment: light has come into the world, yet men love darkness rather than light, for their behaviour is erroneous. Everyone practising worthless (deeds) hates the light and shuns it for fear that his behaviour be confuted; the one practising the genuine (the authentic way) comes toward the light, that it be plainly seen that his deeds were done in divinity’.”

This visit with Nicodemus, Jesus is laying down what I think to be clearly the distinction between the heavenly and the earthly, and how man has so much tried to bring down heaven to earth rather than receiving the heavenly in order to rise into the heavenly. Traditionally, Christians use the scripture in verse 16 in the New King James Version, *“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son that whoever believes in him might not perish but have everlasting life.”* Christians quote this all over the place and they interpret it to mean that God gave His son to be killed on a cross, and to be our perpetual substitute sacrifice, etc. What John is writing and recording what Jesus is saying is this: “For God loved the world in this way...” Not “so much” in the quantitative sense, but rather it is the descriptive love, the type of love. “God loves the world in this way: He gives the monogenic son (not the only begotten son, but He gives the template of the son of a single father) so that everyone believing into him (God and the monogenic son) might not be destroyed but might be having life everlasting.” If I do not believe in a monogenic son, if I do not believe that I need to be of one, single father, then I can’t get it (what God intends for me). It is key to receiving the light. God gave the template of a monogenic son. As we read through the witnesses, John and Matthew, and read the stories about Jesus, we keep hearing Jesus referring to his father as being his single source of life and the single source of his learning, the only one in whom he believes, and he only wants to do His will, and so forth. It is a singular focus. This is the invitation of God. But when we are independent, and we claim independent thinking and we philosophize about God this, and God that, and we read this teacher and we hear that preacher, and we assemble a whole hodgepodge of theories, and we make up a theological, religious thesis, we get nowhere. Jesus dispels all of that. Monogenic... Monogenesis...

(22) “After these things, Jesus and his disciples went into the Judean countryside, and there he was spending time with them and was baptising. But John was also baptising in Aenon near Salim, since there was much water there. People were approaching and being baptised, for John had not yet been thrown into prison (John the Baptist).”

(25) “There arose a dispute between the disciples of John and a Jew over purification. They came to John and asked, ‘Rabbi, he who was with you on the other side of the Jordan, **to whom** you bore witness, behold he is baptising and all are coming to him.’ John answered and said, ‘A man can receive nothing unless it be given to him out of heaven. You yourselves are bearing witness that I said, “I am not the Anointed, but that, having been set apart, I am in advance of him.” The one having the bride is the bridegroom. The friend of the bridegroom, standing by and listening, rejoices over having heard the bridegroom’s voice. Therefore this joy of mine has been fulfilled. He must increase, and I must decrease’.”

In verse 26, he says, “Rabbi, he who was with you on the other side of the Jordan, **TO WHOM** you bore witness...” Is he saying, “...OF WHOM you bore witness...” or “...TO WHOM you bore witness...”? To me, it seems to indicate that, for a time before, Jesus was in the company of John the Baptist. And John the Baptist was bearing witness to Jesus. In other words, Jesus spent some time learning from John the Baptist. About what could John the Baptist be bearing witness to Jesus? We hear of John the Baptist that he was saying, “Make straight the way of the Lord!” and according to Matthew, “Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand. Believe the Well-Message (euaggelia)!” John the Baptist was referring to the Old Scriptures. He was moved to preach and

testify of God's wish for man to repent of his way. This is how I see that he was testifying, or bearing witness to Jesus. He would have been bearing witness of the intent of the Old Scriptures which God had handed out to the prophets of old. All these prophets were not bringing different, conflicting messages. These messengers were all from the same source, the same Father. So it was one Father sending different messengers, not different messengers giving different versions of God. All these prophets gave one version of God. It was always the version that man was lost, and was unreconciled, degenerated man needing to reform, to be regenerated. And so Jesus said, "Yes, God, I get it. OK, I'm going to do this."

After John the Baptist said, "He must increase and I must decrease," next verse, verse 31, to me, it is John the Apostle writing. Traditionally, scholars consider John the Baptist continuing to say the following statement, but if he says, "I must decrease," he is saying, "I'm done. My joy has been fulfilled, I must bow out now." Now for the next statement to be of theological importance, it can't be John the Baptist speaking. It would be John the Apostle who is writing about something he has seen and heard of Jesus. So he is bearing witness. He is saying this:

(31) "The one coming from above is above all, the one out of the earth is earthly. And his speech is earthly. The one coming out of heaven is above all; what he has seen and heard, of this he is bearing witness, and no one is receiving his testimony."

So John the Apostle is saying this. And he identifies with Jesus in the same way. By the time he is writing this Gospel, John sees himself as an extension of Jesus, to go back to the Nicodemus exchange, born from above, Jesus born from above, spirit nature. John the disciple received his spirit, divine nature from Jesus. So John the disciple considers himself born from above. And he testifies of what he has seen and heard, and touched first hand. No one is receiving his testimony. It makes me wonder how Christianity has missed John's testimony. They appear to have chosen some other concept.

(33) "Yet the one who has received his testimony authenticated his God. For whom God has set apart speaks the sayings of God, for He does not give the spirit by measure."

"He does not give the spirit by measure." God does not dissect the Holy Spirit and give a little part of this and a little part of that. That stands boldly in front of religious teachings that speak of a divided Holy Spirit who has different characteristics. This man gets this characteristic, and that man gets a different characteristic. And John says, "God does not give the spirit by measure." The son is a full reproduction of the father, not a partial reproduction of the father, not just some characteristics of the father. The divine son is a reproduction of the Father. The whole nature of the Father is given to the son.

(35) "The father loves the son, and has given all into his hand."

Not partially, all of what He is, all of His nature.

(36) "The one trusting into the son has life everlasting (the authentic son); but the one disobeying the son will not see life..."

So to me it is important that the authenticity of the son be determined and nothing else. And having determined the authenticity of the son, I have to accept all that the son gives me, not partially.

"...The wrath of God remains on him."

In other words genuine reconciliation with God has not yet been completed.

Chapter 4

(1) “The Pharisees heard that Jesus was making and baptising more disciples than John, and the Lord knew it. Howbeit, Jesus himself was not baptising but his disciples were. So he left Judea and went back to Galilee. He had to pass through Samaria. He came therefore to a city of Samaria called Sychar near the plot which Jacob gave to Joseph his son, where Jacob’s fountain was. So Jesus, wearied from the journey, sat on the fountain; it was about the sixth hour. A Samaritan woman came to draw water. Jesus said to her, ‘Give me to drink.’ His disciples had gone off into the city to buy food. So the Samaritan woman said, ‘How is it that you, a Jew, would ask for a drink from a Samaritan woman?’ (Jews do not associate with Samaritans) Answered Jesus, ‘If you had known the gift of God and who it is saying to you, “Give me drink”, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.’ She then said to him, ‘Sir, you have no means of drawing and the well is deep; where would you get this living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us this well and drank from it along with his sons and dependants?’ Answered Jesus, ‘Everyone drinking of this water will thirst again; but whoever drinks of the water which I will be giving to him, it will create in him a fountain of water gushing out into life everlasting.’ She says toward him, ‘Sir, give me this water, that I may not get thirsty, nor come out here to draw.’ He says to her, ‘Go, call your man and come here’.”

John in his writings to this point is continually demonstrating the two worlds: the world of the flesh, the earthly realm, and the spirit realm. Jesus is speaking in spirit terms about spirit matters, and it is like two conversations, or rather a conversation with two levels that do not connect. At this point:

(16) “He says to her, ‘Go call your man and come here.’ The woman replies, ‘I have no man.’ Jesus says, ‘You speak well saying, “I have no man”, for you have had five men, and the one you have now is not your man; this you have admitted honestly.’ The woman then says, ‘Sir, I discern that you are a prophet. Our fathers worshipped on this mountain; and you are saying that Jerusalem is the place for worshipping’.”

Stop here for a minute. Out of the blue, when the lady says to Jesus, “Give me of this water,” his reply seems to be coming out of left field altogether. “Just go call your man and come here.” I have deeply pondered this question over time. Why would he answer in those terms? I found the answer by going back, again, as John keeps referring, back to the beginning, back to the garden, back to the outset and God’s original plan. This whole matter is discussed in detail in the last section, “Going Back To Basics”.

Coming back to the woman at the well, I can understand why Jesus said to the woman, “Go call your man and come here.” He is putting forth a clue on the one hand, and offering reconciliation in the other. Jesus is saying to Eve, “Go call Adam, your husband, the one to whom God has given you.” She needed to learn about humility and subordination. She needed to know of a REAL God, who has a REAL mind, a REAL will, and a REAL purpose for man.

(19) “The woman then says, ‘I discern that you are a prophet. Our fathers worshipped on this mountain; and you are saying that Jerusalem is the place for worshipping.’ He then says to her, ‘Trust me, woman. Time is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem you will worship the Father’.”

He is saying that worshiping the Father is not an exercise of rituals. That is the human side of things. But to genuinely worship the Father is another world, another realm.

(22) ‘You are worshipping whom you have not understood. We are worshipping whom we have understood, since deliverance is out of the Jews; but

the hour is coming and now is when the genuine worshippers will be worshipping the Father in spirit (nature) and truth (authentic nature) (reality, the reality of God which is spirit), for the Father is seeking such to be worshipping Him. Spirit (nature) God is, and those worshipping Him;’...

One is of spirit nature as well when one is born of spirit. One has identified with the spirit and has reached that place where he can then worship God. One cannot truly worship God from a human point of view and from the flesh nature because the flesh nature cannot perceive the heavenly. And the human tendency is to try to draw God down out of His spirit world down into its own earthly world. But for God, His desire is to draw us up out of our earthly, material world to His own higher world, which is spirit. And to worship God, in God’s eyes, is for one to subordinate himself totally. That is the only form of worship in which God is interested. That was the instruction given to Adam in the garden. Any other worship is usually forms of flattery, such as praise and applause. But it ends up being nothing but substitution for the real thing and not genuine. It is not binding and is not a valid relationship from His point of view.

(24B) “...‘and worshipping is required to be in spirit and truth.’ She says to him, ‘I know that Messiah is coming, the one they call Anointed. When he comes, he will explain to us all things.’ Jesus replies, ‘I, the one speaking to you, am he.’

(27) And at that point his disciples arrived. They were amazed that he was speaking with a woman. Of course no one said, ‘What are you seeking?’ or ‘Why are you speaking with her?’ The woman, therefore, left her water jar and went away into the city and said to the men, ‘Come and see a man who tells me all that I do.’”

It is interesting that she didn’t go to her man. She went to the MEN. At that point, she didn’t get it. But she was impressed humanly speaking.

(29B) “ ‘Could this not be the Anointed?’ They came out of the city to see him.

(31) In the mean time, his disciples were urging him, saying, ‘Rabbi, eat.’ But he said to them, ‘I have food to eat of which you are not aware.’ Therefore the disciples were saying toward one another, ‘Has anyone brought him to eat?’ Jesus said to them, ‘My food is that I should be doing the will of the one bidding me’...”

He is describing worship (and the meaning of serving).

(34B) “...‘and that I should be completing his work’.”

The son completes the father, participates with the father in HIS business. He joins in the father’s work, not in his own work.

(35) “ ‘Do you not say, “Four months and then comes the harvest”? Behold, I am saying to you, lift up your eyes and see the fields, how they are ripe for harvest. Already the reaper is receiving wages and is gathering fruit into life everlasting, so that both sower and reaper may rejoice together’.”

At this point, referring to “sowing” and “reaping” and such, Jesus is suggesting that he himself is a firstfruit of the harvest, the harvest that he didn’t sow. It was sown in the past by the prophets who came before him. All of this work of preparation, of cultivating, seeding, and weeding, culminate in a harvest in the middle of which he finds himself. As he is firstfruit of harvest, he is saying that his disciples are called to join in this same harvest, to join this process.

(37) “ ‘For in this the saying is true that one sows and another reaps. I set you apart to reap that for which you have not laboured; others have laboured and you have entered into their labour’.”

So there has been laboring from the beginning through the prophets, and now the disciples find themselves joining in their labors.

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(39) “Now many of the Samaritans of that city believed into him through the word of the woman bearing witness saying, ‘He tells me all that I do.’ Therefore when the Samaritans came toward him, they urged him to remain with them. He remained there two days, and many more believed through his word. They said to the woman, ‘We are no longer persuaded by your word alone, but we ourselves have heard, and we recognize that this is truly the deliverer of the world.’

(43) After the two days he went out from there into Galilee, for Jesus himself bore witness that a prophet is not honoured in his own fatherland. When therefore he came into Galilee, the Galileans received him, having seen all the many things he did in Jerusalem during the feast, for they also came to the feast.”

Jesus was made to see that the woman’s role in this case was to be the catalyst in order to introduce himself and His Father to the men of that city.

(46) “So he came again to Cana of Galilee, where he made the water wine. Now there was a certain nobleman from Capernaum whose son was sick. This man, having heard that Jesus was coming out of Judea into Galilee, went to meet him. He urged him to come down and heal his son, for he was dying. Said therefore Jesus toward him, ‘Unless you see signs and portents you will never believe!’ The nobleman said toward him, ‘Lord, come down before my little boy dies’.”

Again, we see the contrast of who we are and where we are. The man has heard that Jesus heals, but Jesus is replying, in a way, “I don’t heal, God heals. And if you were reconciled with God yourself, you would not be seeking a mediator (go-between) for healing. Right now, you need a go-between because you are alienated from God. Are you not aware that you can be reconciled?” So after making this point:

(50) “Jesus said to him, ‘Go; your son lives.’ The man believed the word which Jesus spoke to him and he went. But while he was yet on his way, his slaves met him saying that his boy lived. He inquired of them therefore the hour in which he had improved. They replied, ‘Yesterday, at the seventh hour, the fever left him.’ The father therefore knew that it was at the very hour in which Jesus said to him, ‘Your son lives’. So he believed, he and his whole household. Again Jesus did this second sign having come out of Judea into Galilee.”

See, there is a danger for me to get caught in the same trap and to elevate Jesus to that special, exclusive status beyond what he really was. I need to have Jesus show me how to get reconciled with God even as he was reconciled with God. But I don’t need Jesus to heal my body, I need God to heal all of me. Jesus is the expression of God, an example for my benefit. He is not God, but rather an expression of God and he had a key role to play. And the role, as he himself saw it, was first and foremost that of reconciling with God Himself, and demonstrating it to others around him so that they may also “get in on it”, to participate. That is why he invited others to follow. He said, “Follow me.” Did he ever say, “Crucify me, and sprinkle my blood all over yourselves in order to trick God into thinking that you are me?”

Chapter 5

(1) “After these things there was a Jewish feast, and Jesus went up into Jerusalem. Now in Jerusalem, at the sheep gate, there is a pool called in Hebrew Bethzatha, having five colonnades. Among these was lying down a multitude of the sick, blind, lame and withered. There was a certain man who had been sick thirty-eight years. Jesus, seeing him lying down, and knowing that he had been in that condition a long time, said to him, ‘Do you want to be made well?’ The sick one answered him, ‘Sir; I have no one to help me into the pool when the water

is disturbed. While I am coming another steps in before me.' Jesus said to him, 'Rise, lift up your cot and walk.' At once the man was made sound in health. He lifted up his cot and walked. Now that day happened to be a Sabbath.

(10) The Jews accosted the one having been cured, saying, 'It is the Sabbath! It is not lawful for you to lift up your cot.' So he answered them, 'The one who made me sound in health, he said to me, "Lift up your cot and walk".' They questioned him, 'Who is this man who said to you, "Lift up and walk"?' But the one who was healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had withdrawn, that being a crowded place.

(14) Shortly after, Jesus found him in the temple and said to him, 'See, you have been made sound in health. Err no more, lest something worse should happen to you.' The man went away and told the Jews that Jesus was the one who had made him well. So the Jews were persecuting Jesus because he was doing these things during the Sabbath. But he answered them, 'My Father is working until now and so am I.' Because of this the Jews were seeking to kill him, since not only was he breaking the Sabbath but also was calling God his own father, equating himself to God."

The Jews in this case are demonstrating their locked-in position of human religion which has built-in definitions of God which are not authentic. They are man's definitions. And when they see this man being healed on the Sabbath, which is more impressive: the fact that it be done on the Sabbath, or that a man be miraculously healed at all? They are obviously not impressed by the healing itself but are caught up in their own mindset of nitpicking, of fruit-picking from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. They've decided that this particular fruit is not to be eaten. And voilà! There we go. But Jesus is saying in rebuttal, "Until now, my Father has been working, and I am working with him. I am a volunteer. The Sabbath is not yet arrived for My Father. And when the work is done, which is the Seventh Day, He and I will no longer need to work."

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. He spent six days, according to Genesis, creating everything, and then rested on the seventh. So Jesus is slyly referring to that passage in Genesis. And according to the biblical historical account, how many years had expired when Jesus was here on earth? Was it not only four thousand years? And referring to other scriptural sources, ¹ to God a day is a thousand years (symbolically speaking again). So Jesus was alluding to these biblical revelations when he said that God was still working. And by including himself with God's working, he is making a strong statement about his own identity, that of a son. He is participating in God's creation process. And what was the final work of God's creation according to Genesis? On the sixth day, He created Man in his own image. And then, He said that it was very good. And then He rested. So Jesus was including himself in the most important aspect of God's creation: the creation of Man, not the corrupt, alien, animal Man, but the regenerated, at peace with God, spirit Man, made in God's own image. And the Jews were offended when they heard him call God his Father because to them, God is distant. "You cannot worship Him except from afar. You've got to placate Him through praise, singing, applause, sacrifices, and all kinds of religious formalities to impress Him." And we impress Him in order to try to obtain some favor in our own little lives where we go and do our own little independent thing, keeping ourselves distant from God.

(19) "Therefore, Jesus answered and said to them, 'Amen! Amen! I am saying to you, the "son" is not intended to do anything of himself except what he discerns the "father" to be doing; for whatever that one may do, likewise the "son" also does. For the Father has affection for the son and reveals to him all that he is doing, and He will show greater works than these that you may wonder. Just as the Father raises up the dead and makes alive, thus also the son makes alive whomever wills. The Father judges no one, but has given all judgment (freedom of choice) to the son, that all may honour the son as they honour the Father. The one

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not honouring the son is not honouring the Father bidding him. Amen! Amen! I am saying to you that the one hearing my word and believing the One bidding me has life everlasting. He is not subject to judgment, but has passed over out of death into life'."

In other words, Jesus is changing the focus on the word "judgment". Jesus is saying that judgment is something one does on one's own self, rather than on others. According to Jesus, judgment is a process of personal decisions and the living out of personal consequences, of personal experience and evaluations. So when the process of elimination is complete, the process of judgment to which he is referring is the choice of finally accepting, and fulfilling the terms of reconciliation with God, the Father.

Another aspect of judgment that Jesus is teaching is the idea of "choosing" as opposed to "condemning". He is saying that when one chooses something, by default one rejects the alternatives, whatever they may be. So when he chooses to be with his Father, he ultimately chooses not to be with anything else. He is expanding on Deuteronomy 6:5 saying: "*You will love the Lord your God with all of your heart, with all of your soul, and with all of your strength...*" Jesus is explaining by demonstration what love really means. It means simply "to choose to please someone, to work at being in a peaceful relationship with someone." But if I love my Father with all of my being, what is there left with which I could love anyone or anything else?

(25) " 'Amen! Amen! I am saying to you, that time is come and now is when the dead will be hearing the voice of the son of God and those heeding shall be living. For just as the Father has life in Himself, likewise He gives the son to have life in Himself, and He gives him authority to choose, since he is son of man'."

Who are the dead to whom he is referring? Who are the dead that will be hearing the voice of the son of God? Again, going back to the garden, God said to Adam that whoever eats of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil will surely die in that same day. So Jesus is simply acknowledging that God had said this in the beginning, and was confessing that man was guilty of eating from that tree and was as a result, dead, that is, having a dead relationship with God the Father. So the death that Adam experienced in that same day was a spirit death, not a physical death. So Adam died and his physical progeny are dead by perpetuating Adam's guilt and remaining in the flesh. But Jesus is here saying that these dead are now going to hear the voice of the son of God, and those heeding his voice, not just hearing passively, but listening intently and modifying their behavior accordingly, will be living, alive to God. It is just as in Matthew 8:22, after being asked by a man to be released to go and bury his father, Jesus said, "Let the dead bury their own dead. You be following me."

(28) " 'Do not wonder at this: the time is come in which all those in the tomb will hear His voice and those doing the good (good, as in not from the tree, but rather the proper, beneficial thing to do whatever that may be expressed by God) will be released into resurrection of life; those practising the false (following the false way, the error, the human way) will be raised into correction. (There is still hope for the dead. It is possible to return to the Father through correction, not condemnation, in order to receive life.) I am not intended to do anything of myself (He is explaining the true role of a son in God's opinion.); just as I hear, I choose, (See, the Father gave freedom of choice to the son) and my judging is fair (What judging? It is just the choice between the spirit and flesh. That is the extent of his judging.), because I am not seeking my will but the will of the one bidding me.

(31) If I witness pertaining to myself, my testimony is not reliable. Another is the one witnessing pertaining to me, and I recognize that the witness which he bears about me is reliable. You sent delegates to inquire of John, and he bore witness of the truth (or the authentic). However, my witness does not come from man (He is not referring to John's witness of him). And these things I am saying so that you might be delivered. John was the burning and shining lamp, yet you rejoiced for but a time in his light. My witness is greater than John's, for the works which the Father has given

me to finish, the very works which I am doing, bear witness about me that the Father has set me apart’.”

Were the works not of reconciliation, and of giving example of reconciliation, and the products and evidence of reconciliation? Jesus’ works were not the healings and miracles themselves, contrary to popular belief, but rather they were the works of a son dedicating himself to his Father. And it was the Father who vindicated him by gifting him with these evidences or signs.

(37) “ ‘And the Father bidding me has Himself borne witness of me. Never have you either heard His voice or seen His form. And His word you do not have remaining in you, since whom He set apart you do not believe.

(39) You search the Scriptures, because you think to be having life everlasting in them; and those very Scriptures bear witness about me; and you are not willing to come to me in order to have life. I am not getting esteem from men, rather I know you, that you do not have the love of God in yourselves. I have come in the name of my Father (about, purpose, authority) and you do not accept me. Should another come in his own name (about, having sent himself), him you will accept.”

This is very important. Here, Jesus is predicting that everything that he showed about reconciliation will be high-jacked down the line, and be misrepresented by a substitute teaching. Jesus taught a gospel of reconciliation, and no sooner had he left, that another gospel was introduced, a gospel of substitution, of dying on the cross for others, and such. I have yet to hear Jesus utter one word about dying in substitution for others while he was yet walking with his disciples.

(44) “ ‘How can you believe, you who seek approval from one another, and not approval from the only God? Do not think that I will accuse you before the Father; there is one accusing you already, Moses, in whom you have hoped. If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my sayings’?”

What Jesus was saying was: “All of which Moses was given to write had to do with me, not me in isolation, but me, son of man, the pattern of reconciliation with God. And if you could see me for who I really am, and what I am really doing, you would see that I am actually putting into practice the instructions outlined by God through Moses. You would recognize me and accept me and learn of me and of my experience in this very endeavor. You wouldn’t be rejecting and condemning me.”

Chapter 5 footnotes:

¹ Psalms 90(4) For a **thousand years** in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night.

²Peter 3(8) But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a **thousand years**, and a **thousand years** as one day.

Chapter 6

(1) “After these things Jesus crossed the sea of Galilee, of Tiberias. A large crowd was following him around because they saw the signs which he did on the sick. So Jesus went up into the mountain, and sat there with his disciples. Now the Jewish feast, the Passover, was near. Jesus, looking up and seeing that a large crowd was coming toward him, said toward Philip, ‘Where might we buy bread enough to feed this crowd?’ This however, he said testing him, for he already knew what he was about to do. Philip answered him, ‘Two hundred denarii is not enough to

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buy each one a morsel.' One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said, 'Here is a little boy who has five barley loaves and two small fishes; but what is that for so many?'

(10) Said Jesus, 'Have the men recline.' Now there was much grass in the place. The men, about five thousand in number, therefore reclined. Jesus then received the loaves, and giving thanks, distributed them to those reclining, and likewise the small fishes, as much as they wanted. When they were all filled, he said to his disciples, 'Gather the leftovers so that nothing go to waste.' They gathered therefore and filled twelve baskets with fragments of the five barley loaves left over from the meal.

(14) So when the men saw the signs he did, they were saying, 'This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world.' Jesus, knowing that they were about to come and seize him in order to make him king, withdrew again into the mountain alone."

They were so impressed at this because he gave them something they wanted. They were willing to make him king from their point of view. But he backed off. That is not what he was about.

(16) "When evening came, his disciples went down to the sea. Climbing aboard, they set out across the sea toward Capernaum. It was already dark and Jesus had not yet rejoined them. The sea was tossed by a strong wind. However after rowing about twenty-five or thirty stadia, they beheld Jesus walking upon the sea and approaching the boat. They were frightened, but he said to them, 'It is I, do not be afraid.' They were glad to take him aboard, and the boat safely came to their destination.

(22) The next day the crowd, left behind on the other side of the sea, saw that no little boat was left except one. And that Jesus had not boarded with his disciples but they left without him. Other boats came from Tiberias, near the place where they had eaten the bread, after the Lord had given thanks. Therefore when the crowd saw that Jesus was not there nor his disciples, they took the little boats and came to Capernaum seeking Jesus.

(25) Having found him across the sea they said to him, 'Rabbi, when did you get here?' Jesus answered them, 'Amen! Amen! I am saying to you, you seek me not because you saw signs but because you ate the bread and were satisfied. Do not work at the feeding the perishing but the feeding the abiding into everlasting life which the Son of Man will give you for the Father: Amen! (God confirms this).'

(28) They said therefore toward him, 'What should we be doing in order to work the works of God?' Jesus answered them, 'This is the work of God so that you may believe into whom He has set apart.' They said therefore to him, 'What sign then are you doing that we might see and believe you? What is your work? Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, as it is written, "Bread out of heaven he gave them to eat" '."

Again we can't help but see in this passage the clumsy conversation between Jesus and the worldly mentality with which he is relating. He is telling them something, and they hear something else. They are focused on the physical bread to eat and he is talking about something else. He is talking about the Father, and the Heavenly.

(32) "Jesus therefore said to them, 'Amen! Amen! I am saying to you, Moses did not give you the bread out of heaven, but my Father is giving you the real bread out of heaven. The bread of God is the one coming down out of heaven and giving

life to the world'."

This is not the person, but rather the bread, the real one. This is the one coming down out of heaven and it is the one giving life to the world. But they are hearing life as they know life: breathing air, physical existence. He is talking about life as the living relationship with God.

(34) "They said therefore toward him, 'Lord, always give us this bread.' Jesus said to them, 'I am the bread of life; the one coming toward me will never hunger, and the one believing into me will never thirst. I said to you that even though you have seen yet you do not believe. All which the Father gives me will be welcome, and the one coming to me I will certainly not reject since I have come down from heaven not to do my own will but the will of the one bidding me. This is the will of Him who is bidding me that all that He has given me I should lose none of it but I shall raise it up the last day'."

"...all that He has given me, all of this endowment." Is it strictly people that He gave to him? It is a conglomeration of all of these things: those He gave me. It must include the concept, the understanding, the relationship and all of the prescribed instructions. "I should lose none of it, but I will pass it on for the Last Day." What is this Last Day? It is not so much the end of time, rather, it is more likely the last step in a journey, to arrive at destination, likely the Seventh Day of Creation wherein God and Man rest, the ultimate objective in God's plan for Man: reconciliation with God rather than a chronological period of time.

(40) " 'This is the will of my Father that everyone beholding the son and believing into him may be having life everlasting, and I shall raise him myself the last day'."

Once he has accomplished this, what will he be raised to be? He'll be raised to be a son. But I cannot receive the light, the teachings of God unless I am willing to let Him teach me of things from His point of view rather than hold onto my point of view. It is needed that I forgo my point of view, my opinions. I need to die to my point of view. Jesus has elaborated so much on this.

(41) "The Jews therefore were murmuring about him since he said, 'I am the bread, the one coming down out of heaven.' They were saying, 'Is this not Jesus the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we have known? Now how can he be saying, 'I have come down out of heaven'?' Answered Jesus, 'Do not murmur with one another. No one is able to come to me unless the Father the one bidding me should draw him, and I shall raise him up in the last day. It is written in the prophets, "And all will be taught of God". Everyone having heard of the Father and having learned is coming to me. Not that anyone has seen the Father except he who is with God, this one has seen the Father. Amen! Amen! I am saying to you, the one believing has life everlasting'."

Jesus is referring to something that he said earlier to Nicodemus: unless a man is born of flesh and of spirit, one cannot see or enter the kingdom. And he seems to be saying here that it is a gift of God. "All will be taught of God." If I am not taught of God, why am I not taught of God? Do I have any option? Is the onus on me to be taught of God? I can't answer that. Maybe ultimately all will eventually hear, but not all have heard in this earthly lifetime. Yet the information has been made public for quite a long time, particularly to the Jewish people who have been the medium of communication between God and man. In the end, I still need to want to be taught of God, of the real, genuine God and of His way of thinking.

(48) " 'I am the bread of life';..."

How can he be the bread of life? He is the bread of life because the words of God which were handed down up until then from the prophets were the bread of God, and having received them and having allowed himself to absorb these words and be transformed by them, he now incorporates and personifies the word of God. The word has now been made flesh in him and he is able to pass this on to others, and to pass on his nature as a result. He has been transformed, maybe not

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completely at that moment, but still, he was a heavenly, spirit being and symbolically spirit bread.

(49) "...your fathers ate the manna in the wasteland and they died. This is the bread coming down out of heaven so that anyone eating of it should not die; I am the bread, the living, coming down out of heaven; should anyone eat of this (kind of) bread he will live forever. Moreover but the bread which I shall be giving, my body, is superior to the world's flesh-life'."

Now he is speaking in spirit terms. It is hard to hear when our mind is focused on the flesh.

(52) "The Jews were quarrelling with one another saying, 'How can this man give us his body to eat?' Jesus said to them, 'Amen! Amen! I am saying to you, if you do not absorb the substance of the son of man nor to be drinking his blood (as the blood circulates through a living body), you do not have life in yourselves'."

We do not obtain life by drinking blood with our mouth. Look at a body. My body depends on the proper circulation of blood throughout to nourish and sustain it. This is common knowledge. There are several references to blood in this regard in the Old Testament. It flows and cleanses the body as well. Another meaning to the term blood is in the expression "blood-line" as in parentage. Again, there is a reference in the prophets in regards to this as well: ¹ "...*The LORD shall count, when he writeth up the people, that this man was born there...*" He may be alluding to the spirit blood-line, I think.

(54) " 'The one chewing on my body and drinking my blood has life everlasting, and I will raise him up in the last day. My body is genuine food, and my blood is genuine drink. The one chewing on my body and drinking my blood remains in me and I in him. As the living Father set me apart and I live through Him, so too the one chewing on me will live through me. (He is talking of a spirit experience) This is the bread coming down out of heaven, not like what the fathers ate and died (biologically); the one chewing on this bread will live forever.' These things he said in synagogue, teaching in Capernaum.

(60) Therefore many of his disciples, having heard, said, 'This is a hard saying; who can bear to hear it?'

They are admitting their limitations, their humanness, their flesh identity and will not come to grasp what he is talking about: spirit.

(61) "Jesus knowing in himself that his disciples were murmuring about this, said to them, 'This confuses you? What if you should see the son of man ascending where he was at first?'

Where was the son of man at first? In the beginning, in the garden of Eden, the son of man was in God's mind. God had an ideal for man to fulfill, a process which man was invited to undergo. But man rejected that original invitation and his offspring have perpetuated the rejection. He is saying that the son of man (not just referring to himself personally) is to return to that place from which he strayed and was intended to fulfill from the beginning. He is saying that he is working at that very endeavor and not excluding anyone else from joining in the same. He is inviting anyone who wills to follow in this very process of ascending from the earthly domain to the heavenly domain, from mankind to godkind.

(63) " 'It is the spirit that makes alive, the flesh is of no benefit at all; the sayings which I have spoken to you are spirit and life'."

He is making the point and clarifying by saying that his words are not of material things, but are symbolic of spirit, intangible things.

(64) " 'But there are some of you who are not believing.' Jesus knew from the beginning which were the ones not believing and which was the one about to give-beside him."

We have traditionally translated this “give-beside (paradidomi)” to mean “betray” which is true in the broadest sense. But in our minds, what does betray look like? When he mentions “give-beside” he is actually talking about someone seeing something, and then distorting it by misrepresentation. Some did get to know Jesus and they saw who he was and he told them who he was, but they did not really hear. They would not see the real Jesus but rather see the picture in their mind of who they wanted him to be. Man does not want to see himself as God intends for him to see, nor does man see God for who He really is. They saw a Jesus as the savior of Israel, the earthly king who would liberate them, to empower them to remain themselves, independent individuals, to remain in their condition of alienation from God. Subordination is not acceptable.

(65) “He said, ‘This is why I said to you that no one intends to come to me unless it be given to him from the Father’.”

The word “intends” here is usually translated as “able”, and that is true. But it is not just able, it all resides in our mindset, in our natural inclination. It is foreign to our intention to conform to God’s wish for us, to come to Him on His terms.

(66) “For this reason many of his disciples went back to their former lives and no longer walked with him.”

It is outright unacceptable to change from our life-long mindset, our nature and our tradition.

(67) “Therefore, Jesus said to the twelve, ‘Do you not also want to leave?’ Simon Peter answered, ‘Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the sayings of everlasting life. We believe and we know that you are the holy one of God.’ Jesus answered them, ‘Did I not instruct all twelve of you? Yet one of you is a traducer.’ He was in fact speaking of one of the twelve, Judas of Simon Iscariot, for it is he who was about to give-beside Jesus.”

We will deal more in depth with this betrayal of Judas in a later segment. At this time I can explain here the discrepancy of a specific word, “instruct” instead of the traditional translation of “choose”, in the text: “Did I not instruct all twelve of you?” The meaning of that word is not really so much “to choose” but more in the sense of preparation through instruction as “to qualify” which brings about the result of separation and being set apart. God chose by drawing them to Jesus and Jesus continued the process by instructing them, yet one of them was a traducer (“diabolos” which means “one who misleads or misrepresents”). When we refuse to see something or someone for what they really are, we choose to see what we want to see. We bear witness of what we imagine we saw, what we preferred to see. That is how we often bear false witness (which is of course one of the ten commandments: ² “*You will not bear false witness*”). When referring to Judas, how would he betray Jesus? Was Jesus angry or hating Judas in all of this? Did Judas intend to hurt or betray Jesus? Judas was totally convinced that Jesus was the coming Messiah, the savior of Israel, the invincible leader who would “kick out the Romans” using “God’s super-power”. Judas saw him as an imaginary hero, a “superman”. He interpreted Jesus keeping his own mindset, therefore distorting him from who and what he really was. Instead, therefore, he sold him for the image that resided in his mind. In other words, Judas was not at all exceptional in that case.

Chapter 6 footnotes:

¹ Psalm 87(1) His foundation is in the holy mountains.

(2) The LORD loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob.

(3) Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God. Selah.

(4) I will make mention of Rahab and Babylon to them that know me: behold Philistia, and Tyre, with Ethiopia; this *man* was born there.

(5) And of Zion it shall be said, This and that man was born in her: and the highest himself shall establish her.

(6) The LORD shall count, when he writeth up the people, *that* this *man* was born there. Selah.

(7) As well the singers as the players on instruments *shall be there*: all my springs *are* in thee.

² Exodus 20(16) Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

Chapter 7

(1) “After this Jesus walked around in Galilee. He was staying out of Judea because the Jews were seeking to destroy him. But the Jewish feast, the pitching of Tents, drew near. Therefore his brothers said toward him, ‘Leave here and go into Judea, so that your disciples might behold the works which you are doing. No one acts in secret while seeking public recognition. If you are doing these things, show yourself to the world.’ Not even his brothers were believing into him. So Jesus said to them, ‘My appointed time is not yet arrived, but your appointed time is always at hand. The world has no reason to hate you, but it hates me, because I bear witness that its works are faulty. You go to the feast; I am not going yet, because my appointed time has not yet been fulfilled.’ Having said these things to them, he remained in Galilee.”

When Jesus said, “My appointed time had not yet arrived but your appointed time is always at hand,” he seems to be again demonstrating the two realms of conversation. The same event is taking place in two realms: the spirit realm and the flesh realm. They being in the flesh realm, whether they be his brothers, his disciples or his surroundings, have been expecting a messiah for years, and if he is that messiah from their point of view, they are always ready with anticipation for him. But Jesus backs off and says, “My appointed time is not yet arrived,” he is doing differently (a different work) than they are expecting. So he is not yet ready to face the situation they are considering, the confrontation with the world.

(10) “After his brothers had gone to the feast, he went also, not openly but in secret. The Jews were seeking him at the feast and were saying, ‘Where is he?’ There was much murmuring in the crowds. Indeed some were saying, ‘He is good’, but others were saying, ‘No, he is leading the people astray.’ Of course no one was speaking openly about him for fear of the Jews (Judeans).

(14) The feast was already half over when Jesus went up into the Temple and started teaching. Therefore the Jews were wondering, saying, ‘How does this one know scriptures without having studied?’ So Jesus answered them, ‘My teaching is not mine but of Him bidding me; if anyone wants to be doing God’s will, he will recognize the teaching, whether it is from God or from myself. The one speaking from himself is seeking his own glory; but the one seeking the glory of the one bidding him is legitimate, and impropriety is not in him. Did not Moses give you the Law? And none of you is doing the Law. So why are you seeking to destroy me?’ Answered the crowd, ‘You have a demon! Who is seeking to destroy you?’”

The Jews were apparently marveling at the fact that Jesus knew the Scriptures without having gone to Bible school, to Bible college. How is this possible that someone seems to know without having gone to one of their accredited schools? That was a bewildering thing for them. Again, even these days it is still like that. You are not recognized as knowing anything without having gone to an accredited Bible school.

Another thing to consider: what was Jesus teaching in the synagogues in his day?

(21) “Jesus answered, ‘One work I did and you are all baffled on account of this. Moses gave you the circumcision (not that it is from Moses but from the fathers), yet you circumcise a man on the Sabbath. A man receives circumcision on the Sabbath so as not to break the Law of Moses and you are angry at me because I made a man whole on the Sabbath? Do not judge according to appearance, but with fairness.’”

(25) Some of the Jerusalemites were saying, ‘Is this not the one they are seeking to destroy? And see! He is speaking openly and they are saying nothing

to him. Could the rulers know that this truly is the Anointed? Indeed we know where he is from; but when the Anointed comes, no one is to know where he is from.' Teaching in the Temple, Jesus cried out, 'You know me? You know where I am from? Yet I am not come from myself, but the One bidding me is real, whom you have not known. I do know Him, because I am with Him and he sets me apart.' They were seeking therefore to get hold of him, but no one laid a hand on him, because his hour had not yet arrived. Many in the crowd believed into him, and were saying, 'When the Anointed comes, will he do more signs than this one does?'

(32) The Pharisees heard the crowd murmuring these things about him. The chief priests and the Pharisees delegated subordinates with orders to seize him. Jesus said therefore, I am yet a little while with you, and I am going with objective (headed) toward the One bidding me. You will seek me and you will not find me, and where I am you are not intending to be coming.' The Jews were asking themselves, 'Where is this man about to be going that we will not find him? Will he be going into the dispersion of the Greeks and teaching them? What is he saying, "You will seek me and not find me" and "Where I am you are not intending to be coming"?'

Jesus is making a commentary on the whole experience he is undergoing. His whole purpose as he sees it himself is to go to the Father in full reconciliation. And that is why he is saying, "I am going with objective (headed, not just going) toward the One bidding me. You will seek me and you will not find me. Where I am you are not intending to be coming. You will be seeking me in places in which I am not because you are not expecting to be going where I am going. You have no intention of going to the place where I am going. So how can you find me unless you go to where I am going? The only way to find me is to know where I am going and ultimately to go yourselves to where I am going. Then you would find me." But man doesn't intend to go there. The personal price is just too high.

(37) "Now on the last day of the feast, Jesus stood and he cried out, 'Should anyone thirst, let him come to me and let him drink. The one believing into me, just as the Scripture says, ¹ "Out of his inmost parts will gush living water".' He said this about the spirit they did not concern themselves to be receiving."

Here once again, John is writing about the double world, the two levels of existence, the spirit and the flesh, and those surrounding Jesus were not concerning themselves to be receiving spirit. They didn't have an inkling of what that meant.

(39) "...The believing into him was not yet spirit since Jesus was not yet fulfilled. Therefore some out of the crowd, having heard these words, were saying, 'This truly is the Prophet'; others were saying, 'This is the Anointed'; but some were saying, 'Surely, the Anointed is not coming out of Galilee? Has not the Scripture said that the Anointed is coming from the seed of David, and from Bethlehem, the village where David was?' The crowd was divided on account of him. Some of them even wanted to take hold of him, but no one laid a hand on him."

See again he says in verse 42, "Has not the Scripture said that the Anointed is coming from the seed of David, and from Bethlehem...?" Their mind is still only on the physical, the earthly. They don't imagine that the Anointed is to come out of God, divinity. It is a different world.

(45) "The subordinates returned to the chief priests and Pharisees who said to them, 'Why did you not bring him?' Answered the subordinates, 'Never a man spoke thus.' The Pharisees said to them, 'Have you also been led astray? Not one of the rulers nor of the Pharisees believed into him. But this crowd, ignorant of the Law, is accursed.' One of them, Nicodemus, the one having come to him previously, said toward them, 'Does our law judge a man without first giving him a hearing to explain what he is doing?' They answered, 'Are you also out of Galilee? Search and see that no prophet is raised up out of Galilee'."

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And in saying this, the Pharisees, the leaders identified with the flesh. They should have been looking for an Anointed to be coming from God, from divinity. But they were only concerned about the physical criteria that they expected. For what kind of an anointed were they looking? This special person they were anticipating, what was in their mind? What was he going to do? By now, it seems they were expecting an heir to King David in the flesh, a “king” in the flesh to rule wisely over the Jewish nation, to take power, and to conquer the world, and not so much he have the power, but rather that he give them the power to rule. The existing rulers were only looking for a catalyst which would make it possible for them to take power for themselves. They really did not have it in their mind to be subordinates, but rather rulers.

Chapter 7 verse 53 through to chapter 8 verse 11 is not present in some manuscripts. Nevertheless it is included here.

(53) “And they went each one into his house.”

Chapter 7 footnotes:

¹ I am not aware of a verse in the standard Old Testament which exactly resembles the one quoted here by Jesus. He may have quoted a scripture no longer extant. There are a number of scriptures that make reference to waters and wells, for example:

Proverbs 18(4) The words of a man’s mouth *are as* deep waters, *and* the wellspring of wisdom *as* a flowing brook.

Jeremiah 2(13) For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.

Chapter 8

(1) “Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. At daybreak, again he came into the Temple, and all the people were coming toward him. Having sat down, he was teaching them. Then the scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman caught in adultery. They stood her in the centre, saying to him, ‘Teacher, this woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery. In the Law, Moses instructed us to stone such women. What therefore are you saying?’ They were saying this to test him so as to have pretext to accuse him. Jesus having bent down was writing with his finger on the ground. But when they persisted in questioning him, he looked up and said, ‘Let the one of you that is sinless be first to throw a stone at her.’ Having bent down again he continued writing. The ones having heard began leaving one by one starting with the older ones, and he was left alone with the woman. Looking up, Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, where are they? No one condemned you?’ She said, ‘No one, lord.’ So Jesus said, ‘Neither am I condemning you; go, and sin no more.’

(12) Jesus again spoke to them, ‘I am the light of the world. The one following me should never be walking about in darkness, but he will be having the life light’.”

This brings us back to the first chapter where “...the light came into the world...” and “...the darkness did not grasp it...” and on the first day of creation, God created light, and ¹ “*separated the light from the darkness*”. So Jesus is identifying with the light. First of all he has received this light and it has transformed him so he is now the embodiment, the continuation of that light. You could say that he is a repeater of that light just like a repeater in a fiber optic telecommunication network. Or we could even consider him a window through which the light passes without obstruction.

(13) “The Pharisees said to him, ‘You bear witness about yourself; your witness is not valid.’ Jesus answered, ‘Even if I bear witness about myself, my testimony is valid that I know from where I come and to where I am headed (going with objective). But you do not know where I am coming from or where I am headed (going with objective). You are evaluating according to the flesh. I am not evaluating anything’.”

This needs commenting. Jesus knew from where he was coming and to where he was headed. The son of man is invited to transcend the flesh to the spirit. So Jesus knew that he came from man, but he also knew where he was going. “I am not staying here. I’m going to the Father, to divinity. That is my objective. You evaluate according to the flesh (your own preconceptions) and you don’t see the spirit and it is not an objective for you. So everything you see you evaluate according to your flesh standards. I’m not evaluating anything.” Well, that sends us right back to the garden of Eden where the original sin was the eating of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Ultimately that is what evaluating is. He says, “I don’t evaluate anything.” In other words, “I don’t eat from that tree (pick and choose what words of God to receive and to not receive).

(16) “ ‘Yet, if ever I do evaluate, my evaluation is valid since I am not (doing it) alone, but it is with my Father bidding me’.”

In other words, “I don’t evaluate according to my standards, but according to my Father’s, and that is what validates my evaluation, and ultimately rendering me innocent before Him.” The tree of the knowledge of good and evil is a real thing. The concept of right and wrong is real but only in perspective of the Father. He decides what is “good” and what is “evil” at all times. It is not for the subordinate to determine or to evaluate the fruit. That is why he specifies that his evaluations were not his, or rather self-GENERATED. They were those of his Father and he committed himself to accept and agree with THOSE OF HIS FATHER.

(17) “ ‘Also, it is written in your own law, “The witness of two men is valid”. I bear witness of myself and the Father bidding me also bears witness of me.’ So they were saying to him, ‘Where is your father?’ Jesus answered, ‘You neither know me nor my Father. If you knew me, you would also know my Father.’ These sayings he spoke in the treasury while teaching in the temple. Still no one took hold of him, because his hour had not yet come.”

Interesting, when he says, “You neither know me nor my Father. If you knew me you would also know my Father.” That is the summary of the intimate father/son relationship which Jesus was promoting. The devoted, genuine son reproduces the father completely, not just in flesh, but also in SPIRIT just as in the third chapter. Later on, we will discuss the image of the vine where the branch, while attached to the parent branch, is a perfect continuation or extension of the same vine, not of a different one. That is how one can say, “If you know me, you know my father.” He is a replication of the Father, not as a severed copy or imitation, but an attached living continuation of the Father. This is very important. He was a totally devoted, sold-out son who aspired to be continually part of the Father, not a separate being APART.

(21) “He said therefore again to them, ‘I am headed (going with objective) and you will seek me, and you will die in your erring. Where I am going, you are not intending to be coming’.”

This makes me stop and think. What does this foretell about the christian era, the whole christian movement which followed Jesus’ death? Does Christianity teach and demonstrate the continuation and replication of Jesus in like kind? Or has it taught and led in error? This is a very important question.

(22) “The Jews were saying therefore, ‘Will he kill himself since he is saying, “Where I am going with intent you are not intending to be coming”?’ He said to them, ‘You are of below, but I am of above; you are of this world, but I am not of this world. That is why I said to you that you will die in your errings; for unless you believe that

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I am who I am, you will die in your errings’.”

Now, at this point, he was saying that unless they believed that he was who he was (WITHOUT CHANGING OR MODIFYING HIM), that they would die in their errings (erroneous ideas resulting in erroneous behavior). Did Christianity accept Jesus Christ for who he was, or did it redefine who he was and what he did into something or someone that he really was not? If that took place, he was warning the people of his day, since they were not interested in who he was, that they were in danger of dying IN THEIR ERRINGS.

(25) “They were saying therefore to him, ‘Who are you?’ Jesus answered, What I am telling you is fundamental. What I have is far beyond your sayings and your criteria; rather the One bidding me is real, and it is what I heard from Him that I am speaking into the world.’ They knew not that he was telling them about the Father. Jesus added therefore, ‘Whenever you should give proper recognition to the “Son of Man”, then you will know that I am who I am, and that I do nothing of myself. As the Father taught me, so I speak. The One bidding me is with me. He did not leave me alone since I am always doing what pleases Him.’ He having said these things, many believed into him.”

Jesus continues to highlight the difference between the earthly seeker, and the heavenly seeker.

(31) “Jesus tested the Jews who were then believing him (or those who were claiming to believe him), ‘If ever you should remain in my word, you are my disciples indeed, and you will know the real, and the real will free you’.”

Here it is traditionally translated as “the truth”. But the intent of the message is that if it is true, it is in fact real (God-generated) versus what is imaginary (man-generated).

(33) They answered toward him, ‘We are seed of Abraham and never have been slaves to anyone; how are you saying, “You will be made free”?’ Jesus answered, ‘Amen! Amen! I am saying to you, everyone practising the error is slave of the error. The slave does not remain in the house forever but the son does remain forever’.”

This merits a note. “The slave does not remain in the house forever but the son does remain forever.” In the book of Genesis when the comment is made that ² “*man will leave his father and mother and cleave to his woman*”, it is popular teaching that this be a commandment. If this were in fact a commandment, it would come in total contradiction to the one that Jesus proclaimed. How then can a man leave his father and mother and remain in the house forever? Hmm?!!!! We need to transcend the flesh, the material, and see the spirit. From the very beginning, the son was not intended to leave the father, and mother by extension, particularly the father. In addition, in Exodus, God commands Israel through Moses, ³ “*Honour your father and mother...*” Did he say to honor until one is old enough to leave? Did he say to honor until he married a woman? Did he give any proviso whatsoever to stop honoring his father (and mother by extension)?

(36) “ ‘If therefore the son should free you, you will be free indeed. I know that you are seed of Abraham; but you seek to destroy me because my word does not find room in you. What I have seen in my Father’s presence I am speaking; and you on the other hand, what you heard about the Father, you are doing’.”

There is a difference between what he heard from the Father in the Father’s presence compared to on the other hand what has been heard about the Father because the concepts about the Father were man-made and erroneous.

(39) “In reply they said to him, ‘Our father is Abraham.’ Jesus said to them, ‘If you are children of Abraham, then do the works of Abraham. But now you are seeking to destroy me, a man who told you the truth which I heard in God’s presence. Abraham did not do this. You are doing the works of your father.’ They said

to him, 'We are not bastards; we have one father, God.'

(42) Jesus then said, 'If God were your father, you would love me, for I originate from God for I am come not from myself but rather it is He who sets me apart. Why are you not understanding my speech? Because you do not intend to be hearing my word. You are from your father, the traducer, and the desires of your father you want to be doing. He was originally a murderer, and he did not stand in honesty, since honesty is not in him. Whenever he tells the lie, he speaks from himself, since he is a liar and his own father. Though I am telling the truth, you are not believing me. Which of you confutes me about error? If I am telling the truth, why do you not believe me? The one who is from God, hears the sayings of God; this is why you do not hear, because you are not from God'."

Again, the contrast between the earthly and the heavenly... From the beginning, man has grasped the affinity to the flesh. He has identified with the creation. He has chosen not to identify with the Creator who is spirit. He has kept God at a distance. Jesus is highlighting this. In the end, it is the only thing that is meaningful in man's existence according to Jesus, this transformation out of the flesh into the spirit.

(48) "The Jews then said to him, 'Do we not say rightly that you are a Samaritan and have a demon?' Answered Jesus, 'I do not have a demon. Indeed I honour my Father, and you dishonour me'."

In spite of the explanations that Jesus gives, and the confidence from which he speaks, and the backing from God, they are entrenched in their ways. Their minds are closed and refuse to listen. They will not even consider the possibility that they are wrong and that Jesus is genuine and true.

(50) " 'I do not seek my esteem; He is the One seeking and evaluating it. Amen! Amen! I am saying to you, anyone putting my word into practice should never focus on death.' The Jews said to him, 'Now we know that you have a demon. Abraham died and the prophets died, yet you are saying, "Anyone putting into practice my word should never taste of death"; are you greater than our father Abraham who died? The prophets also died. Whom are you making yourself to be?' Answered Jesus, 'If I esteem myself, my esteem is nothing. It is my Father who esteems me, He whom you call your God. You have not known Him, but I have known Him. If I should say that I have not known Him, I should be a liar like you; but I have known Him and I am putting into practice His word. Abraham your father was thrilled at the prospect of seeing my day. He is seeing it and thrilled.' Said therefore the Jews toward him, 'You are not yet fifty years old, and you have seen Abraham?' Said to them Jesus, 'Amen! Amen! I am saying to you, from before Abraham to be generating, I myself am.' They therefore picked up stones to throw at him; but Jesus hid and left the temple."

Now what does this statement say: "Amen! Amen! I am saying to you, from before Abraham to be generating, I myself am."? If we look back to the time of ⁴ Abraham and his relationship with God, God promised Abraham offspring. And if we look at it all from the flesh point of view, it is almost a failed promise. It is fulfilled, but there is nothing great in it except for numbers. On the other hand, when God is promising offspring to Abraham, He is speaking to Abraham as to a prophet. So God gave Abraham a glimpse (a preview) of the type of offspring to which He was referring and would use Abraham to ultimately generate. Jesus was the beginning of the fulfillment of this promise. This is why Jesus says, "Abraham was thrilled at the prospect of seeing my day." And when he says, "From before Abraham to be generating, I myself am," in summary, he is saying, "I am the fulfillment of that promise to Abraham, the spirit descendant of God through Abraham, Abraham being an instrument through which God's spirit son is to be born.

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Chapter 8 footnotes:

¹ Genesis 1(3) And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.

(4) And God saw the light, that *it was* good: and God divided the light from the darkness.

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

² Genesis 2(24) Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.

³ Exodus 20(12) Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.

⁴ Genesis 11(29) to Genesis 18(33) and Genesis 20(1) to Genesis 25(8).

Chapter 9

(1) "Walking along, Jesus encountered a man blind from birth. His disciples enquired of him, 'Rabbi, who erred (sinned), this man or his parents that he should be born blind?' Jesus answered, 'It was neither for his errings (sins) nor for those of his parents, but so that the works of God might be manifested in him. It is required to be working the works of the One bidding me while it is day. Night is coming when no one intends to be working. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world'."

A note here. It was popular belief that sin was a list of dos and don'ts, and a system of accounting: three sins equal three punishments, so on and so forth. The consequences were always directly related to a specific sin. In regards to this man who was born blind, they assumed that this condition was the result of a specific sin. But they asked, "What was the specific sin, and whose was it, his own, or of his parents?" while missing the whole point. Jesus knew that it wasn't a list of things, but rather a condition, a frame of mind of independence. Sin was a direction, hence the term erring, meaning "going in the wrong direction". Sin is simply doing different than instructed by God, what He intended. Whatever denies the expressed essence or intent of God is sin.

(6) "Having said these things, he spat on the ground and made mud out of the spittle. He put it on the blind man's eyes, and said to him, 'Go with purpose: wash yourself in the pool of Siloam (which means "set apart"),' He went off therefore, washed himself, and came back seeing."

Maybe it is not too important at this point, but the fact that he sent him to the pool of Siloam which means "set apart or sent", seems to be a subtle hint. He didn't just touch his eyes so that he could see. He had him do something that wasn't of his own choosing to do. He sent him to that particular pool in order to fulfill the healing. So he was given an instruction to follow and the consequence would be the healing and seeing. Interesting symbolism...

(8) "His neighbours and those who knew him to be a beggar were saying, 'Is this not the one who sat and begged?' Some were saying, 'It is;' others were saying, 'No, he just looks like him.' He himself said, 'I am he.' So they said to him, 'How then were your eyes opened?' He replied, 'The man called Jesus made mud, smeared it over my eyes and said to me, "Go into Siloam and wash yourself." So I went, I washed myself, and received my sight.' They said to him, 'Where is he?' He replied, 'I do not know.'

(13) They brought the once blind man to the Pharisees. Again it was a Sabbath day in which Jesus made the mud and opened the man's eyes. Once again therefore the Pharisees were questioning him as to how he received his sight.

He said to them, 'He put mud on my eyes, and I washed myself, and now I see.' Some of the Pharisees were saying therefore, 'This is not a man of God, because he does not keep the Sabbath.' But others were saying, 'How can a man, a sinner, be doing such signs?' So they were divided on his account. They said therefore to the blind one again, 'What do you say about him, since he opened your eyes?' He replied, 'He is a prophet.'

(18) The Jews called into question that he had ever been blind, until they called for the man's parents and interrogated them. 'Is this your son? Do you say that he was born blind? How is it that he now sees?' His parents answered therefore, 'Yes, this is our son and yes, he was born blind. But how he now sees we do not know, and who opened his eyes we do not know. Ask him. He is of age, let him speak for himself.' his parents said these things because they feared the Jews. Already the Jews had agreed that anyone declaring Jesus as anointed should be expelled from the synagogue. That is why his parents said, 'He is of age, ask him.'

(24) They summoned once again the man who was blind and said to him, 'Give the recognition to God. We know that this man is a sinner.' So he answered, 'I do not know if he is a sinner. One thing I know: I was blind and now I see.' They said therefore to him, 'What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?' He answered, 'I already told you. Did you not hear? Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?' They reviled him and said, 'You are that man's disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. We know that God spoke to Moses, but we do not know where this one is coming from.' The man answered, 'What a marvellous thing! You do not know where he is coming from, yet he opened my eyes. We all know that God does not hear sinners. However, he does hear the God-fearing, and those who do His will. Throughout the age no one has ever heard of anyone opening the eyes of one born blind. If he were not a man of God, he would not be able to do anything.' So they said to him, 'You were altogether born in sins, and you are teaching us?' And they threw him out."

See again, because he was born blind, it was automatically assumed and concluded that it was a result of sin. In their eyes he was born altogether in sin because he was born blind. But, if we think of it, who is blind here?

(35) Jesus heard that they had thrown the man out, and having found him, he said, 'Do you believe in the son of man?' So he asked, 'And who is he, sir, that I should believe in him?' Jesus said to him, 'You have indeed seen him, and the one speaking with you is he.' Then he said, 'Lord, I believe.' And he submitted to him. Jesus said, 'I came into this world in order to set the record straight, so that the ones not seeing may see, and the ones seeing may be made blind'."

This is a very important statement that is generally overlooked and misunderstood. "I came into this world in order to set the record straight." The Jewish nation hadn't got it. They had been sent, over the years, prophets giving them God's instructions and teachings, their source of "spirit sight", but they twisted it all sideways and refused to receive it as it was offered because they were bent on independence, their own interpretation. So he said, "I came into this world to set the record straight so that the ones not seeing (spirit sight) may see, and the ones seeing (claiming spirit sight) may be made blind (made to realize their genuine spirit sightlessness)." As Jesus said to Nicodemus, we are in fact ALL born into the world WITHOUT SPIRIT SIGHT. We need to be born from above. We need to have our spirit sight given to us FROM ABOVE. We need to subordinate, and therefore, like a blind man, we need to have a guide who sees for us and defines things for us.

(40) "Those of the Pharisees who were with him heard these things, and said to him, 'Are we also blind?' Jesus replied, 'If you were blind, you would have no sin; but now you say, "We are seeing", therefore your sin remains'."

The Pharisees are offended at being told that they are spiritually blind.

Chapter 10

(1) “ ‘Amen! Amen! I am saying to you, the one not entering through the door into the sheepfold but climbing in some other way, that one is a thief and a plunderer. But the one entering through the door is shepherd of the sheep. The doorkeeper opens to him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls for his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought forth all his own, he goes ahead of them. His sheep follow him, because they recognize his voice. They will certainly not follow a stranger, but rather they will flee from him because they do not recognize the voice of strangers.’ Jesus spoke in a metaphor, but they did not know what he was talking about. Jesus continued, ‘Amen! Amen! I am saying to you, I am the door for the sheep. All who come placing themselves ahead of me are thieves and plunderers. But the sheep do not hear them. I am the door. Whoever should enter through me will be delivered, and he will go in and out and will find pasturage. The thief is not coming except that he should be stealing and should be sacrificing, and should be destroying. On the other hand I came so that they may be having life, and pre-eminently. I am the genuine shepherd; the authentic shepherd places his soul (identity) over the sheep. The hireling who is not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and abandons the sheep. He flees, and the wolf snatches and scatters them. That is because he is a hireling and the sheep do not matter to him. I am the genuine shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father, and I place my soul over the sheep’.”

I see Jesus use this metaphor of the shepherd in a way to elaborate on the intended relationship between God and man, His creation, the relationship that of father and son. The son of the shepherd looks after the sheep even though they are not personally his in independence. He treats them as though they were his because he shares in his father's ownership. The sheep are not his in isolation but they are his together with his father. The loving son shares his father's property, not separate from his father, but with his father. So the son of the shepherd cares for the sheep on behalf and in extension of his father, entrusted by his father. He looks after them carefully because he doesn't want to lose anything that belongs to his father, and to himself by extension.

Now he says here that there is only one way to enter the sheepfold. This is an elaboration on Jesus telling us that there is only one way to reconciling with God the Father. There is no substitution for that. There is no other way. Others have tried. There are some who try to enter through different doors, but there is only one door. And he says, “I am the door,” I as in the son of man defined by God. That is the only door that has been presented and made available to us, the one defined by God through His prophets. And seeing that Jesus has received and identified with that, then he is that door, or he represents that door. What he is is that door, the son of man becoming the son of God. (again, this elaboration about transformation from son of man to son of God)

And then he goes on to say, “All who come placing themselves ahead of me are thieves and plunderers,” referring to phony and counterfeit SHEPHERDS. They are not genuinely appointed by the sheep owner. A hireling is at least hired by an employer. But Jesus is suggesting an even greater violence taking place: the violence of CLAIMING shepherd status NEVER HAVING BEEN HIRED BY THE OWNER. They are in fact SELF-APPOINTED, USURPERS for personal gain. They were more like wolves, predators.

He says here, “I am the genuine shepherd. The authentic shepherd places his soul over the sheep.” That is a two-fold statement. He places his identity, his life, the whoever he is, over his sheep in their protection. In fact he goes ahead of the sheep in the “first line of fire”, blazing the trail for those to follow. He doesn't send them out to get hurt first, he doesn't lead like modern military leaders do. The genuine shepherd goes before them to show the way, to guide them safely to where

they are going. And when he says that he “places his soul”... Again, like other things, the word “soul” has been misunderstood and misdefined in religious circles. “Soul” is the identity, everything that makes up a person in character. And when he refers to his identity, he is referring to his new identity, the heavenly identity as opposed to the old earthly identity. So he is saying that he places his heavenly identity on the line before them for them to have somewhere to go, the way to the Father.

He says, “I am the genuine shepherd. I know my own and my own know me.” This is a different way of saying what he says somewhere else, “Those taught of God come to me.” “Those who have an affinity, or those who desire to know God, will know who I am, and will recognize me.”

(16) “ ‘I have other sheep which are not of this fold. It is imperative for me to be leading them as well’.”

The meaning here is that the Jewish nation was the fold primarily addressed. But he is indicating that there were other sheep not of this fold. The invitation to reconciliation was not limited to the Jewish nation, to the Hebrew people, but it is to all of Mankind, to the collectivity of man. The Jewish nation was chosen and set apart to isolate the process, to be the means by which God revealed this process of reconciliation. It was an unfinished work at the time.

(16B) “ ‘They will hear my voice, and they will be made one flock, one shepherd. This is why the Father loves me because I forsake my identity that again I may receive it’.”

He forsakes his earthly identity that again he may receive his new, heavenly identity.

(18) “ ‘No one takes it from me, rather I am forsaking it voluntarily. I have authority to forsake it, and I have authority to again receive it. I receive this instruction from my Father.’

(19) Again the Jews were divided because of these words. Many of them were saying, ‘He has a demon and is mad; why are you listening to him?’ Others were saying, ‘These sayings are not of a demonized man. Is a demon able to open the eyes of the blind?’

(22) Came the time for the feast of Dedication in Jerusalem. It was winter. Jesus was walking about in the Temple in the colonnade of Solomon. The Jews surrounded him and said, ‘How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Anointed, tell us plainly’.”

Again, at this point they are asking him the question, “Are you the one we’ve been waiting for? Tell us plainly. All of this stuff you’re doing... All of this guessing around... We don’t recognize you because you don’t fit the expectations that we have of the Anointed One. So just tell us. What is it that you’re doing?”

(25) “Jesus answered them, ‘I told you and you do not believe. The works which I am doing in the name of my Father bear witness of me. But you do not believe because you are not of my sheep. My sheep hearken to my voice and I acknowledge them. They follow me, and I give them life everlasting. They will never be destroyed, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father who has given them to me is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand. I and the Father are one’.”

He is alluding to oneness again, here. Once the son has been born to the Father, and the relationship has been reconciled and established, oneness takes place. The son is now an extension of the Father, of the same kind, the same nature which is divine nature. This is an invitation to all mankind not just to one individual. We all as men have the potential to be sons of God as Jesus was. John goes to great lengths to elaborate on this. We will continue to see this as we progress through this gospel of John, in his letters, and even in the gospel of Matthew on which

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we have been touching a little bit and will examine more thoroughly later.

(31) “Again the Jews picked up stones intending to stone him.”

It offends them that he refers to God as his father. They can not grasp this concept.

(32) “Jesus reacted by saying, ‘I showed you many authentic works proceeding from the Father; for which one do you stone me?’ The Jews answered him, ‘It is not over a fine work that we are stoning you, but rather for misrepresentation, and because you, being a man, are making yourself a god.’ Jesus answered them, ‘Is it not written in your law, ¹“*I said you are gods*”? If he called gods those to whom the word of God was addressed (and the scripture is not to be undone), are you saying to the one the Father sanctifies and sets apart in the world, “You are misrepresenting” because I said “I am a son of God”? If I am not doing the works of my Father, do not believe me; but if I am so doing, even if you do not believe me, believe the works, that you should know and recognize that the Father is in me and I am in the Father.’ They sought therefore again to get hold of him; but he safely escaped their grasp.

(40) So he went off again across the Jordan to the place where John was baptising at first, and stayed there. Many came to him and said, ‘John indeed did no sign, but all that John says about this man is true.’ And many believed into him there.”

It is so interesting that as he speaks to them about his nature, his relationship with the Father, and reconciliation, they are totally offended because they cannot grasp the message that God has been giving them for thousands of years already through the prophets. It is inconceivable to them that man can rise, or rather, be raised to a higher level of existence in an intimate relationship with God as a father, not as a distant theoretical being which we can keep at bay with religious processes and rituals. They didn’t know a God except one over which they would debate and fight. And yet, as referenced by Jesus, “*I said ye are gods*”, in Psalm 82, we are clearly told what God’s intent was for Israel and for whoever wants to be part of God’s family. The Jews just did not get, or rather, receive the message, the ones to whom the message of God was given.

Chapter 10 footnotes:

¹ “Elohim” (gods) as in “Yehovah Elohim” (God’s name and family name: plural form of “Eloah” (God)).

Psalm 82(1) Elohim stands in the family of God (El); He judges in the midst of the gods (Elohim).

(2) How long will You judge unjustly, and uplift the faces of the wicked? Selah.

(3) Vindicate the poor and the fatherless: cleanse the afflicted and needy.

(4) Deliver the poor and needy from the wicked one’s snatch.

(5) They know not, neither do they understand; they walk in darkness: all the foundations of the earth are upset.

(6) I have said, Ye *are* gods (Elohim); and all of you *are* children of the most High.

(7) But ye shall die as man, and like one of the princes you shall fall.

(8) Arise, God (Elohim), judge the earth: for thou shalt inherit all the foreign nations.

Chapter 11

(1) “Now there was a certain man, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. In fact, Mary, the sister of Lazarus, was the one who had anointed the Lord with perfumed oil and had wiped his feet with her hair. The sisters sent word to Jesus, saying, ‘Lord, the one for whom you have affection is sick.’ But upon hearing, Jesus said, ‘This sickness is not fatal, but rather for God’s vindication. It is so that thereby might be vindicated the son of God.’

(5) Now Jesus loved Martha, her sister and Lazarus. Therefore, when he heard that Lazarus was sick, even then he stayed two days where he was. Afterwards he said to the disciples, 'Let us return to Judea.' The disciples said to him, 'Rabbi, the Judeans just now were seeking to stone you, and you are going back there?' Jesus answered, 'Are there not twelve hours of daylight? If anyone walks in daylight, he does not stumble because he sees by the light of this world. Now if anyone walks in the night, he stumbles, because he has no light.'

(11) He said these things, and went on to say, 'Our friend Lazarus has lain down to rest, but I am going to rouse him out of sleep.' The disciples therefore commented, 'Lord, if he is sleeping, he should recover.' But Jesus was referring to his death. They thought that he was talking about the rest of sleep. So Jesus said to them plainly, 'Lazarus died, and I am glad for you. You might believe, since I was not there. Now let us go to him.' Said therefore Thomas, the 'Twin', to his fellow disciples, 'Let us also go that we might die with him'."

The disciples were expecting some flack in Judea because Jesus was a target of persecution. They knew that he might be arrested and they would be in trouble.

(17) "When Jesus arrived, Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. Now Bethany was near Jerusalem by about fifteen stadia, and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them over their brother. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went to meet him; but Mary sat in the house. Martha said therefore toward Jesus, 'Lord, if you had been here, would my brother have died? Is it not true that God gives you whatever you ask?' Jesus said to her, 'Your brother will rise.' Martha replied, 'It is true that he will rise in the resurrection on the last day.' Said to her Jesus, 'I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes into me, though he should die, he will live; and everyone living and believing into me will never die. Do you believe this?' She said, 'Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Anointed, the son of God, the one having come into the world.' And having said this, she went off and secretly called for Mary, her sister, 'The teacher is nearby and is calling for you.' When she heard, Mary rose up quickly and went to meet him, for Jesus had not yet come into the village, but was still where Martha had met him. The Jews were with her in the house consoling her. They saw Mary get up quickly and leave. They followed her, thinking that she was going to the tomb to weep there. When Mary reached Jesus and saw him, she fell at his feet, saying, 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.' Therefore Jesus, seeing everybody weeping, Mary and the Jews with her, was indignant and upset. He said, 'Where have you put him?' They answered, 'Lord, come and see.' Jesus shed tears. Therefore the Jews were saying, 'See how he had affection for him.' But some said, 'Could not this man, who opened the eyes of the blind, keep this one from dying?'"

Again, here is John elaborating on the two worlds, the two realms of existence. Jesus sees the situation where Lazarus died in the flesh, and he wasn't troubled by it. As a matter of fact he saw a grand opportunity to demonstrate the power of God and to be vindicated by God, and to vindicate what he had been living, the father/son reconciliation and all that it entails. There was a tremendous opportunity for him. So he is joyful and glad. He said, "Lazarus died, and I am glad for you..." He sees what is possible here. There is the opportunity to show the real God and what He is. He is life. He said, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes into me, though he should die, he will live; and everyone living and believing into me will never die." Again, there is the contrast between dying in the flesh and dying in the spirit. Lazarus didn't die except in the flesh. His body expired like all flesh. But he was born in the flesh and dead in the spirit, or more specifically "unliving", like we are. Since Adam, we are born dead (unliving) in the spirit. And here was the opportunity to demonstrate in a visible, tangible manner the change from the condition of death to the condition of life.

Confronting The Cloudiness

Now he was indignant and upset because they were not getting it. He was offering them an opportunity and they were stuck where they were. Mary, Martha, and the others, they were moaning, groaning, and grieving. So there were two mindsets here. For Jesus there was the opportunity to see God in action and what He is about, and they were focusing on death. He also likely foresaw not only his own personal death and rejection by the Jews, but also the rejection of the very message he was promoting and representing: “the age of darkness where no man can work,” as Jesus ¹ said earlier.

(38) “Therefore Jesus, still indignant, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay across its mouth. He said, ‘Remove the stone.’ Martha, the sister of the deceased, responded, ‘Lord, he smells already, for it has been four days.’ Jesus is saying to her, ‘Did I not tell you that if you should believe, you will see the vindication of God?’ They removed therefore the stone. So Jesus lifted his eyes upward and said, ‘Father, I am thankful that you hear me. Though I know that You always hear me, it is for the sake of this crowd that I speak, so that they might believe that You set me apart.’ These things having said, with a loud voice he cried out, ‘Lazarus, come on out!’ The one who had died came out. His hands and feet were bound with swathing bands, and his face was wrapped with cloth. Jesus said to them, ‘Unwrap him and set him free to let him go’.”

It is an illustration of the resurrection of life, to rise from dead and useless to a living relationship as a son with the Everlasting Father.

(45) “Consequently, many of the Jews who had accompanied Mary and had witnessed what Jesus had done, believed into him. But some went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus did. Therefore the chief priests and the Pharisees convened the Sanhedrin, and said, ‘What shall we do since this man performs so many signs? If we let him continue, all will believe into him, and the Romans will come and strip us of both our place and nation’.”

That was all they could see. They saw a threat to their authority or place within the Jewish society. They were the elite, the leaders. It didn’t sink in that Jesus was truly sent of God and was His representative. They didn’t know God. They spent their lives digging around in the Scriptures but they didn’t know anything because it was all from the human point of view, and all of the writings and scriptures, the communications from God, were twisted and made to conform to the human mindset.

(49) “One of them, Caiaphas, being chief priest of that year, said to them, ‘Don’t you see? Don’t you realize that it is to your advantage that one man should die for the people and the whole nation should be saved?’ {(51) But this he said, not from himself, rather as chief priest of that year. He prophesied that Jesus was about to be dying off over the nation, (52) and not over the nation only, but so that he might gather into one the children of God, the ones having been scattered.}”

This little bracketed portion of scripture genuinely appears to be an editorial insertion by someone other than John some time later. Why? Because the comment after the words of Caiaphas pertaining to the substitution death of Jesus goes completely against the rest of the message of the gospel of John and of Matthew. It appears to me to have been inserted in order to try to force it to conform with the substitution gospel. It is OUT OF CONTEXT and OUT OF CHARACTER. Jesus didn’t die INSTEAD OF OTHERS. Jesus died in order to show us the way HOW TO DIE (to self). Jesus gave up his mortal soul in exchange for his Father’s immortal soul. And Jesus provided us the way to do the very same thing. Jesus offered to pass on his “immortal soul” (God’s family identity) in order to deliver us from our independence and mortality.

(53) “They thenceforth took counsel to arrange his death. Jesus no longer walked openly among the Jews, but left and went to a city near the wilderness called Ephraim. There he stayed with the disciples.

(55) Now the Jewish Passover was near, and many went up from the country to Jerusalem to purify themselves for the Passover. Gathering together in the Temple, they watched for Jesus and speculated, 'What do you think? Will he even come to the Feast?' The chief priests and Pharisees had given instruction that anyone knowing the whereabouts of Jesus should report it, so that they might take him into custody."

Chapter 11 footnotes:

¹ John 9(4) (Direct translation from Greek:) "It is required to be working the works of the One bidding me while it is day. Night is coming when no one intends to be working. (5) As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world."

Chapter 12

(1) "Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, the hometown of Lazarus whom Jesus raised from the dead. They made a supper there in his honour. Martha was serving, and Lazarus was one of the guests at table. Mary took a pound of perfumed oil, genuine spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, wiping them with her hair. The house became filled with its scent. Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples, the one about to give-beside him, said, 'Why was this perfumed oil not sold for three hundred denarii and the money not given to the poor?' But he said this not because he cared for the poor, rather because he was a thief and, having the money box, he was handling the contributions. Jesus therefore said, 'Let her be. She has kept it for the day of my burial. The poor you have with you always, but me you do not have always.'

(9) The large crowd of the Jews learned that Jesus was there. They came, not only to see Jesus, but also to see Lazarus whom he had raised from the dead. Now the chief priests plotted to also kill Lazarus, since many Jews were being drawn and believing into Jesus because of him.

(12) The next day the large crowd which had come to the Feast heard that Jesus was coming into Jerusalem. They took palm branches and went out to meet him. They shouted, ¹ 'Hosanna! Blessed is the one coming in the name of the Lord, the king of Israel.' Having found a young ass, Jesus sat upon it, just as it is written, ² *'Fear not, daughter of Zion. Behold! Your king is coming, sitting upon an ass's colt.'* These things his disciples did not know at first, but when Jesus was vindicated, they remembered that these things had been written about him and now had been done to him.

(17) The crowd, which had been present when Jesus called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead, was bearing witness. The crowd he drew was all the larger because it heard that he had done this sign. Therefore the Pharisees lamented to each other, 'It is clear that our efforts are in vain. See! The world has gone after him.'

(20) There were Greeks among the worshippers at the feast. These approached Philip, from Bethsaida of Galilee, and they enquired of him, 'Sir, we wish to see Jesus.' Philip came and told Andrew. Together they told Jesus.

(23) Jesus answered them, 'The hour is come in which the son of man is to be vindicated'."

Confronting The Cloudiness

"The son of man is to be vindicated." We have religiously used the expression "son of man" (literal translation from the Greek: the human son) as that applying to Jesus exclusively as son of God. He is not talking about himself only. He does include himself, but the expression "son of man" meant to Jesus the generic son of man. The son of man is to be vindicated. In other words, God's intended definition of the son of man will be vindicated by being fully transformed into sonship with God. The full relationship is to be sealed at a very high price by choice. The son of man choosing to become son of God has to pay a very high price. He has to die to his earthly existence. He has to forgo it and adopt the heavenly existence which God honors and vindicates, blesses and confirms.

(24) "Amen! Amen! I am saying to you, unless the grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone. But if it dies, it bears much fruit. The one who is fond of his soul (his earthly identity) loses it (inevitably through physical death); and the one hating his soul in this world will sprout forth into life everlasting. (The choice is there, not just for Jesus, but for me as well.) If anyone may be serving me, let him be following me, and where I am there also my servant will be'."

Where? "That heavenly place, that heavenly realm, in reconciled state with God". How? "By following me." There is no substitution suggested or implied in his statement.

(26B) " 'If anyone may be serving me, he will himself be honouring the Father. Now my identity is in crisis, and what should I say, "Father, save me from this hour" '?"

Even Jesus had an identity crisis. He had to deliberately choose his heavenly identity over his earthly identity which was beckoning him from all sides through the mouths of the people.

(27B) " 'It is however for this very purpose that I came to this hour: Father, bring (complete and perfect) recognition to Your name'."

The name of the Father becomes the name of the son. The son receives the same name as the father thus honoring and growing the family name.

(28B) "Came therefore a voice out of heaven, 'I have both brought recognition to it and shall do it again.'"

(29) Of the crowd which stood and heard, some were saying that it thundered; others were saying, 'An angel has spoken to him.' Jesus responded, 'This voice has spoken not on my account but on yours. Now is the judgment of this world, now the ruler of this world shall be thrown out. And if I should be lifted up out of the earth, I shall draw all toward myself.' But he was saying this signifying what sort of death he was about to be dying."

In our religious ignorance, we've interpreted this statement to be Jesus foretelling his physical death on the cross, and so forth. But I think this wasn't what he was talking about. He was talking about choosing his heavenly allegiance and identity at any cost, the cost being the earthly identity, the life in this world including the physical death of the body. That is the sort of death to which he was referring: martyrdom. "And if I should be lifted up out of the earth..." meaning out of the earthly into the heavenly, "...I shall draw all toward myself."

(34) "The crowd reacted, saying, 'We heard from the Law that the Anointed remains forever. How then can you say that the son of man must be lifted up? Who is this son of man?' Said therefore to them Jesus, 'Yet a little time the light is among you. Walk while you have the light, lest the darkness overtake you. The one who walks in the darkness does not know where he is headed. While you have the light, believe into the light, so that sons of light you might generate (cause to come into existence).' These things spoke Jesus, and having gone off, he hid from them."

(37) But in spite of having done so many signs in front of them they did not believe into him, that might be fulfilled the ³ word of Isaiah the prophet who said, *'Lord, who has believed our report? And the arm of the Lord, to whom has it been revealed?'* This is why they were not inclined to believe, because again ⁴ Isaiah said, *'He has blinded their eyes and hardened their heart, in order that they might not see with their eyes nor understand in their heart and they should turn, and I should heal them.'* These things said Isaiah because he saw His glory, and spoke about Him. Nevertheless many among the rulers believed into him, yet on account of the Pharisees did not confess him openly for fear of being expelled from the synagogue. They preferred the approval of men to the approval of God."

This is the very opposite to what Jesus was doing. Jesus, despite the great threats against him by the religious leaders continued identifying with the Father. And those who believed into him were not convinced enough to break the ties with their past and to go with him all the way. Jesus was facing being expelled, not only from the synagogue, but from the world itself, dying. But it was by choice.

(44) "Jesus cried out and said, 'The one believing into me is not believing into me but into the one bidding me, and the one beholding me is beholding the one bidding me'."

Again, he is repeating the oneness between the father and the son. The son actually resembles his father and he continues his father, at least the loving son does.

(46) " 'I have come a light into the world, in order that everyone believing into me should not remain in the darkness. And if ever anyone should hear my sayings and not sprout forth, I am not judging him, for I came not to judge the world, rather to rescue the world. The one rejecting me and not receiving my sayings has his judge: the word which I spoke. It will judge him in the last day because I did not speak out of myself, but the Father bidding me, Himself has given me instruction, what I should say and how I should speak. I have been made to understand that His instruction is everlasting life. Therefore what things I am speaking, according as has spoken to me the Father, thus I am speaking'."

The loving father and son relationship which God intended from the beginning is possible. Jesus shows the way.

Chapter 12 footnotes:

¹ Psalm 118(26) Blessed *be* he that cometh in the name of the LORD: we have blessed you out of the house of the LORD.

² Zechariah 9(9) Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he *is* just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.

³ Isaiah 53(1) Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?

⁴ Isaiah 6(10) Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.

Chapter 13

(1) “It was the eve of the Passover Feast and Jesus knew that had come the hour in which he would pass over from this world to the Father. Having loved his own in the world, he loved them to the purposed end. During supper, Judas of Simon Iscariot, the traducer, already had it in his heart to give-beside Jesus. Understanding that the Father places all at his disposal, and that he proceeds from divinity and toward God he is endeavouring, Jesus got up from the table, set aside his outer garments, and girded himself with a towel. He then poured water into a washbasin, and started to wash the feet of the disciples, wiping them off with the towel. So when he got to Simon Peter, Peter said to him, ‘Lord, are you washing my feet?’ Jesus answered him, ‘What I am doing you do not yet understand, but you will understand later.’ Peter said to him, ‘You will never wash my feet!’ Jesus answered him, ‘Unless I wash you, you have no place with me.’ Simon Peter reversed himself, ‘Then Lord, not only my feet but also my hands and my head!’ Jesus said, ‘The one having been bathed has no further need of washing but is wholly clean except for his feet. Ye are clean, but not all.’ He knew who would give-beside him, which is why he said, ‘Ye are not all clean.’

(12) When he finished washing their feet, he put his outer garments back on, reclined again, and said, ‘Do you know what I have done to you? You call me “Teacher”, and “Lord”, and rightly so, for so I am. Therefore if I, your lord and teacher, washed your feet, you are also obliged to wash the feet one of another. I gave you a pattern in order that you may be doing as I did to you. Amen! Amen! I am saying to you, a slave is not greater than his master nor an apostle greater than the one bidding him. If you understand these things, happy are you if you do them. I am not speaking about all of you. I know whom I instruct. Yet, in order that the Scriptures might be fulfilled: *1 “The one chewing my bread raised his heel upon me”*. I am telling you now before it happens, so that when it happens, you may believe that I am who I say. Amen! Amen! I am saying to you, the one who receives anyone I am bidding receives me. The one who receives me receives the one bidding me.’”

Now this passage is of utmost importance. Wash the feet? Jesus said, “You call me ‘Teacher’ and ‘Lord’, and rightly so, for so I am. Therefore if I, your lord and teacher, washed your feet, you are also obliged to wash the feet one of another.” It seems to be generally believed that he was referring to the mutual washing of each other’s feet. But that is not what he said. He said that the lord and teacher washes the feet of the disciple. “I give you a pattern. So do like me.” In other words, you wash the feet of your disciples, not of each other. It was not intended to be mutual. He explained it to be “master-disciple”, “teacher-learner”. It is definitely erroneous to assume that he meant “mutual”. And then he says in conclusion, “...the one who receives anyone I am bidding receives me.” That suggests a vertical extension. It is like the vine that John describes a little later. He is saying, “I send somebody, and whoever believes in whomever I send believes in me, just like God sent me, and if you believe in me you believe in God.” This is a declaration of the chain of authority. His message was in fact the very process of authority, and the exercise of humility which God is seeking from us. Again, the apostle-disciple relationship is very much like the intended relationship between father and son. The son honors the father in all things, and fulfills the father from God’s point of view. It is hard to grasp this in the flesh because in the world it doesn’t happen that way. Man does not recognize this. For a flesh son to be completely engulfed with his father in the flesh does not happen. God never intended it to be a flesh motivated setting. It is a spirit relationship he is talking about, but yet lived out in the flesh setting.

(21) “These things having said, Jesus became troubled in spirit and testified, saying, ‘Amen! Amen! I am saying to you that one of you will present (give-beside) me.’ The disciples looked at one another, being at a loss about whom he was

speaking. One of the disciples whom Jesus loved was leaning on Jesus' bosom. So Simon Peter nodded to him and said, 'Ask him to tell us about whom he is talking.' So the latter leaned back upon the breast of Jesus and asked him, 'Lord, who is it?' Jesus answered, 'It is the one to whom I shall give the morsel that I dip.' Therefore, having dipped the morsel, he took it and gave it to Judas of Simon Iscariot. And after the morsel, the traducer (nature) took him over. Then Jesus said to him, 'What you are doing, do quickly.' However, none of those reclining knew why he said this to him. Some were thinking, since Judas had the money box, that Jesus had said to him, 'Buy what we need for the feast,' or 'Give something to the poor.' Having received the morsel, Judas went out at once; and it was night."

Now here again, let us examine this scene with reality in mind. We traditionally translate the word "paradidomi (beside-give)" as "betray". But, for the sake of argument, imagine this. Jesus is surrounded by his twelve closest, and he out and says, "One of you is going to betray me." Placing myself in that situation, they would all be very upset. And having pointed out the one to "betray", you would think that they would all grab him and lynch him or something. That is looking at it with eyes of reality. Peter later in the evening took out his sword and struck one of the party come to take Jesus. So he would be the likeliest of them to jump Judas. They certainly would have made a big fuss about it at the very least. But rather, as John says clearly, they DID NOT KNOW OF WHAT HE WAS TALKING. So with certainty, the word used in this conversation was NOT "betrayal" as we have traditionally translated. In fact, I will go even further to say that Judas had no intention of hurting or betraying Jesus knowingly. Placing myself in his situation, knowing that Jesus was the anointed king of Israel, and knowing that he had the power of God at his disposal to heal and to even raise the dead, he had in his mind that he was the one granted the honor to "introduce" the new king to the leaders of Israel. To him it was not betrayal. It only means betrayal to Jesus because it is the introduction of the erroneous image or idea of Jesus Christ. Judas, along with all the other disciples, yet still did not know who Jesus was, nor what his real mission was. Jesus did not see himself as a king in the flesh as everyone else did. But Judas was waiting with anticipation to crown this new earthly king, and those closest to this king would have places of privilege. So he understood it as being an honor to introduce Jesus, to arrange this meeting with the Jewish leaders, not a betrayal. And Jesus letting Judas know that he knew what he was up to, and telling him to do it quickly, only reinforced his conviction of what he was doing. He saw it as being given holy sanction, or blessing from Jesus, not a rebuke. I look at it with eyes of reality. And the others, when they saw Judas leaving, they didn't know what he was doing that night. They certainly did not get the idea of "betrayal".

(31) "When Judas had left, Jesus said, 'Now is fulfilled the son of man, and God is fulfilled in him. God shall be fulfilling Himself in him, and properly He shall be fulfilling him. Little children, yet a little while I am with you; you will seek me, and just as I said to the Jews, "Where I am headed you are not intending to come", I am so saying to you now'."

Again, to elaborate on this, "As I said to the Jews," he is looking at his disciples, and they are of the same mindset. They are not aware of his real purpose. They see a king, so they really see it the same way as the other Jews. They were not enlightened enough, they hadn't quite got it yet. The only real difference was that they were totally convinced that Jesus was in fact the coming Messiah, whereas the Jewish leaders were not. They rejected Jesus outright, him not fulfilling their expectations and criteria. Whereas the disciples received Jesus as the Messiah while not fully grasping who he was and what he was really about.

(34) " 'A new instruction I am giving you so that you may love one another. May you love one another AS I LOVED YOU. In this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love one for another'."

Confronting The Cloudiness

Again, he is instructing them about love. And as he said before, “Just as I wash your feet, go and wash others’ feet...” He wasn’t talking about mutual love, about love of one (horizontal) disciple for another. He was talking about the love of a father towards a son, the love towards offspring or disciples. “You are to have love for your own disciples just as I have love for ye, my disciples. When you go out and you are given followers of your own, this is the love you need to cultivate. You develop this love by instructing them and teaching them the truth that I have taught you, God’s purpose, God’s way.”

(36) “Simon Peter said to him, ‘Lord, where are you headed?’ Answered Jesus, ‘Where I am headed you are not intending to follow me now, but you will follow me later’.”

Again he says “not intending”. This is usually translated as “not able”. It is less “not able” and more “not intending” because they literally do not have in their minds the purpose that was in Jesus’ mind at that time. Their intention was not to let themselves be killed for the sake of being with the Father, but their intention was somewhere else, in an earthly kingdom, again, at this time. But he does say that some day, they would follow him in the same intention and purpose when they finally got to understand it.

(37) “Peter said, ‘Lord, why can I not follow you now? I will put my soul over you.’ Jesus answered, ‘You will put your soul over me? Amen! Amen! I am saying to you, a cock will by no means crow before you will have disowned me three times’.”

My soul, my identity, my life... The soul is the identity. For Peter, his soul was his physical life. “I’ll risk my life. I’ll put my life on the line to defend you.” But Jesus’ precepts are the total opposite of that. Jesus is putting his life on the line for his disciples before God. It is not the disciples that do this for the teacher or leader. The apostle is breaking the ground, is blazing the trail, so-to-speak, for the disciples to follow. He is first in taking the big risk.

Chapter 13 footnotes:

- ¹ Psalm 41(1) Blessed is he that acts wisely toward the poor: Yehovah will deliver him in the day of trouble.
- (2) Yehovah will watch over him, and keep him alive; he shall be blessed upon the earth: and You will not deliver him unto the soul (lust) of his enemies.
- (3) Yehovah will uphold him on the couch of sickness: You change all his bed in his sickness.
- (4) I said, Yehovah, favour me: heal my soul (lust); for I have sinned against You.
- (5) My enemies speak evil of me: When will he die, and his name perish?
- (6) And if he comes to see *me*, he speaks vanity: his heart gathers iniquity to itself; he goes outside, and speaks.
- (7) All that hate me whisper together against me: against me they plot my hurt.
- (8) A thing of ruin is poured out on him, and he who lies down will no longer rise.
- (9) Yea, my own friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up *his* heel against me.
- (10) But You, O Yehovah, favour me, and raise me up, and I will repay them.
- (11) By this I know that You delight in me, because my enemy does not triumph over me.
- (12) And as for me, in my integrity, You uphold me, and establish me before Your face for ever.
- (13) Blessed be the LORD God of Israel from everlasting, and to everlasting. Amen, and Amen.

Chapter 14

(1) “ ‘Let not your hearts be troubled; be believing into God, and also into me. In my Father’s house there is room for many to abide; otherwise would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you’?”

Traditionally we have translated this as: “In my Father’s house there are many rooms.” Well, rooms are chambers of privacy. But in the Father’s house there is no more need for privacy. There is no need for isolation. There is no need for a private identity. In the Father’s house there is room for many to co-exist, to live in harmony one with the others.

(3) “ ‘And if I go and prepare a place for you, again I am coming and I shall receive you toward myself so that where I am you may be also. And where I am headed you know the way.’

(5) Thomas said to him, ‘Lord, we do not know where you are headed; how can we know the way?’

(6) Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one comes toward the Father if not through me. If you knew me, you would perceive my Father as well; from now on you know Him and have seen Him’.”

In this instance, again Jesus is speaking about this passing over from the earthly, fleshly existence to the heavenly, changing identity. He is leaving behind, literally of course, but firstly cognitively, mentally and with purpose, the old identity and life, choosing the heavenly over the earthly. But again his disciples don’t yet grasp the difference. So when he says, “Where I am going, you know the way,” they respond by saying, “We don’t know where you are going.” They still have in mind that he was going to some physical place, a destination in this world. Jesus was talking about another destination, and it didn’t sink into them as of yet.

(8) “Philip in turn said, ‘Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us.’

(9) Jesus said to him, ‘All this time I have been with you and you do not yet know me, Philip? The one having seen me has seen the Father; so how can you say “Show us the Father” ’?”

Again, Jesus is making the point. The son who is sold out to his father, like the branch of a tree, replicates and is an extension of his source. “I am like my father. Not only am I like my father, I am a direct living extension of my Father,” speaking in the spirit. Jesus has been given, he has received the heavenly light and has been transformed, virtually completely. “If you see me, you will see my Dad. You will see my Father, because I’m not separate from Him, and not different from Him. I do everything like Him, for Him, and with Him.”

(10) “ ‘Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The things I am saying to you I am not speaking from myself; but the Father remaining in me is doing His works. Be believing me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; but if not, through the works themselves be believing. Amen! Amen! I am saying to you, the one believing into me, the works which I am doing that one will also do, and progressively (Greek: meidzona) these he will do as I am going toward the Father’.”

“The works which I am doing, that one will also do.” What works? They are the works of reconciliation, honoring the Father, and of going to Him.

(13) “ ‘Whatever you should ask in regards to my name, this I will do, that might be fulfilled the Father in the son. If you ask me anything in regards to my name, this I will do.

(15) If ever you may be loving me, you will practice my instructions. Then I shall entreat the Father and He will give you another summons (paraclete) (Greek: paracletos: call-beside) so that it may be with you always, ‘...”

The “paraclete” is the thing or the one who calls someone beside. So I use the word “summons” instead of the word “advocate” because a summons is an official bidding to come, such as in a summons to appear before a court of law. And here again, “If ever you may be loving me, you will practice my instructions.” By deduction, we must conclude that if we are not practicing his instructions, we are not loving him.

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(17) “ ‘...the spirit of authenticity, which the world is not inclined to receive’.”

So this summons is the spirit of authenticity, the spirit of truth. What is truth? Truth is the authenticity of God. Authenticity is the spirit, the motive where I will settle for nothing less than the truth, the real. “I do not wish to make up information” or “make believe”. I will go to the source and get the authentic information and find the real, true God. And if I am not willing to hear and heed His instructions, as relayed through His son, then it is all for nought.”

(17B) “ ‘That is because it neither sees it nor knows it’.”

He is referring to the world which is not inclined to receive the spirit of authenticity. The world says, “Reality sucks! Tell me lies, sweet little lies that are palatable to me.” Flattering lies are the things that sell on the market place, not reality. Unless you are granted spiritual sight, you don’t know it.

(17C) “ ‘You do know it because it is remaining with you and shall be in you. I shall not abandon you orphans, I am coming toward you’.”

When Jesus said this, he wasn’t speaking so much as Jesus the man, but as the Son of Man, as the representative of the potential that is in man. Each of his disciples has the potential to replicate Jesus, or rather what Jesus was replicating, the Son of Man.

(19) “ ‘A little while longer and the world sees me no more, but you see me because I am living and you will live. In that day, you will know that I am in my Father and you are in me and I in you. The one having my instructions and putting them into practice, that is the one loving me. The one loving me will be loved by my Father. I will also love him, and plainly reveal myself to him.’

(22) Judas, not Iscariot, said, ‘Lord, what has happened that you should reveal yourself to us and not the world?’”

When Jesus speaks of revealing himself, he is speaking of revealing who he really is, the son of man, passing over to divinity, becoming son of God.

(23) “Jesus answered him, ‘If anyone loves me, he will put my word into practice, and my Father will love him. We shall go toward Him and make our abode with Him. The one not loving me does not put my words into practice. This word which you are hearing is not mine but rather from the Father bidding me.

(25) These things I have spoken to you while being with you. The paraclete, the holy spirit, which the Father will send in regards to my name, it will teach you all and will remind you of all which I told you. Peace I issue to you. My peace I give to you, not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled nor be afraid’.”

How does the world give peace? The world doesn’t give peace, it makes peace. It does it by making concessions, through trade and agreements, give and take. Jesus is saying the opposite. “The kind of peace I give you isn’t based on “give a little, take a little”. My peace is total in exchange for total surrender.” That is the bargain, the genuine covenant with God. Even in the worldly mindset, it is not that difficult to grasp this principle. When one person surrenders to another, there is no more conflict between those two individuals. So the conflict that has been here since the beginning, since Adam and Eve, can be resolved by total surrender. No more conflict. “I have no need to make any more independent decisions, nor to defend myself in any way. The decisions are made by the one I serve and he is completely responsible for me. Everything I do is as per his instructions.” So there is no more conflict between those two. That is not to say that the conflict is removed with the world. On the contrary, the conflict is completely exposed with the world and the world is at war with that one, as Jesus says elsewhere, “The world hates me, it will hate you...”

(28) “ ‘You heard that I said to you, “I am on my way and I am making myself known to you”. If you loved me, you would rejoice that I am going toward the Father, because the Father is greater than I’.”

Now Jesus says here that his Father is greater than he. Is that equal? Why do we insist on making Jesus equal with God? Did he not insist at all times that he was a subordinate?

(29) “ ‘Now I have told you before it happens, so that whenever it might happen, you should believe. I will not speak much more with you, for the ruler of the world is coming, and he has nothing on me. However, that the world may know that I am loving the Father, and am doing according to my Father’s instruction, let us get up and go on from here’.”

Jesus is describing the crisis moment that he is facing. He is beginning to face the crisis of identity. The ruler of the world is coming to him... Having given leave to Judas to go do his thing, he knows that he wants to introduce him as the king. So Jesus knows that there is a confrontation to take place due to the expectations that he will rise to kingship in the flesh. But he knows that this is not what he is about. He knows that he is to forgo this opportunity to be a king in this world in order to fulfill the mandate that was given to the son of man. He is to surrender and forgo all personal worldly ambition in preference to sonship to his heavenly Father.

Chapter 15

This whole chapter is a monologue by Jesus and it is very significant in his teachings.

(1) “ ‘I am the vine, the genuine one, and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch attached to me and not bearing fruit he takes away. Every branch bearing fruit he prunes so that it may bear more fruit. You already are clean through the word which I have spoken to you. Remain in me and I in you. Just as the branch is not able to bear fruit by itself unless it remains on the vine, likewise neither you, unless you remain in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. The one remaining in me and I in him is the one bearing much fruit. Apart from me you are not able to do anything. Unless one remains in me, he is thrown out as a branch and dries up. They gather them and throw them into the fire to be burned. If you remain in me and my sayings remain in you, ask for that which you want and it will be granted to you. In this is gratified my Father so that you may bear much fruit and generate to me disciples. Just as the Father loved me, also I loved you. Remain in my love. If you put into practice my instructions you will remain in my love just as I have put into practice my Father’s instructions and am remaining in his love’.”

Here, Jesus uses the vine to illustrate the relationship that God intended from the beginning, the father/son relationship, not just a generic father/son relationship, but a father/son relationship where the branch, the offspring, totally replicates the source, the branch to which he is attached. Jesus is saying that the heavenly Father is the vinedresser, He owns the whole thing. He is the creator. He owns all of the creation. He owns the vine. So Jesus is saying, “Well, I’m a creation too. I’m one of the created ones. I am a son. I am firstborn, therefore I am given to be the trunk, the main branch. And you, my disciples, are offshoots of me.”

In order for this living organism of the vine to be maintained and to be perpetuated, oneness has to remain. Each branch needs to be attached. It does not break off and start another tree somewhere as is often thought. The earthly son normally leaves. Again, as the misinterpretation from the garden where the son is seen more as an acorn or a seed, he goes and starts a new plant. Jesus is saying, “This is not a new plant, this is one plant, a living organism that remains together.” Each branch does not break off. It puts out new shoots. But the new shoot is not independent. It is only the channel by which new branches shoot out. And the new branches...You can imagine just how large it can become. Each generation of offshoot generates new shoots, yet everyone remains

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attached to the main branch. But the fifth generation isn't attached to the main trunk independently. It is attached through another. And therefore oneness can remain, an orderly oneness. And it is of the same nature. The tenth branch offshoot of the vine has the same nature as the main trunk. This is to illustrate what Jesus had in mind. Spiritually speaking, this is the relationship that is intended to be. Each branch doesn't have a separate IDENTITY, except that it is visible. It is seen attached to the other one. It doesn't generate a new identity with new characteristics. It reproduces the same characteristics, the same nature.

(11) “ ‘These things I have spoken to you so that my joy may be in you and your joy might be made full. This is my instruction, so that you may be loving one another as I loved you’.”

It is “SO THAT...” It is not an instruction to love. It is an instruction of how things are to be in order to make it possible for love to come about. “My instructions,” Jesus is saying, “are such that you, following them, are enabled to love one another as I loved you.”

(13) “ ‘Greater love than this no one has in order that one might establish his soul (identity) over his friends’.”

In the Greek language, the word “agape” (love) is not the same as “phileo” (affection). The Greeks had a theoretical ideal love which they could not perfectly define. It was the “transcendent” form of love. It was in essence a person's wish or desire for the very best for another. It was the opposite to wishing hurt and humiliation toward another.

So Jesus could be saying it in this way: “I have no greater good or benefit to offer to my friends except that which I have: reconciliation with my Father. Your reconciliation with the Father is facilitated by me. So by offering myself as a ‘propitiator for your estrangement’, I am doing the best thing for you that I could ever do for you.” It is in fact an extension of his Father's love toward us in general. John expresses this in his first letter very clearly 4(19), “We love him, because he first loved us.” He made himself available to others to be the means or channel to the Father. In other words, Jesus was making himself available to take FULL RESPONSIBILITY for his “friends”. It is very similar to a parent accepting to take responsibility for a child, or a husband accepting to take responsibility for a woman.

(14) “ ‘You are my friends IF you do what I am instructing you’.”

OK, we consider friends those who please one another mutually. But he is not saying this. He is describing what he means by friends: “if you follow me.” There is no mutuality here. “By following me, and keeping my instructions, you are my friends. If you don't, you're not my friends.” So our definition of friends in the world is very different from that of Jesus.

(15) “ ‘I no longer consider you slaves, since the slave does not know what his master is doing. I consider you friends because all that I hear from my Father I make known to you. You do not instruct me, but I instruct you, ‘...’”

This has commonly been translated as “You did not choose me, but I chose you...” This has nothing to do with choosing. It has everything to do with instructing (qualifying). “You do not instruct me. But I instruct you...” He is clarifying the relationship. It is a one directional relationship. It is a vertical relationship, not a horizontal, mutual relationship.

(16) “ ‘You do not instruct me, but I instruct you, and produce you that you may be going with purpose and may be bearing fruit and your fruit may remain’.”

What would this fruit be? This fruit would be new offspring of like kind, christ-kind, anointed-kind, son of man, son of God, sons of men, sons of God, transformed out of a bunch of sons of men, offspring of men into offspring of God.

(16B) “ ‘This is so that whatever you might ask the Father in regards to my name, he might give you’.”

"In regards to my name." What is "my name", when Jesus is saying this? What is his name? His "name" is "Christ". His name is "God". His name is "Father's Son". So if he is becoming the son of God, then whatever name God has becomes his name as His son. Even in the world, when I have sons, they have my name (just as I bear my father's name). If I am a Jones, my son is a Jones. Well, Jesus is talking about identity. "Whatever you might ask the Father in regards to my name,..." this is to facilitate. "Whatever you ask the Father that you need to make this transformation possible, He will give you."

(17) " 'These I have relayed to you in order that you may be loving one another. If the world is hating you, you know that it has hated me before you. If you were of the world, the world would be fond of its own. But because you are not of the world, rather I educated you out of the world, this is why the world is hating you'."

So if the world loves me, if the world is not hating me, maybe they don't see. Maybe I haven't become. Maybe I'm of the world.

(20) " 'Keep in mind the word which I said to you, "A slave is not greater than his master". If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they put into practice my word, they will also yours. However they will do all these things due to my name, because they did not know the One bidding me'."

"...They did not know the One bidding me." So all those of us who have not and are not getting it, who are not identifying with **this** christ, with **this** Jesus, with **this** John, can claim to know God, but it does not necessarily mean that we know Him. Jesus is saying, "The one who knows God shows it by identifying with these instructions. And alienation with the world is inevitable."

(22) " 'If I had not come and spoken to them, they would have no guilt'."

OK. Who did Jesus come and speak to? Who has he spoken to? He didn't speak to the Russians. He didn't speak to the Chinese. He spoke to the children of Israel. And they were the ones who were supposed to know. They were the repository of the Word of God. They were the holders and keepers of the Word of God. They had been chosen to receive the Word of God. And yet, he says, "If I had not come and spoken to them, they would have no guilt."

(22B) " 'But now they can no longer hide their guilt'."

"So they got it all wrong," he is saying. "The religion that I came out of, the Hebrew religion, didn't get it."

(23) " 'The one hating me also hates my Father'."

Who was hating Jesus? It was the Jewish community of his day.

(24) " 'If I did not do among them the works which no one else did, they would have no guilt. But now they have seen and have hated both me and my Father'."

What are these works that Jesus is talking about? Are they not "the works of reconciliation and returning to the Father by abiding in the instructions handed down by the Father through the prophets of old"?

Like he said, "You receive me, you receive my Father. If you reject me, you reject my Father. You see me, you see my Father." So by rejecting Jesus, they rejected the Father. And we, the new Jews, the Christians, have exactly the same guilt on us, because we have rejected the same Jesus. We have redefined him in a way that he never intended. Christianity, right from the beginning, has given-beside, has followed the way of Judas Iscariot. We are followers of Judas, not of John and Matthew, not of Jesus. We are followers of Judas because we have misrepresented the Jesus anointed who came and taught us who he was.

(25) " 'It is in order to fulfil the word written in their Law, "*They hated me without cause.*" (Psalm 69:4) When the summons comes, which I, myself, shall be sending to ye on the Father's behalf, the spirit of authenticity which proceeds on the Father's behalf, that shall be testifying about me, and even you are bearing

witness that you are with me according to the original concept’.”

What is he saying here? “When the summons comes, which I, myself, shall be sending to ye on the Father’s behalf, the spirit of authenticity which proceeds on the Father’s behalf, that shall be testifying about me,...” When I adopt, cling to the spirit of authenticity, and dig, and seek relentlessly for the authentic Son of Man, the authentic Jesus, his authentic identity, “it shall testify about me.” Yes, because everything that he said and did, when I adopt it, it transforms me, and I get to understand more and more who he really was. And I gradually become more and more like him. It is like saying, “When you travel on a journey, and follow the directions, you will see the very same scenery and signs along the way. And you will ultimately reach the same destination.”

Chapter 16

(1) “ ‘These things I have spoken to you that you might not be made to stumble. They will exclude you from the synagogue. A time is coming when those who kill you will think to be offering sacred service to God. This they will do because they know neither the Father nor me’.”

Let us take another look at this. Jesus is speaking to his disciples and he is warning them of how they will be treated. He says, “A time is coming when those who kill you will think to be offering sacred service to God.” Again, this is allusion or reference being made to the coming counter gospel. The counter gospel, or anti-gospel, in a sense kills Jesus and his apostles because it buries what they IN FACT were, what they IN FACT said and that for which they IN FACT stood. The anti-gospel, having subverted the genuine, made it all-but impossible for the vine of Christ to grow and prosper.

(4) “ ‘These things I have spoken to you so that whenever their time should come, you may remember that I spoke to you of them. These things, however, I did not say to you at first, since I was with you. But now I am headed toward the one bidding me and yet not one of you is asking me, “Where are you headed?” Because I have spoken these things to you, grief has filled your hearts. Nevertheless, I am telling you the truth, it is for your benefit that I should leave. Should I not leave, the summons would never come toward you. But when I go, I shall send it toward you. And having come, it will confute the world about sin, and about righteousness, and about judgment: about sin indeed, because they do not believe into me; about righteousness also, because I am going toward the Father and you no longer see me; then about judgment, because the ruler of the world has been judged’.”

“About sin... The error is so entrenched that the earthly mindset has erroneously defined sin. And as a result they can’t understand me and they don’t believe in me,” says Jesus. “I don’t ‘measure up’ to their views and expectations. But you, when the spirit of truth, the enlightenment of God, reaches you, and you get it, you’ll realize. This spirit of truth will set the record straight for you. It will confute, it will clarify the difference between the error and the authentic.

About righteousness... The one thing that pleases the Father is that I am completely committed to ‘going to the Father’. And the very process of going to the Father can only be fulfilled by complying with the conditions of reconciliation that He has already outlined to us. It is up to us to fully recognize and accept those conditions, and to execute them with complete determination. And you no longer see me because the erroneous picture of me in your minds will be completely dispelled and replaced by the proper picture of who I am.

About judgment... Judgment is another way of saying ‘choosing’. The ruler of this world is judged because I choose God instead. By choosing to be with God, I, by default, forsake this world and all of its allure. Consequently the world’s erroneous state is exposed.”

(12) “ ‘I still have many things to tell you, but you are not able to bear them right now’.”

"You haven't been changed enough. You haven't yet been granted the capacity to grasp everything."

(13) " 'So when it comes, the spirit of authenticity (the summons... the spirit identity, when it comes and indwells you) will guide you into all authenticity, for it will not speak from itself, but rather whatever it hears it will speak, and the things forthcoming it will announce to you. That one will fulfil me, because it will receive of what is mine and announce it to you. All that the Father has is mine. That is why I said, "Of what is mine it will receive and will relay it to you." In a little while you will no longer see me, and again a little while and you will perceive me'."

Now, see, this spirit of authenticity, for the sake of understanding our mindset, the religious have personified it. And it is ok to personify a spirit. But they have made it to be a real, distinct person, having its own will. Yet, when we listen to Jesus speaking, according to him, the "holy spirit" is a characteristic. It is not just a characteristic, it describes and defines the person who is with God. Holy spirit is a mindset, the holy mindset. Spirit is the source of attitudes. So the holy spirit is basically the nature in which the relationship takes place. The father/son relationship based on God's definition, and coming from God, is the holy relationship. The relationship itself, the interaction between the father and the son is the product of holy spirit, and it is the mindset wherein this interaction takes place. And it also defines the holy realm, the heavenly realm versus the earthly realm. In the earthly realm, the focus is on self, whereas in the heavenly realm, the focus is on the Father.

(17) "Therefore some of his disciples said toward one another, 'What is this he is saying to us, "In a little while you will no longer see me, and again a little while and you will perceive me"; and, "Because I am headed toward the Father"? They were saying therefore, 'What is this he is saying, "A little while"? We do not get what he is saying.' Jesus knew that they wanted to question him, so he said to them, 'Are you debating with one another because I said, "A little while and you will no longer see me, and again a little while and you will perceive me"? Amen! Amen! I am saying to you that you will weep and you will wail, but the world will celebrate. You will be grieved, although your grief will be turned into joy. The woman, when she gives birth, has grief because her time has come. But when she has given birth to the child she no longer remembers the tribulation due to the joy that a human was begotten into the world. You also now indeed have grief. But I will be revealed to you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you. In that day, you will by no means question me. Amen! Amen! I am saying to you, should you ask the Father anything in regards to my (sur)name He will give you. Until now you asked nothing in regards to my name. Ask and you will receive, so that your joy may be made full'."

Is this a big mystery? Jesus is saying that the stand that he is taking, the identity of his Father, the stand that he is taking with his Father, is alienating the world, and upsetting the world, those in authority around him. And he foresees being put to death because of it, because it is unacceptable to the mindset of the world. But this determination to see it through to the end, to go to the Father, to identify with the Father brings about God's miracle of transformation. And God intends this to be passed on. So, at this moment, he is saying, "You will see me no longer. But in a while, you will see me again because God will put it in you to perceive me, to know who I really am, and who I really was at that time."

Referring to the statement, "...you will by no means question me," he is actually saying, "You will have no more questions about who I am and what I am doing."

(25) " 'These things I have spoken to you in metaphors. A time is coming when I will no longer speak to you in metaphors, but will openly report back to you about the Father. In that day you will ask in regards to my name, and I am not saying to you that I shall petition the Father about you. The Father Himself is fond of you,

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because you were fond of me and you believed that I came forth on the Father's behalf. I came forth from the Father and came into the world; now I am leaving the world and passing over toward the Father'."

"Passing over..." See, Jesus is metaphorically referring to the feast of Passover which was a symbol for the intent of God, which is for us to pass over from the flesh identity to the spirit identity, from the earthly world to the heavenly. And it is not a change of place physically, it is a change of mindset. It is a passing over. Interestingly enough, the feast of Passover required that the nourishing bread have no leaven (yeast) in it, the leaven representing corruption. Jesus at one point in Matthew said (chapter 16), "...beware of the leaven of the Pharisees..." The leaven changes the nature of the food. The pure bread of life has no "leaven" in it, metaphorically speaking.

(29) "His disciples then said, 'See! Now you are speaking plainly, and no longer in metaphors. Now we know that you know everything and that no one should doubt you. By this we believe that you came forth from God.' Answered Jesus, 'Are you now believing? Look! A time is coming and it has already come when you will be scattered each one to his own and you will desert me. Yet I am not alone, for the Father is with me. These things I have spoken to you so that in me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage, I have overcome the world'."

The process of overcoming the world is not an external conquest over others, but rather an internal conquest over the ego, the earthly mindset. The heavenly mindset can only be received and established with the willing co-operation of the individual.

Chapter 17

(1) "Having spoken these things, Jesus looked up toward heaven and said, 'Father, the hour has come. Fulfil your son, so that the son may fulfil You. According as You give him authority over all flesh, that which you have given to him, he is to give to them: eternal life. And eternal life is in knowing You, the only real God, and the one whom You set apart (anointed Jesus). I fulfilled You upon the earth. I accomplished the work which You gave me to do'."

What was this work which God gave him to do? It was to receive the light, to identify with the purpose that God had been revealing to man through the prophets, to volunteer to be transformed. And therefore, having done so, Jesus is simply saying, "I've done it. Now it's up to You as to what comes next. Vindicate Your son now. Show the world that it is Your message, Your invitation."

(5) " 'Now you, Father, fulfil me alongside Yourself with the fulfilment that I am to have for those of the world who are to be with You. I clearly revealed Your name to the men whom You gave me out of the world. They were Yours and You gave them to me. They have put Your word into practice. They now know that all that You gave me is indeed from You, and that I have given to them the sayings which You gave me. They received and they know truly that I came forth from You. They believed that You set me apart. I pray for them; I do not pray for the world but rather for the ones which You have given me, because they are Yours. All mine are Yours and Yours are mine, and I have been fulfilled in them'."

Now, we should remember that these words here are accredited to Jesus by John. But let us remember that John is writing his gospel, is writing this message many years after these events. And John, at the time he is writing, has fully received and understood the message. And that is what he is confirming here, and that is what he is putting in Jesus' mouth because he recalls what Jesus had said, "The holy spirit will bring to your recollection those things I said to you." So John is writing with a clear mind of who Jesus was, and is: the son of man passing over into sonship with God.

(11) “ ‘I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming toward You. Holy Father, keep them in Your (sur)name which You have given me, so that they may be one just as we are one’.”

When he is talking about name here, he is talking about the identity. A family unit has the same name. “So Your name, God, the divine, is theirs as well as mine and Yours. It is Your name.” We know that in the Old Testament, Moses was given the commandment (Exodus 20:7): “*You will not take the Lord’s name in vain.*” This is what He meant. He wasn’t talking about cursing and using vulgar language. He was talking about identifying with God improperly by distorting who He is and what He says. That is taking it in vain. When we identify with the authentic, we must become the authentic.

(12) “ ‘When I was with them, I kept them in Your name which You have given me. I watched over them, and not one of them was lost except the son of perdition, so that the Scripture should be fulfilled. But now I am coming toward You, and these things I am speaking in the world in order that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them Your word, and the world hates them, because they are not of the world just as I am not of the world’.”

Again, we can sense here how John is writing after full understanding of who Jesus was. As a matter of fact, he puts in Jesus’ mouth that he is not in the world anymore. In other words, if he is not of the world, he has passed over to the heavenly. In principle, that event takes place in the flesh. But it is fulfilled, completed when the flesh passes away, when the flesh expires. Then the obstacle to the spirit is removed, because it is no longer there to be appealing. As long as we are in the flesh, our identity, our mind resides in the flesh body. We are vulnerable to the assail of the world. It is forever trying to appeal to us, positively or negatively. It is a push-pull dynamic.

(15) “ ‘I do not pray that You should take them out of the world but rather that You should guard them from the faulty one (from sin which is the error, the unreal, the substitute). They are not of the world just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth. As You set me apart into the world, also I set them apart into the world. I am sanctifying myself over them, so that they also may be, having been genuinely sanctified’.”

What is “to be sanctified”? To be sanctified in essence is to volunteer to the transformation with God, the complete dedication to God. It is in not clinging to the old, independent, flesh identity, but rather in proceeding to the Father. That is how one is sanctified. He is showing the way so that the disciples, his offspring, may be genuinely sanctified by repeating this process. When they see how he did it, they’ll know how they can do it.

(20) “ ‘It is not only for these that I am praying, but also for those who will believe into me through their word, that all may be one, just as You, Father, are in me and I in You. It is so that also they may be in us, and that the world may believe that you set me apart’.”

Here again is amplification on the concept, on the metaphor of the vine where the vine grows and new shoots come out. They are all of the same kind and they remain attached to the same unit, the same living body you might say. Another teacher later on spoke of, not a vine, but a human body. Now Jesus never referred to a human body in describing the heavenly relationship. He spoke of a vine. The other teacher spoke of a body. He dissected it and showed all kinds of breakdowns and specialized functions. Whereas in the vine, all the parts, all the extensions of the vine have the same purpose. They don’t have specialized purposes. They all have the purpose of continuing the original. And here also, Jesus says, “...those who will believe into me through their word.” Jesus, at another time, gave full authority to his disciples in continuing him. He says, “Whoever receives you, receives me. And whoever receives me, receives my Father.”

Now here I have a bone to pick. Something troubles me about later beliefs of Christianity. For instance, another teacher at some point in time, having seen the disciples, the authentic

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apostles of Jesus, writes down and declares that he wasn't impressed by them. He claimed a direct link to Jesus and a direct revelation of his message. And lo and behold! The whole of Christianity has gone with this alternate gospel, the "gospel" of substitution, the "gospel" of independence, claiming to be legitimate while denying the already established group of disciples of Christ. To me, this demands very serious examination.

(22) " 'I gave them the fulfilment which You gave me, that they may be one just as we are one, I in them and You in me. It was for them to be perfected into one, in order that the world may know that You set me apart and that You loved them just as You loved me' ."

We should remember that Jesus is talking about his already established disciples, the apostles of his day. When he talks about oneness and unity, "I in them", and I compare it to where I come from, the human christian mindset which I learned and adopted and was very much a part of for many years, I've been troubled not knowing why. I've been troubled by the dissension, the contradictions, and the conflict between different sects, between different religious groups, be it Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox, all kinds of sects that break down and vie for legitimacy, and yet cannot agree to be one. They do not even pretend to be one. They condemn each other for one reason or another.

(24) " 'Father, I desire that those which You have given me might be with me where I am, in order that they might behold my fulfilment which You gave me, because You loved me unto the world's overthrow' ."

Now, I've been accustomed to read in previous translations, "You loved me before the foundation of the world." Well, when I read the Greek, I can see here it meaning more than that: "unto the world's overthrow." In other words, "Your love deposited in me made it possible for me to overthrow the world's grasp that it has on the son of man, the hold that it has on us." The overthrow is as he said earlier, "I have overcome the world." So the world's overthrow is not so much a physical war, battles where bombs go off, and so on. The overthrow of the world is when the world has lost its stranglehold on him. Jesus took a stand with God and **THAT** undid the world's power over him.

(25) " 'Righteous Father, the world does not know You, but I know You, and these know that You set me apart. I made known Your name to them and I shall make it known, so that the love with which You loved me may be in them and I in them' ."

And what is the nature of this love? The nature of this love is of an intimate relationship wherein a son, remaining determined to be faithful to his father, is rewarded by God with full membership in His household, His Family.

Chapter 18

(1) "These things having said, Jesus came out with his disciples across the winter torrent of Kidron where there was a garden into which he and his disciples entered. But Judas, the one giving-beside (misrepresenting) him, also knew the place, since Jesus had many times met there with his disciples. Therefore Judas, leading a cohort and subordinates of the chief priests and the Pharisees, came there with torches, lamps and weapons. So Jesus, knowing what was in store for him, came and said to them, 'Whom are you seeking?' They answered him, 'Jesus the Nazarene.' He replied, 'I am he.' Judas, the one giving-beside him, was also standing with them.

(6) So when he said to them, 'I am he', they backed off and fell on the ground. He therefore again inquired of them, 'Whom are you seeking?' They said,

'Jesus the Nazarene.' Answered Jesus, 'I told you that I am he. If then you are seeking me, allow these to be released.' This was so that might be fulfilled the word which he had said, 'Whom you have given me, I have lost not one of them.'

(10) Then Simon Peter drew a sword which he had, struck the chief priest's slave and cut off his right ear. The name of the slave was Malchus. Said therefore Jesus to Peter, 'Put the sword back into its sheath. Should I not drink the cup which the Father has given me?' Following this, the cohort, the commander and the subordinates of the Jews seized Jesus, bound him and led him first to Annas. He was the father-in-law of Caiaphas who was chief priest that year. Caiaphas was the one who had counselled the Jews that it is to their benefit for one man to die over the people."

Just a little note here. What did Jesus mean when he says to Peter, "Should I not drink the cup which the Father has given me?" Metaphorically speaking again, the "cup" that Jesus referred to here and many times previously, the "cup" is a symbol of, and it goes back to the Old Testament, a symbol of doing something that is asked of you by someone else, doing someone else's will, doing something that you would rather not be doing. It is a sacrifice. It is something that you don't want to do. It is a trial, or just simply a test of fidelity. And so, he is saying here, "Shall I not drink the cup which the Father has given me?" In the last supper scene in the gospel of Matthew, we see Jesus refer to the cup and the bread. He uses the symbol of the bread and the wine. The bread is referred to earlier in the gospel of John. "I am the bread of life." In other words, the son of man, the nature of the transformation, the bread of life, the word of God is absorbed and transforms us into a new creation, not an adopted creation that remains the same, that is saved to be the same, and to mislead God into believing that we are something other than what we are. No, it is a genuine transformation that takes place. And the wine, the cup of wine, the "blood" is the cleansing fluid that circulates in a body. It is nourishing. It brings nourishment to all the parts of the body. And also, the drinking of the cup is doing something that we would rather not be doing, not just rather, but that we dreadfully, humanly speaking, resist.

(15) "Simon Peter, as well as another disciple, was following Jesus. That disciple was known to the chief priest, and he went in with Jesus into the courtyard of the chief priest. Peter was standing outside at the door. Therefore the other disciple, who was known to the chief priest, went out and spoke to the doorkeeper and led in Peter."

Now it is not clear as to who this other disciple is beside Peter. I would think that it might be Judas himself because Judas was known to the chief priest. He made a deal with them. It could be another, but that particular one we know. He was eager to present Jesus to the chief priest. He introduced them. He was the broker, the "go-between".

(17) "The servant girl, the doorkeeper, then said to Peter, 'Are you not also one of this man's disciples?' He said, 'I am not.' Now the slaves and the subordinates were standing around. They had made a charcoal fire, since it was cold, and they were warming themselves. Peter was also standing with them warming himself.

(19) The chief priest interrogated Jesus about his disciples and about his teaching. Jesus answered him, 'I have spoken openly to the world. I always taught in synagogue and in the Temple, where all the Jews assemble, and I spoke nothing in secret. Why are you interrogating me? Interrogate the ones who heard what I spoke to them. Look! These know what I said.' On hearing this, one of the subordinates standing by, gave Jesus a slap, saying, 'Is that any way to address the chief priest?' Answered Him Jesus, 'If I spoke harmfully, bear witness about the harm; but if properly, why do you slap me?' Therefore Annas sent him off, bound, to Caiaphas the chief priest.

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(25) Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. They said to him, 'Are you not also one of his disciples?' Peter denied it saying, 'I am not.' One of the slaves of the chief priest, a relative of the one whose ear Peter had cut off, said, 'Did I not see you in the garden with him?' Again Peter denied; at once a cock crowed.

(28) Then they led Jesus from Caiaphas to the praetorium. It was early. They did not enter the praetorium that they might not be defiled but may eat the Passover."

(I'm sure John is writing this "tongue-in-cheek".)

(29) "Pilate came outside to meet them and said, 'What accusation do you bring against this man?' They answered him saying, 'If this man were not doing wrong, we would not be handing him over to you.' Therefore Pilate said to them, 'You take him, and try him according to your law.' The Jews said to him, 'It is not lawful for us to kill anyone;' so that might be fulfilled the word that Jesus had said signifying what sort of death he would be dying."

When we read this, traditionally, I've been taught by previous teachers that, when Jesus referred to what sort of death he would be dying, it meant that he would be put on a cross. But, when I read this properly, it means that the Jews had decided that he needed to die, to be killed. They could not stand his message, he needed to be snuffed out. But they did not have the authority to put someone to death in front of the government of the day, which was Roman. So they had to find a way to have him executed (silenced by being put to death) by the "legitimate" authorities, the Romans. This, in fact, was the sort of death that he would be dying, the sort of death which was illegitimate, for wrong pretext. Yet he was volunteering and was not fighting it. It was opportunity for him to demonstrate to us the extent of his commitment to the Father despite the threat of physical death. He is facing two things here. He has a choice between two options: death for what he represented, or being crowned king if he were to change his allegiance to the Jews. He had two pictures in front of him. And he chose the former. This is reminiscent of one of the three temptations in the wilderness described by Matthew (4:9), "If you bow down and worship me..."

(33) "So Pilate re-entered the praetorium and called for Jesus and said to him, 'Are you the king of the Jews?' Jesus replied, 'Are you saying this of yourself, or have others told you about me?' Answered Pilate, 'Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests handed you over to me. What did you do?' Jesus answered, 'My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my subjects would fight so that I should not be handed over to the Jews. However, my kingdom is not of here'."

So what is he saying here? "My kingdom or my realm, the place where I belong, my identity is not here in this world, on this world's terms. My identity is heavenly. And in the heavens I have authority delegated from God. I have authority because I am one with my Father who is The King."

(37) "Said therefore to him Pilate, 'Are you therefore a king?' Answered Jesus, 'You are saying that I am a king? It is for this that I was begotten and for this that I came into the world, it is in order that I should bear witness to the truth (real or authentic). Everyone who is of the truth hears my voice.' So Pilate said, 'What is truth?'"

We come back to the whole theme of John, the authentic world of God versus the make believe divine world that man makes up. The contrast of minds is interesting. God's mind thought us, the creation, into existence. Yet man, the creation which is thought up by God, goes on to think up God as though He is a product of man's mind. This is why so many concepts of God arise. Rather than seeking to know the real God, man devises and imagines versions of God in his own mind. Versions vary with each individual. That is why the concepts of "holy spirit" in circulation are so varied. You ask two Christians what the holy spirit is, and everyone will describe to you a different

holy spirit than the next. There are similarities and differences. There is no uniformity nor oneness because rather than to receive the definition of God, man presumes and takes it upon himself to define God.

(38B) "Having said this, Pilate again went out to the Jews and said to them, 'I find not one fault in him. However, it is your custom that I should release someone to you at the Passover. Would you like therefore that I should release to you the king of the Jews?' So they cried out again saying, 'Not this one but rather Barabbas.' Now Barabbas was a robber."

Again, there is a poetic occurrence here. Barabbas was a robber. The religious nation along with its leadership preferred a thief, a robber, and a rebel, to the authentic son of God. This is something to marvel about. As a matter of fact, according to another report, Barabbas had the same first name as Jesus; there was Jesus the anointed, and there was Jesus Barabbas. They chose Jesus Barabbas over Jesus the anointed. And I say "they", and I have to back off and say not only "they", but "we". We, man, collectively have chosen this because the inheritance that we have received of Jesus, our knowledge of Jesus in the christian circle totally reflects our choice. We preferred the thief. We have wholeheartedly approved of the crucifixion because we have identified with the Jews of that day. We have redefined Jesus as someone who had not been. In Matthew (21:33), Jesus gave the parable of the vinedressers where the owner of the garden leases out the vineyard to renters and they go and make use of the vineyard as if it were their own. And then, at the time of harvest, to collect rent, the owner sends slaves and the slaves are rejected, even put to death. He sends his own son to make the collection. And he also is rejected, even joyfully because "now, if we kill the son, we can have the inheritance." And Christianity claims the inheritance by the death of this son, thereby identifying with the wicked vinedressers. We rejoice over the death of the Owner's son.

Chapter 19

(1) "Then Pilate took Jesus and scourged him. The soldiers braided a crown of thorns, put it on his head, and arrayed him with a purple garment. They approached him saying, 'Hail, king of the Jews!' And they would slap him. Pilate went outside again and said to them, 'See! I am bringing him out to you that you should know that I find not one fault in him.' So Jesus came outside, wearing the thorny crown and the purple outer garment. Pilate said to them, 'Behold the man!' When therefore the chief priests and the subordinates saw him, they cried out saying, 'Impale! Impale!' Pilate said to them, 'You take him and impale him yourselves, for I find no fault in him.' The Jews answered him, 'We have a law, and according to this law, he must die because he made himself son of God.' Therefore, when Pilate heard this saying, he was made to fear even more. He re-entered the prætorium and said to Jesus, 'Where are you from?' But Jesus did not give him an answer. Therefore Pilate said to him, 'Are you not speaking to me? Do you not know that I have the power to release you or to impale you?' Jesus replied, 'You would have no power over me unless it had been given to you from above. This is why the one who handed me over to you has the greater error'."

Let us take note here. The Jews said to Pilate, "We have a law, and according to this law, he must die because he made himself son of God." That is interesting. I can't find one law in the Scriptures that says this, anything like this anywhere. It could be an interpretation of a law which said, "*You will not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.*" (Exodus 20:7) I guess this is how they could interpret it. The Jewish frame of mind had already decided that NO MAN COULD BE a son of God.

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(12) "Due to this, Pilate sought to release him, but the Jews cried out saying, 'If you release him, you are no friend of Caesar. Everyone making himself king speaks against Caesar.' Therefore Pilate, hearing these words, led Jesus outside, and he sat upon a step in a place called "The Stone Pavement", but in Hebrew "Gabbatha". It was the preparation of the Passover at about the sixth hour. He said to the Jews, 'Behold your king!' Those therefore cried out, 'Take him away! Take him away! Impale him!' Pilate said to them, 'Shall I impale your king?' Answered the chief priests, 'We have no king but Caesar.' So then he handed him over to them to be impaled."

It is all about politics, isn't it? But in the Kingdom of God, is there room for politics? Did Jesus ever preach "repent for the DEMOCRACY of God is at hand"?

(16B) "Therefore they took Jesus. And Jesus, himself carrying his stake, went out to the so-called 'Skull Place', which in Hebrew is 'Golgotha'. There they impaled him, along with two others on either side of him. Pilate also wrote a title and put it on the stake. It read, 'JESUS THE NAZARENE, KING OF THE JEWS'. Therefore many of the Jews read this title since the place where Jesus was impaled was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, in Latin and in Greek. The chief priests and the Jews were therefore saying to Pilate, 'Do not write "The King of the Jews", but rather that he said, "I am King of the Jews".' Answered Pilate, 'What I have written, I have written'."

Two sides of the political spectrum are here displayed by Pilate and the Jews. The Jews are trying to say, "The reason for putting him to death was because he claimed something." Whereas Pilate, from his own point of view, was putting to death the possibility of a king rising in the Jewish state. He was politically protecting Caesar, Rome, and ultimately himself and his position.

(23) "When the soldiers impaled Jesus, they took his outer garments and divided them into four parts, to each soldier a part. Intending likewise to part the inner garment, they found it to be seamless, woven from top to bottom. Therefore they said toward one another, 'Let us not split it. Rather let us determine by lot whose it will be,' so that the ¹ Scripture might be fulfilled, '*They divided my garments among themselves, and upon my apparel they cast lots.*' The soldiers indeed did these things.

(25) These women were standing near Jesus' stake: his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas and Mary Magdalene. Jesus therefore, looking at his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, said to his mother, 'Woman, behold your son.' Next he said to the disciple, 'Behold your mother.' From that time on, that disciple took her as his own."

The only thing I see here of significance may be of extreme significance. It seems to be that in this scene where Jesus looks to his mother and says, "Woman, behold your son," and to the disciple, John, "Behold your mother," he is pointing to the practice in the old Jewish tradition of a father naming the heir, the one to have headship of the surviving family. Jesus had twelve apostles who were like sons. And in this it would suggest the possibility that Jesus was naming John as the head of the family to succeed him. Christianity traditionally claims that Peter was the head of the church designated by Jesus. Where do they get this idea from? But the head of the vine to succeed Jesus, the one who has in fact received the legacy of the gospel message of Jesus is John in this case. Regarding the other gospel that is attributed in part to Peter, there is no evidence of him having preached it. It came from other sources, and not direct sources, such as John. So I would have a very strong tendency, at this point, to see this as the naming of the heir, the chief heir, the succeeding head of the Christ family. The discourse on the beach at the end of John's Gospel adds weight to this thought.

(28) “At this point, Jesus knew that all had been accomplished. Yet, to fulfil the Scripture, he said, ‘I am thirsty.’ A vessel full of vinegar was sitting there. So having put a sponge full of vinegar on the end of a stalk of hyssop, they brought it to his mouth. After receiving the vinegar Jesus said, ‘It has been accomplished!’ and, with his last breath, his head drooped.

(31) It was the preparation, the eve of the Great Sabbath day. The Jews did not want the bodies to remain upon the stake on the Sabbath. They petitioned Pilate that their legs be broken so that the bodies might be taken away. So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the men who had been impaled with Jesus. Having come to Jesus, they saw that he was already dead. So they did not break his legs. Instead, one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and blood and water came out. The one who saw this bears witness, and his testimony is true. And he knows that he is telling true things, that you may believe. These things took place that the ² Scripture might be fulfilled, ‘*Not one of his bones will be crushed.*’ It is also ³ written in another place, ‘*They will gaze at him whom they pierced.*’

(38) Joseph of Arimathea, a disciple of Jesus, had been hiding for fear of the Jews. He petitioned Pilate for permission to take away the body of Jesus. With permission, he came and took away the body. Nicodemus, who had previously come to Jesus by night, also came bearing a roll of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds. So they took the body of Jesus and wrapped it in spices with bandages according to the Jewish burial custom. There was a garden near the place where he was impaled. In the garden was a new tomb in which no one had yet been buried. It was there, due to the preparation, and since the tomb was nearby, that they put Jesus.”

Chapter 19 footnotes:

¹ Psalm 22(18) They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.

² Psalm 34(20) He keepeth all his bones: not one of them is broken.

³ Zechariah 12(10) And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for *his* only *son*, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for *his* firstborn.

(11) In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon.

(12) And the land shall mourn, every family apart; the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart;

(13) The family of the house of Levi apart, and their wives apart; the family of Shimei apart, and their wives apart;

(14) All the families that remain, every family apart, and their wives apart.

Chapter 20

(1) “Early on one of the Sabbaths, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb. She saw that the stone had been removed from its mouth. She ran to Simon Peter and the other disciple for whom Jesus had affection. She told them, ‘They have removed the Lord from the tomb, and I do not know what they have done with him.’

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(3) So Peter and the other disciple (John) went to the tomb. The two ran together; but the other disciple outran Peter and arrived at the tomb first. He stooped and looked in, the bandages lying there, yet he did not enter. Simon Peter caught up to him, entered the tomb, and beheld the bandages lying there. He noticed that the sweat cloth, which had covered Jesus' head, was not lying with the bandages but separately, having been rolled up in one place. Then the other disciple, the one who had first reached the tomb, also entered. He saw and believed. They did not yet know that according to Scripture, it is necessary for him to rise from the dead. So the disciples went into seclusion.

(11) Mary, however, was standing near the tomb, weeping. As she wept, she stooped into the tomb and beheld two angels in white sitting there, one at the head and the other at the feet of where the body of Jesus had lain. They said to her, 'Woman, why are you weeping?' She replied, 'They took away my lord, and I do not know what they have done with him.' Having said this, she turned around, and beheld Jesus standing there. She did not recognize him. Jesus said to her, 'Woman, why are you weeping? Whom do you seek?' Mary, thinking him to be the gardener, said, 'Sir, if you removed him, tell me where you put him and I shall take him away'."

To be noted here is that, in spite of knowing Jesus, Mary doesn't recognize him upon seeing him. So we can conclude here that a transformation had taken place. There was something very different about him.

(16) "Jesus said to her, 'Mary.' She turned and said to him in Hebrew, 'Rabboni!', which means 'teacher'. Jesus said to her, 'Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. Go to my brothers and say to them, "I am ascending to my Father and your Father, my God and your God".' Mary Magdalene brought the news to the disciples saying, 'I have seen the Lord!' and relating what he had said to her.

We could see here a clue for us today. Christianity has been "clinging" to a picture and a version of Jesus that is erroneous. Therefore we are being reminded to let him "go to the Father", and let us not "worship him at a distance", and let us adopt his MESSAGE AND PUT IT INTO PRACTICE.

(19) That evening, one of the Sabbaths, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst, saying to them, 'Peace to you.' Upon saying this he showed them both his hands and his side. The disciples rejoiced to see the Lord. Again, Jesus said to them, 'Peace to you. Just as the Father has set me apart, so I am bidding you.' Having said this, he inhaled, and said, 'Receive holy spirit (breath, nature). If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain those of any, they are retained'."

To note here, in this exercise, Jesus is transferring from himself complete and total authority to his apostles, those who knew him personally, the eleven that were left, nobody else. To these he is giving full authority. In other words, as he had said earlier, "No one comes to the Father except through me," he is conferring authority to the eleven apostles because they are set apart and sent, "hand picked" to continue his work of reconciliation. And "if you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain those of any, they are retained." Forgiveness is imparted through the process of transformation from the earthly to the heavenly. The forgiveness begins with the earthly person realizing his condition, and his need to repent and to make a choice in favor of the heavenly. But it requires subordination, surrender, not just in principle and in the mind, calling it spirit or whatever, but surrendering totally, just as the disciples were to surrender in all things to Jesus the Anointed in their day. Forgiveness is now in the hands of his successors, the apostles. And forgiveness is in surrendering to one of these in all things with no exceptions, not just in some things and not in others, but in all matters.

We have a tendency as humans to surrender, theoretically, in spirit matters, but not in flesh matters. But this is where we exercise our will: in the flesh realm. So if we retain this, if we keep the authority, the power to decide who is right, what is right, what is wrong, what to do, we perpetuate the error. We must go through that singular door that Jesus described in the parable of the good shepherd. It is by total surrender to the “anointed one”, whoever he may be. The anointed one in the days of the apostles was Jesus. Upon transferring to them his authority, and leaving, the anointed one was then any one of those eleven. Anyone else wanting to be part of this family, needed to surrender self in order to be born a new member of this family. One could become a new being, a spirit being still residing in the flesh but a transformed being. The surrender is the evidence of the new birth.

(24) “Thomas, one of the twelve, the one called ‘Twin’, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples were saying to him, ‘We have seen the Lord.’ But he said to them, ‘Unless I see in his hands the nail prints and I thrust my finger into them, and unless I thrust my hand into his side, I will never believe.’

(26) Eight days later, his disciples were inside and this time Thomas was with them. Jesus came, though the doors were locked, stood in their midst and said, ‘Peace to you.’ Addressing Thomas, he said, ‘Bring your finger here and see my hands. Bring your hand and thrust it into my side. Do not refuse to believe but rather be believing.’ Thomas answered and said to him, ‘My Lord and my God!’ Then Jesus said, ‘Because you have seen me, have you believed? Happy are they who believe without having seen.’

(30) Many other signs Jesus did in sight of the disciples, which are not written in this scroll. But these were written in order that you may believe that Jesus is the Anointed, the son of God, and in order that, believing, you may have life in his name.”

Chapter 21

(1) “After these things Jesus manifested himself again to the disciples by the sea of Tiberias in the following manner. Simon Peter, Thomas the ‘Twin’, Nathanael from Cana of Galilee, the sons of Zebedee and two others of the disciples were together. Simon Peter said to them, ‘I am going fishing.’ They replied, ‘We are coming with you.’ They went, boarded the boat, and all that night they caught nothing.

(4) At daybreak, Jesus stood on the beach, but the disciples did not recognize him. Therefore Jesus said to them, ‘Little children, do you have anything to eat?’ They answered, ‘No.’ So he said to them, ‘Cast your net on the right side of the boat and you will find.’ They cast it therefore, but they were not able to draw it in for the multitude of fishes. Then that disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, ‘It is the Lord!’ When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girded himself with his outer garment, for he was naked, and threw himself into the sea. The other disciples came with the little boat, for they were not far from shore, only about two hundred cubits, dragging the net of fishes.”

A thought comes to mind here, just a possible representation. In this scene, the group of seven of Jesus’ disciples were together, not eleven, but seven. In other words, there is an incomplete situation here. And they decide to go fishing. They spend the whole night fishing and catch nothing. Thinking of some of the things Jesus said in the gospel of Matthew, he told Peter and the disciples that he would make them fishers of men. And in another place, he says, “Night is coming where no one can work.” So here is a situation where during the night,

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the designated apostles are fishing but catch nothing. I wonder that this be prophetic in the sense that, after the death of Jesus, night set in because another gospel brought night to this gospel. And it took precedence. It was chosen, as John says earlier, "Men preferred darkness to light." The light came, but men rejected the light. So for a couple of thousand years, it has been night time. And the genuine, authentic gospel has not been given daylight, so-to-speak. It has not been allowed to succeed, it has not been allowed to "catch fish". It has not been allowed to be considered, let alone received. Another one has done so in its place. But lo and behold! Morning comes, and they are told to cast their net on the right side of the boat. What is the right side of the boat? There are two sides of a boat: the right side and the wrong side. Again, I may be stretching the intent here, but I find an interesting thought in this.

(9) "When they set foot ashore, they saw a charcoal fire lying there with fillets on it, and bread. Jesus invited them, saying, 'Bring some of the fillets you just caught.' Simon Peter went and drew the net onto the beach, full of large fishes, one hundred and fifty-three of them. Though there were so many, yet the net was not torn. Jesus said to them, 'Come and have breakfast.' None of the disciples dared to inquire of him, 'Who are you?' recognizing that it was the Lord. Jesus took the bread and gave it to them, and the fillets likewise. This was already the third time that Jesus was manifested to the disciples, after having been raised from the dead."

Continuing the picture of night time and such, maybe the time is near for Jesus' manifestation having been raised from the dead. Maybe it is time to see a manifestation of the revived gospel of Christ.

(15) "When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon of John, do you love me more than these?' Peter answered, 'Yes, Lord, you know that I have affection for you.' Jesus said to him, 'Feed my young lambs.' He said to him a second time, 'Simon of John, do you love me?' Again Peter answered, 'Yes Lord, you know that I have affection for you.' Jesus said to him, 'Shepherd my little sheep.' A third time he said to him, 'Simon of John, do you have affection for me?' Peter was grieved because he asked him the third time, 'Do you have affection for me?' So Peter replied, 'Lord, you know all things. You know that I have affection for you.' Jesus finally said, 'Feed my little sheep. Amen! Amen! I am saying to you, that when you were younger you girded yourself and walked about where you pleased. But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands and another will gird you and bring you where you do not want to go.' This he said signifying by what sort of death Peter would satisfy God. Then he said, 'Be following me'."

What I find interesting in this scene is that three times, Jesus questions Peter about love. The first time, Jesus asks Peter whether he loved him, the AGAPE, or deliberate love. But Peter replies from the human place where he is, "I have affection for you," not love, affection. The second time, Jesus asks the same question, but gets the same answer. The third time, Jesus asks him, instead of love, but rather whether he had affection for him. Peter is upset about this. There is a difference being made here between deliberate love versus human affection. Affection is earthly, love is heavenly. Love is superior, it is the higher calling because it is not based on feeling. It is premeditated and deliberate. It is the kind of love that God invites us to have, to bestow upon us. It is the kind of love that God has for us. He doesn't love us because we are loveable or worthy of His love. He loves us deliberately with purpose and anticipation, to raise us to a higher plane, to a higher level. Affection is common, normal and not special. It is natural and automatic. It is a reaction to someone or something that is pleasing to us. Whereas agape love is premeditated, and it is not conditional upon anything happening to cause it to be from the recipient of the love. It is an exercise of will rather than an emotional reaction.

Jesus goes on to tell Peter that when he is older, another would make him do what he didn't want to do. This could easily be the foreshadowing or the prediction of the event where Peter will be given credit for leading the church in the common christian mindset. Whereas the authentic Peter, the authentic disciple, would not have done this. He would have followed the same gospel as John.

And so, in a sense, Peter is being given credit for the counter-gospel, the gospel of substitution by being declared to be the head of that church.

(20) "Having turned around, Peter looked at the disciple whom Jesus loved following behind. This is the one who at the supper leaned against his breast and said, 'Lord, who is the one handing you over (beside-give)?' Seeing this one, Peter said to Jesus, 'Lord, what about him?' Jesus replied, 'If I want him to remain until I come, what is that to you? You, be following me.' So this saying circulated among the brothers, 'That disciple is not dying.' However, Jesus did not say to him that he was not dying, but 'If I want him to remain until I come, what is that to you?'"

Why is this recorded, this exchange with Peter about John? I see a couple of things. One is that Peter is indicating a preoccupation with another disciple, a brother from his point of view. And Jesus is saying, "Don't preoccupy yourself with the horizontal brotherhood. Be preoccupied with the vertical brotherhood. Be following me. That is to be your focus, and whatever this other brother does is his business, his concern. His following me is his challenge, not yours. Your challenge is to follow me. Each one of you has the individual challenge of following me. Concern yourselves with being sons, followers. Don't be concerned with being leaders, or fathers." And then Jesus said, "If I want him to remain until I come, what is that to you?" Could this be a prediction of the last day, the seventh day, where John is to be raised in acknowledgment along with his gospel, preserved from total corruption and "death", kept unto the "coming of Christ"? It is considered by many that Jesus is coming back. The prediction is not so much that Jesus, the individual person, is coming back, but Christ is coming back. The Son of Man concept is to be raised up in the last day. And is it not possible that this is what Jesus is foretelling, that in the last day the genuine Christ along with his gospel will be raised up through John, by the due recognition being given to him?

(24) "This is the disciple bearing witness about these things and who wrote these things. We know that his testimony is true. There are many other things Jesus did, which, if they were written in detail, I suppose the world itself could not contain the scrolls written."

John ends his account of the gospel by again certifying, by restating that his testimony is authentic. And to respond to the earlier question, "What is truth?" he is talking about truth versus untruth, genuine versus counterfeit, the real versus the make-believe. There is an authentic gospel presented here. But there is also a counterfeit, substitute gospel in the world. And he is proclaiming, and stating from where he is coming. He knows this: he is a witness who has seen, who has personally experienced the Christ experience with Jesus. He was personally involved and he is saying, "Because of this, I am an authentic witness. I am giving you my own testimony, not someone else's second hand testimony."

First Letter Of John

Following the meditations on the gospel according to John, my thoughts are simply that, in writing the gospel account, John bore witness from a genuine witness vantage point. He testified of who Jesus was, what he did, and what his message was in order to set the record straight. Apparently in his time there had already arisen some divergences to the gospel (the message that he had received from Jesus), some change of definitions, and some interpretations as to who Jesus was and what he did. John was concerned about this. In addition to writing his version of the gospel, he also wrote three letters that are included in the New Testament. These letters were addressed to his disciples, those seeking to know his apostle, Jesus. It would appear that his letters were written, on the one hand, as practical applications for his learners, his students, for incorporating in their life the message of the gospel. On the other hand, he encourages them to continue steadfast in their walk while ignoring the forces around them tempting them to abandon their way, namely anti-christs, false prophets, and idols. John shows us that a tremendous change took place in himself. He described it and was offering it to his followers.

Chapter 1

(1) "It is fundamental that which we have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, that which we have examined and we have felt with our hands, everything about the word of life. The life was made manifest to us. We have seen it and we bear witness. It is from this (vantage point) that we are proclaiming to you the life everlasting. It was in relation to the Father and it was made manifest to us. It is from that which we have seen and heard that we are proclaiming to you, so that you also may share a place with us. Our relationship is with the Father and with his anointed son Jesus. We write these things so that our joy may be fulfilled."

Obviously, at this point, John is making reference to other messages. Other gospels are being taught out there. And they do not conform to the teachings that he himself had received directly from Jesus. And so he is cautioning to "beware of teachers who come to bear witness of something they have not personally experienced." He is drawing attention to the qualification of a genuine witness.

(5) "This is the message which we have heard from him and we are announcing to you: God is light and there is absolutely no darkness in Him. If we should claim to have a relationship with Him and yet we be walking about in darkness, we are lying and are not practising the legitimate. But if we are walking about in the light as He is in the light, we then have a legitimate relationship with one another and the blood of His son Jesus is cleansing us from all erring.

(8) Should we say that we have no error, we make ourselves to drift and we are not being honest. But if we acknowledge our erring, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our erring and to cleanse us from all impropriety. If we should say that we have not erred, we make Him a liar and His expressed thought is not in us."

Chapter 2

(1) "My offspring, I write these things to you that you might not stray. Should anyone stray, we have a summoner before the Father, anointed Jesus the righteous. He is propitiator for our estrangement, and not only for ours but also for that of the whole world. This is the proof that we know him, when we put his instructions into practice. The one who says, 'I know him', and does not put into practice his instructions is a liar, and legitimacy is not in him. But he who truly puts his word into practice, in this one the love of God has been perfected. In this we know that we are in him. The one claiming in him to be remaining, he must himself accordingly be walking about as that one walked about."

Again, here John is definitely referring to some other teachers out there who are not legitimate and who are causing upheaval, who are misleading people, who claim to have it but in reality do not.

(7) "Beloved, I am not writing to you a new instruction, but rather an old one which you originally have. That old instruction is the word which you heard. I am simply writing to you a renewed instruction: as it is true in him, so it is true in you, that the darkness is passing and the genuine light is already shining.

(9) The one claiming to be in the light yet hating his brother is still in darkness even now. The one loving his brother is remaining in the light, and there is in him no cause for stumbling. The one hating his brother is in darkness. And walking about in darkness, he does not know where he is going. The darkness has blinded his eyes."

Again, here John is talking about the contrast between the genuine and the false. And when he is talking about hating a brother... Jesus taught of a oneness within the brotherhood, a oneness as in a vine where there is total harmony in the message, the message being the same. And what is the message? The message is of reconciliation with the Father through surrender, by subordination. And anyone who is unable to subordinate to the "anointed", whoever that anointed might be, just hasn't got it. Independence is out of the picture by now. The whole message of reconciliation and forgiveness for our errings is very simply one of surrender and subordination, not just in theory and in mental exercise, but in reality and in practice, to the authentic anointed one. Now Jesus, being the authentic, passed on his anointing to his own authentic subordinates, his BROTHERS, whose subordinates in turn can be authentic but only by subordination, not by confrontation, and not in independence. He was talking about a MULTI-GENERATIONAL BROTHERHOOD, a VERTICAL BROTHERHOOD.

(12) "I am writing to you, offspring, that you have forsaken your straying through his name; I am writing to you, fathers, that you have known the original one. I am writing to you, young men, that you have overcome the faulty. I write to you, children, that you have perceived the Father. I write to you, fathers, that you have known the original one. I write to you, young men, that you are strong and the word of God is remaining in you and you have overcome the faulty. I write to you, children, that you have recognized the Father."

In his own way, John is referring to the process of reconciliation, and the father/son relationship, the father/son relationship in the authentic divine setting.

(15) "Be not loving the world nor the things in the world. Should anyone be loving the world, the love of the Father is not in him. Everything in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pursuit of self-sufficiency, are not of the Father, but rather are of the world. The world is passing away and also its lust, but the one doing the will of God remains indefinitely.

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(18) Children, it is the last hour. Just as you heard that an anti-christ is coming, even now many anti-christs have come. By this we know that it is indeed the last hour. They went forth from among us, but they were not of us, for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us. This exposes the fact that they are not all of (from) us. Ye have an unction: from the holy one, you know all. I did not write to you that you do not know the truth, but rather that you indeed know it, and that every falsehood is not of the truth."

Let us pause for a moment here. John is referring to, "It is foretold that anti-christ is coming, but it has already happened. They are already out there, not an individual anti-christ, but the spirit of anti-christ, the counter-gospel, the anti-gospel." What is the anti-christ? It is the one who does not reflect the authentic, the original. And it was already happening in John's day. He was referring to that saying, "They went from among us, but they are not of us because they teach another gospel. They're not sticking with us, and they defy us (the apostles and their authentic followers). They give a different gospel rendition and deny our authority over them." They claim pre-eminence for themselves and that is not what Jesus taught. It is fundamentally different. It isn't just a different point of view. It is fundamentally different because the very basic definition of reconciliation with God is based on willing subordination, the dying to one's self, the subordination of the will. The will does not die. But even though it continues, I can voluntarily subordinate it to another. The onus is on me to do this by first surrendering my will to God and asking God to place me where He wants me, under whose authority He would like me to function in His house. And using the vine analogy again, to what branch am I intended to be attached?

(22) "Who is the liar does not depend on recognizing that Jesus is or is not the Anointed. This is the anti-christ: the one contradicting the "Father and the Son" (the gospel that Jesus taught to his disciples). Everyone contradicting the son does not have the father either. The one repeating the son also has (repeated) the father. As for you, that which you originally heard, let it remain in you. Should that which you originally heard remain in you, you will remain in the son and in the Father. This is the promise which he gave us, everlasting life."

Well, if contradicting the son is contradicting the father, the same thing applies to the grandson and to the great grandson down the line. If I am born a great grandson, it is not up to me to "short change" the hereditary line, the family tree. I am one with the vine by remaining attached to the branch which sprouted me.

(26) "I wrote to you these things about those seducing you. And as for you, the anointing which you were given from Him remains in you, and you do not need anyone (else) to be teaching you. Rather His anointing is teaching you about all things. It is authentic, not false. So just as it taught you remain in it. So now, offspring, remain in Him, that when He is manifested you might have confidence and not be disgraced from Him in his presence. If you should know that He is faultless, you know that everyone practising faultlessness has been begotten of Him."

Chapter 3

(1) "See what manner of love the Father has given to us that we should be called **divine offspring, and so we are**. It is because the world does not know **Him** that it does not know **us**. Beloved, we are **now divine offspring**, though it has not yet been fully manifested what we shall be. We know that when it is manifested, we will be like Him and that we will see Him as He really is. Everyone anticipating this purifies himself just as God is pure."

Here, at the beginning of this chapter, John is referring once again with emphasis on the fact that in the reconciliation with God, God bestows His nature on us making us divine offspring, spirit offspring of His by transforming us from the earthly nature to the divine nature. "We may not be fully mature at this point in time, but we are already children of God. We don't need to be looking for some other way into the house of God. We are already members. Keep steadfast in this."

(4) "Everyone perpetuating the error is also perpetuating lawlessness, and **THE NOT BEING UNDER AUTHORITY IS THE ERROR**. You know that God was manifested so that He might expose the erring, as erring is not in Him. Everyone remaining in Him does not stray. Everyone straying has neither seen Him nor known Him. Offspring, let no one deceive you. The one practising faultlessness is faultless, just as that one is faultless. The one practising error is of the traducer, since the traducer is fundamentally erring. To this end was manifested the son of God, that He might reverse the works of the traducer.

(9) Everyone begotten of God is not practising error, since His seed remains in him. He is not inclined to be erring, because he is begotten of God. By this are manifested the offspring of God and the offspring of the traducer: he who does not practice faultlessness and who does not love his brother is not of God.

(11) This then is the message which you heard originally, so that we may be loving one-another, not in the way of Cain who out of faultiness slaughtered his brother. And why did he slaughter him? Because his works were depraved, but those of his brother faultless.

(13) Do not be amazed, brothers, if the world hates you. We know that we have passed over out of death into life, since we are loving the brothers; the one not loving remains in death. Everyone hating his brother is a murderer and you know that no murderer has life everlasting remaining in him. He demonstrated love when he placed his soul over us; we in turn are obliged to place our souls over the brothers (disciples). Whoever has the life-means of the world, ¹ sees his brother in need, and withholds from him, how can the love of God be remaining in him? Offspring, let us not be loving merely in word or with tongue but in deed and in genuineness."

Here, John is referring to the brotherhood of which Jesus spoke. And this brotherhood was not a brotherhood based on horizontal relationships, brother to brother. He established a brotherhood which was first based on a relationship of progeny, a vertical brotherhood, a vertical system where brother "begets" brother. And here John says that Jesus demonstrated his love for us when he "placed his soul over us". In other words, he provided for his disciples the genuine identity. He placed his soul as an example for them to follow. He "bet the farm". And that is how he demonstrated his love. He wouldn't stray from that concept in spite of all of the world's pressures and obstacles, in spite of the world's refusal of this fundamental principle, even unto death. This identity, this soul remained firm and steadfast. Then John says, "As Jesus did this, the onus is on the disciple to now continue that work by placing his own soul over "brothers", not horizontally, but vertically, disciples, allowing subordinates to take their place in the family tree, in the vine. He is saying that anyone who is unwilling to subordinate cannot be part of the vine.

Not only that, he also says that whoever "has the life-means of the world..." This may have an interesting double meaning. Firstly, he is speaking of those having already received the heavenly identity from Jesus, the "life-means in this world", including himself. He is not talking about survival in the flesh here; he is talking about the means to everlasting life available to the world. And whoever has access to this is required to pass it on, to make it available to potential followers, the genuine, not the faulty.

Secondly, I think he is talking about disciples, followers, who, when they notice their apostle being in financial or material need, withhold whatever support they have at their disposal. This is very similar to the original commandment in Exodus 20:12, "*Honour thy father and thy mother...*" And

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on a similar note, Jesus says in the Book of Revelations to John, 3(20) “*Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.*” If Jesus delegated his disciples to be his representatives on earth, then at any time a disciple comes “knocking on my door”, it behooves me to share what I have with him materially, and to receive what he has for me SPIRITUALLY. Jesus had and was the “Bread of Life” to all those IN HIS PRESENCE. So whoever ate of this “bread” became the “Bread of Life” JUST LIKE JESUS. So a disciple of Jesus, namely John here, ALSO BECAME the “BREAD OF LIFE” IN THE FLESH. Sadly, John is not physically here on earth anymore except in the person of HIS TESTIMONY, and in the person of HIS DISCIPLES. “Whoever receives whomever I am bidding, receives me, and whoever receives me, receives the One bidding me.” Is it not time to stop pretending?

(19) “By this we will know that we are legitimate, when we surrender our heart to him. When our heart points the finger of blame, God is greater than our heart and He knows all. Beloved, when our heart stops casting blame, then we have total confidence in relation to God. And whatever we ask we receive from Him, since we are putting His instructions into practice, and we are doing the things pleasing in His sight. This is His instruction, so that we should commit to the surname of His anointed son Jesus and that we may love one-another according to the definition He gave us. The one applying His instructions remains in Him and He in him. And how do we know that He is remaining in us? By the spirit (nature, attitude, mindset) which He gave to us.”

When we receive Him as He is, we are transformed and we see it in ourselves. We sense it. We observe it. And we know it because our whole point of view shifts. Our mindset, our frame of mind changes. And that is what he means by “the spirit”. It is the heavenly spirit that replaces the earthly spirit.

Chapter 4

(1) “Beloved, do not trust every spirit, but rather prove the spirits whether they are of God, for many false prophets have gone forth into the world.

(2) This is how you recognize the spirit of God: every spirit which repeats the anointed Jesus who came in the flesh is of God, but every spirit which does not repeat (that very) Jesus, is not of God. And this is the spirit of the anti-christ, which, as you have heard, is coming, and now is already in the world.

(4) You are offspring of God, and you have overcome them, because greater is the one in you than the one in the world. They are of the world, therefore they speak from a worldly viewpoint, and the world hears them. We are of God. The one knowing God hears us. Anyone not of God does not hear us. That is how we know the spirit of legitimacy and the spirit of fraudulence.

(7) Beloved, let us be loving one-another, because love is of God, and everyone who loves has been begotten of God and knows God. Everyone who does not love never knew God, since God is love. God manifested His love among us by setting apart his monogenic son into the world, in order that we might live through him. Here is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and set apart His son, a propitiator for our estrangement.”

In other words, he is a template, a guide and an appropriate instrument for reversing our estrangement, the means to reconciliation.

(11) "Beloved, if God so loved us, we are also obliged to love one-another. No one at any time has seen God. If we love one-another, God remains in us and His love, having been perfected, rests in us. How do we know that we remain in Him and He in us? In that He has given to us of His spirit. We have seen and we are bearing witness that the Father has set apart the son, deliverer of the world. Whoever repeats Jesus anointed, the son of God, God remains in him and he in God. We have come to know and have trusted the love which God has in us."

Here is where I encounter a contextual conflict. John just a few verses earlier says, (2) "This is how you recognize the spirit of God: every spirit which repeats the anointed Jesus who came in the flesh is of God, (3) but every spirit which does not repeat (that very) Jesus, is not of God. And this is the spirit of the anti-christ, which, as you have heard, is coming, and now is already in the world." Having said this, why would John say later on in verse 15, in the original Greek text, "Whoever repeats that Jesus is the son of the God, the God in him is remaining and he in the God"? John always qualifies his entire gospel message by specifying exactly WHO is to be REPEATED. John is not talking about the generic recognition of the EXISTENCE of a Jesus Christ and who was a son of God. He is pointing to the SPECIFIC Jesus Christ whom he got to know and of whom he is now a representative. It is NOT enough to "confess Jesus Christ as the son of God". That does nothing. It is PARAMOUNT to GET TO KNOW THE REAL JESUS CHRIST, AND TO REPEAT HIM IN WORD AND IN DEED. And it is for that reason that the above verse, verse 15, may have been altered by someone wanting to force John to identify with the COUNTER GOSPEL.

Here John is elaborating on the family of God. It is not just Jesus alone who is son of God. He is saying here that whoever repeats the anointed Jesus is also a son of God. In other words John, repeating Jesus, is equally a son of God, an offspring of God through Jesus. You could say a grandson, Jesus being the firstborn, or rather the first generation, of the authentic fullness of God. Anyone born through John or any other legitimate offspring of Jesus, is also a legitimate offspring. And anyone who does not recognize them and their gospel, the love of God is not in him. He remains of the world.

(16B) "God is love. He who remains in that love remains in God and God remains in him. Love has been perfected between us in that, just as that one is, so are we in this world, and this gives us confidence in the day of decision."

The day of decision is any day I have a choice to make when a choice is presented before me to consider. I am to choose between the heavenly and the earthly nature or identity, specifically the authentic heavenly. Sadly, man tries to force the heavenly nature to conform to the earthly nature and to absorb it into the earthly. But this is not the way it was meant to be. It is the opposite. This is the work of the anti-christ, the focus being on the earthly instead of the heavenly. Man is to accept the heavenly for what it is instead of what he would like or wish it to be.

(18) "There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear, since fear implies punishment."

He is talking about whoever fears going to "hell". This is a prevailing "doctrine" or "belief" among not only Christians, but in many religious systems of beliefs. It is a fallacy. There is no love in it with no genuine knowledge of God. With the fear of punishment there is no love. Jesus says in the Book of Revelations, ² "*Whomever I love, I chasten...*" In other words, as a son of God, I will be chastened, not punished. If I fear God's chastening (erroneously interpreted as "punishment") then I do not love the author of the chastening. But if I love my father, I will receive my chastening which is part of the process of my transformation from the earthly identity to the heavenly identity. As a member of God's family I don't have to face any "hell" or anything like that. Fear is the evidence of the absence of love. So if I have fears, I still haven't got it. I haven't received the spirit of God in its fullness.

(18B) "And he who fears has not been perfected in love. We love because He first loved us."

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(20) Should anyone say, 'I love God', and yet hate his brother, he is a liar. For the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, can not love God whom he has not seen. This instruction we have from Him, so that the one loving God may be also loving his brother."

Again, John is putting emphasis on the vertical brotherhood primarily. How can I pretend to love God whom I have not seen, if I can't love the one He begot ahead of me? I should be grateful that God provided someone ahead of me to lead and to guide me, to sponsor me into His family instead of defiantly standing there thinking I can enter by myself just by defining God to suit my fancy.

Chapter 5

(1) "Everyone believing that Jesus is the anointed has been begotten of God. And everyone loving the begetter is also loving the one begotten of him. When we love God and put into practice His instructions, then we know that we are loving the offspring of God."

Again, this passes on. He is saying that, in loving the begetter, I must also love the begotten. Just as Jesus is the begotten of God, and I love Jesus, I can't stop there. I must also love anyone begotten from God through Jesus. Therefore, his disciples, those to whom he gave spirit life, I can't ignore or bypass them.

(3) "This is the love of God in order that we may put into practice His instructions and His instructions are not heavy, since all begotten of God overcome the world. And this is the means by which we overcome the world: our faithfulness (steadfast fidelity).

(5) Who overcomes the world if not he who believes that Jesus is the son of God? It is he who came through water and blood, anointed Jesus, not in water only but in water and in blood. It is the spirit (attitude, mindset) that bears witness, since the spirit is the truth. There are three bearing witness, the spirit, the water and the blood, and the three are one (in agreement)."

How does this work? Well, Jesus seems to indicate, in his exchange with Nicodemus, that water represents the flesh nature which is the beginning. I am first born of water from my flesh mother, but not in spirit yet. And then he talks of the blood representing one of two things: the blood as that which flows through the veins to give life to the members or branches that remain attached, and the blood-line, which represents the family origin or parentage. When I receive the spirit identity, I am transformed and am given spirit nature. I now change "blood-line" or family.

(9) "If we are apt to receive the testimony of men, know that the testimony of God is even more reliable. This is the testimony of God, that He has acknowledged His son. The one believing into the son of God has evidence in himself. The one not believing God has made him to be a liar, since he has not believed the testimony which God presented in evidence regarding His son. And this is God's testimony that gives us life everlasting, and this life is in His son. The one who has the son has life; the one who does not have the son of God does not have life."

The understanding, I think, to which John is referring is simply having the evidence within one's self, the testimony, the experience, after having put the words of God into practice. I see it because it is taking place within me.

(13) "These things I wrote to you, you who are committed to the (sur)name of the son of God, that you might know that indeed you have life everlasting. And this is the confidence which we have toward Him, that if we should ask anything according

to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we may ask, we also know that He will grant us that which we have asked of Him.”

Now this statement isn't intended to mean that we can ask for anything that we wish. If I am sold out to God, I don't wish for anything outside of Him. So I can't use this as pretext (license) to ask for something independent of Him. This doesn't mean to ask for anything from my will, because my will is subordinated to His now. Therefore what I ask, He will hear provided (it is conditional) that it remains within the parameters of His expressed will. It is provided that it be part of what His wishes are. He is not going to facilitate my estrangement as a gift.

(16) “If anyone should see his brother commit an offence which does not incur death, he may inquire, and he will give life to the one offending not toward death. There is offence incurring death. I am not suggesting that request be made concerning that. All faultiness is offence, but there is offence not incurring death.”

This isn't very complicated. In his frailty, the human being, in the process of transformation, will make mistakes. Once I “sell out” to God, once I commit myself to God, I will still make mistakes. I will need God along the way, and those mistakes are forgivable. They are faults that are forgivable. But there is one fault that is unforgivable: it is the fault of “not going to the Father”. It is not a mere mistake. It is an all-out error in direction and intent, not only an error in practice but an error in direction. So errors in the process of change are forgivable as long as the receptiveness to correction remains. But the moment that I am not receptive to correction, the moment I cease to repent, then I am “unforgivable”. I become rebellious and I go astray. It is that very thing that leads to death. In other words, going back to the garden of Eden, and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, if I insist and persist on eating of its fruit, clinging to my independence, the automatic consequence is death. God said this to Adam from the beginning. The consequence is death. Once I have committed myself to God, I have accepted and have recognized that my dilemma is the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. I may make mistakes along the way, even eat from this tree. But in my direction I am allowing God to correct me and to transform my mindset in order to stop eating from that tree.

(18) “We know that everyone begotten of God does not err, for the one who begot him of God is keeping him, and the faulty (one) does not touch him. We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies in fault. Moreover, we know that the son of God comes, and he has given to us understanding to recognize the true God and we are in the genuine, in His anointed son, Jesus. Now this is the true God and life everlasting. Offspring, guard yourselves from idols.”

Idols are commonly thought to be trinkets or statues that we fashion for ourselves. Idols, in reality, are false images of God that we create in our minds to replace the real God rather than the reality of God that He gives us, that He bestows on us of Himself. I need to see God for who He really is by letting Him reveal Himself to me rather than try to “figure Him out” for myself. Otherwise I would end up creating an imaginary version of Him, which is the natural human tendency, and “placing my trust” in this image. This practice is in the end ridiculous, foolish, and a waste of time. There is only one genuine authentic God and I need to let Him define Himself to me. And John concludes this letter with this most singular warning.

Second Letter of John

(1) "The elder to the chosen lady and to her offspring, whom I love in truth, and not I alone but also all those who have known the truth, through the truth which remains in us, and will be with us forever. There will be with us favour, mercy and peace proceeding from God the Father, and anointed Jesus, the son of the Father, in truth and love."

When he says, "The elder to the chosen lady and to her offspring", he is addressing her as the congregation of believers who have heard from him before. They must be his own personal disciples, understudies, followers with disciples of their own. There is the suggestion of more than one generation of followers, or "offspring".

(4) "I was overjoyed to find some of your offspring walking in truth, in accordance with the instruction we received from the Father. And now I am reminding you, lady, not as though writing to you a new instruction, but rather that which we have had from the beginning, so that we may love one-another. This is what love means, that we continue walking according to his instructions. This is the instruction: may you continue walking in the very instruction you heard from the beginning. Many impostors have gone out into the world. They do not repeat the anointed Jesus who came in the flesh. These are the impostor and the anti-christ."

He is warning his disciples, his congregation, of others who are offering different versions of the gospel. And he is saying, "Don't listen to them. What you got from us originally is the authentic, nothing else. There are impostors who claim to know Jesus, who claim to speak for Jesus, but they don't believe in the Jesus who came in the flesh. They believe in a Jesus they imagined in their minds." John knew the Jesus who came in the flesh and he repeated his instructions. Others were claiming to hear from Jesus in the spirit, in meditations, and conjuring up all kinds of substitute and counterfeit theology and religious precepts. Whereas John goes back to the basic, the simplicity of Christ and the reconciliation process.

(8) "Watch yourselves, so that you might not undo what we work, but rather you might obtain a full reward. Everyone taking the lead and not remaining in the teaching of the anointed does not have divinity. The one remaining in this teaching has both the father and the son. Should anyone come to you not bearing this teaching, do not receive him into your home nor encourage him in his endeavours. For he who encourages him, shares in his futile works."

(12) Although I could be writing many things to you, I prefer not to communicate with paper and ink. Rather I hope to come visit you and speak face to face, so that your joy may be fulfilled.

(13) The offspring of your chosen sister embrace you."

My simple thought here is that John is suggesting the existence of similar congregations established elsewhere, either those established by John himself, or established by fellow apostles who had the same mandate as himself bestowed by anointed Jesus.

Third Letter of John

(1) "The elder to Gaius the beloved, whom I love in truth.

(2) Beloved, I pray that you should prosper in all things and be healthy, just as your identity (your soul) is maturing. Yes I rejoiced greatly when brothers came from you. They were living proof of how faithful you are, since their walk corresponded to yours. I have no greater joy than to hear of my offspring that their walk is faithful to the truth.

(5) Beloved, you are doing faithfully as you work at the transformation of strangers into brothers, who bore witness to your love in sight of the assembly of the called-out. You do well sending forth these suitably to God; for they came forth preferring the name over anything they might have received from the Gentiles. Therefore we are obliged to accept such as these, so that we may generate fellow authentic workers."

Here, John is making reference and confirming this oneness of the apostle/disciple, the disciple walks and talks like the apostle. Even though John here refers to brothers, Gaius, a disciple of John, went forth and taught others. Another who was taught by Gaius came along and met John, and John recognizes Gaius, hence himself and Jesus, not by his physical appearance, but by the teachings. He is in oneness. He is reflecting the teacher. He is a faithful reproduction of himself through Gaius. There is integrity even though there are more than two generations. This is what John is confirming.

(9) "I write something to the assembly. But Diotrephes, who is fond of pre-eminence, is not receiving us over himself. For this reason, when I come, I will bring to remembrance the works which he does. Not content to berate us with hurtful words, he does not receive the brothers over him. And those wishing to do so he forbids. He even drives them from the assembly.

(11) Beloved, do not imitate the worthless but rather the good. The one doing good is of God, the one doing bad has not seen God. Demetrius was examined under all and under the truth itself; and we confer on him a favourable report, and you know that our report is reliable.

(13) Many more things I could be writing to you, but I prefer not to communicate with ink and reed. I hope to see you soon where we shall speak face to face. Peace to you.

The friends embrace you. Embrace the friends by name."

Reference is made here by John to two types, whether they are actual individuals or not, I can't be certain, but the interesting thing is that the name "Diotrephes" to which he refers, in Greek means "Nourished by God". There seems to be an individual by the name of Diotrephes who is fond of pre-eminence and does not receive the brothers (John and the like) over himself. He doesn't recognize their authority over him. He is independent. He knows better. He sees himself to be intelligent, and an independent thinker, and he claims to have direct access to God and have it independently. He says, "I am going to show them up." He not only does not receive them (the genuine disciples of Jesus) over himself, he prevents others from receiving them over themselves. Jesus had said in Matthew pertaining to the Pharisees that they themselves neither enter the kingdom of God, and they prevent those who would enter from entering. So the pharisaical mindset is worldly, and it is present.

Then he mentions Demetrius. This must be the one who had just arrived, and he says about him, "We've examined him, and I am pleased to report that he's one of us."

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Letters of John footnotes:

¹ Matthew 25(41) *Then shall he (the king) say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:*

(42) *For I was an hungred, and ye gave ME no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave ME no drink:*

(43) *I was a stranger, and ye took ME not in: naked, and ye clothed ME not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited ME not.*

(44) *Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we THEE an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto THEE?*

(45) *Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not TO ME.*

² Revelations 3(19) *As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.*

Deuteronomy 8(5) *Thou shalt also consider in thine heart, that, as a man chasteneth his son, so the LORD thy God chasteneth thee.*

2Samuel 7:14 *I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men:*

A Visit With Matthew

Introduction

I visited with the apostle John, focused on what he has been saying, and I listened carefully to his teachings. By virtue of the fact that he knew Jesus personally and tells us about him, through John, I get a fresh look, a fresh view of the Holy Scriptures from beginning to end. John sends us back to the beginning, to the beginning of creation where God created man and the rest of the creation along with Him. And the Scriptures from the beginning express the purpose that God has had and has for man. The purpose is clearly defined throughout the Scriptures as that of relationship, relationship firstly between God and His creation, man, and secondly between man and man. He has progressively revealed through the Scriptures how He sees it, and what He intends. And at the same time has invited us to join Him in this plan.

So Jesus, apparently from the accounts handed down to us, seems to be the first of the created men to grasp this theme and embrace it. Many men prior to him and probably since, have had various degrees of understanding of this. Jesus, having grasped it completely, then lived it and passed it on to his close followers, his disciples, the apostles. He gave them, as he says, all that he had. So all that he learned from his Father, God, he passed on to them so that they would enjoy the fullness of that relationship. Upon approaching John and really “rubbing shoulders” with him and really listening to him, I discover that John did in fact grasp this message, this purpose, and wrote about it, bore witness, testified about it, about Jesus, about his message, and the fact that Jesus and the message were in essence the same. Jesus was the embodiment of his own message, of the very intent of God, the fulfillment of His intent. So John, after receiving it, became an offspring of Christ, in like kind.

The Old Scriptures tell us that for a thing to be validated or confirmed, it takes at least two witnesses. If two witnesses testify of the same event, of the thing they have seen and heard, then it is corroborated. But these witnesses, to be valid, must have genuinely seen and heard the occurrence to which they testify. Having listened to John, I will now go visit with the other apostle who wrote a gospel, who wrote an account, a testimony of what he has seen and heard, the apostle Matthew. John knew Jesus and so did Matthew. Upon visiting with Matthew, I will listen and see if he is in fact confirming the message that I heard from John. With this in mind, I will read and stop occasionally to meditate and comment on what I am reading.

According to Matthew

Chapter 1

(1) "Book of genealogy of Jesus Christ, son of David, son of Abraham:

(2) Abraham begot Isaac, Isaac begot Jacob, and Jacob begot Judah and his brothers.

(3) Judah begot Perez and Zarah by Tamar, Perez begot Hezron, and Hezron begot Ram.

(4) Ram begot Amminadab, Amminadab begot Nahshon, and Nahshon begot Salmon.

(5) Salmon begot Boaz by Rehab, Boaz begot Obed by Ruth, Obed begot Jesse, and Jesse begot David the king.

David begot Solomon by her (who had been the wife) of Uriah.

(7) Solomon begot Rehoboam, Rehoboam begot Abijah, and Abijah begot Aza.

(8) Aza begot Jehoshaphat, Jehoshaphat begot Jehoram, and Jehoram begot Uzziah.

(9) Uzziah begot Jotham, Jotham begot Ahaz, and Ahaz begot Hezekiah.

(10) Hezekiah begot Manasseh, Manasseh begot Amon, and Amon begot Josiah.

(11) Josiah begot Jechoniah and his brothers about the time of the deportation to Babylon.

(12) And after the deportation to Babylon, Jechoniah begot Shealtiel, and Shealtiel begot Zerubbabel.

(13) Zerubbabel begot Abiud, Abiud begot Eliakim, Eliakim begot Azor.

(14) Azor begot Zadok, Zadok begot Achim, and Achim begot Eliud.

(15) Eliud begot Eleazar, Eleazar begot Matthan, and Matthan begot Jacob.

(16) And Jacob begot Joseph the husband of Mary, by whom was begotten Jesus who is called Christ.

(17) So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations, from David until the deportation to Babylon are fourteen generations, and from the deportation to Babylon until the Christ are fourteen generations."

At this point, what comes to my mind is this. I think back to what Jesus had said as reported by John about the flesh and the spirit. "That which is flesh is flesh, and that which is spirit is spirit, the heavenly and the earthly, you are from below, I am from above, the distinction." Here, we are given the genealogy of Jesus in the flesh. But we have a tendency as human beings, because

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we reside in the flesh and are wrapped up in flesh, to place a great deal of importance on this. Yet, when I look at it, and I hear Jesus say, "The flesh profits nothing. It is the spirit that gives life," genealogy in the flesh is not as relevant as we think. But what I see in this genealogy is that symbolically, Jesus embodies and represents all of his ancestors. He reaches back in time even beyond Abraham right back to Adam. He engulfs humankind, identifying with them all, receiving the spirit light that God had been offering since the beginning, on his own behalf and on behalf of all those who came before him who had not been able to do so for God's own reasons. He received it completely.

(18) "Now the birth of Jesus Christ was thus.

After his mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of holy spirit.

(19) Then Joseph her husband, being righteous, and not wanting to make her a public spectacle, intended to divorce her secretly. But while he was thinking about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying 'Joseph, son of David, you should not be afraid to receive Mary your woman, for that which is begotten in her of spirit is holy. And she will give birth to a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their errings'."

Much is made of this. The fact that it is indicated here that Joseph was the intended husband, and Mary was betrothed to him, and before they consummated the marriage, she was found with child. We put a lot of emphasis on this. In fact religiously we have made a legend of this. We've borrowed from legends of other religions and cultures where virgin births are reported. We've decided that this had to be a virgin birth where God is the actual biological father and that there was absolutely no man involved in the pregnancy. It may be so because God is certainly able to do so. But for the reality of Jesus to be, it is not relevant or needed because that which is flesh is flesh, and that which is spirit is spirit. The child is flesh until God deposits "spirit" in him. Whether he comes from a married woman, an unmarried woman, an "illegitimate" pregnancy of any kind (as recounted on a number of occasions in the Scriptures), in the end it makes no real difference. It is only flesh. But being flesh beings, we put much emphasis on this.

If this matter were of utmost importance, why then did John NOT report this event?

(22) "Now all this happened that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: *¹ 'Behold, the maiden shall be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call his name Emmanuel',* which is translated, 'God with us'.

(24) Then Joseph, aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord directed him and received his wife, and did not 'know' her till she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus."

Again, there is a small point of contention. In christian religions many believe that Jesus was born without the participation of a man. And not only that but religiously many believe that after Jesus was born, Mary never "knew" a man at all, she never slept with Joseph. It certainly doesn't say that, and it is not required to be thus. Both John and Matthew refer to ² Jesus' brothers and sisters who were known to the community.

Chapter 1 footnotes:

¹ Isaiah 7(14) Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

² Matthew 12(46) While he yet talked to the people, behold, his mother and his **brethren** stood without, desiring to speak with him.

(47) Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy **brethren** stand without, desiring to speak with thee.

Matthew 13(55) Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his **brethren**, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas?

(56) And his **sisters**, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all these things?

John 2(12) After this he went down to Capernaum, he, and his mother, and his **brethren**, and his disciples: and they continued there not many days.

John 7(3) His **brethren** therefore said unto him, Depart hence, and go into Judaea, that thy disciples also may see the works that thou doest.

John 7(5) For neither did his **brethren** believe in him.

John 7(10) But when his **brethren** were gone up, then went he also up unto the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret.

Chapter 2

(1) "Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, magi from the east came to Jerusalem, saying, 'Where is the one born king of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the east and have come to pay our respects to him.'

(3) When Herod the king heard this, he was agitated and all Jerusalem with him. And when he had assembled all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them as to where the Christ was to be born.

(5) So they said to him, 'In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it is written by the prophet:

(6) ¹ *"But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are not the least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel".*"

Again, we see here the mindset of the people. They were expecting a ruler, a political king to shepherd the people in an earthly setting, an earthly kingdom. So this is where the consistency between Matthew and John begins. Matthew is revealing this as the mindset of the people who were expecting a messiah, a messiah who was expected to be a standard, earthly king.

Consequently, as a result of this prevailing mindset, Herod could see a contender, a pretender to his throne. He saw a threat. He did not want to be replaced, neither himself, nor his dynasty.

(7) "Then Herod, when he had secretly called the magi, ascertained from them when the star had appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, 'Go and search diligently for the young child, and when you have found him, report back to me, that I may come and pay my respects as well.'

(9) When they heard the king, they departed; and behold, the star which they had perceived in the east led them on until arriving it was confirmed where was the infant. When they understood the star, they rejoiced with great joy.

(11) And when they had entered the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, fell down and bowed to him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

(12) Then, being divinely warned in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed for their own country by another way.

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(13) Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, 'Arise, take the young child and his mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him.'

(14) When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night and departed for Egypt, and was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, ² *'Out of Egypt I called my son.'*

(16) Then Herod, when he saw that he was outwitted by the magi, was extremely angry; he dispatched a task force to take all the male children who were in Bethlehem and in all surrounding districts, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had determined from the magi.

(17) Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying:

(18) ³ *'A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping, Rachel weeping for her children, refusing to be comforted, because they are no more.'* But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, 'Arise, take the young child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the young child's life are dead.' Then he arose, took the young child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel.

(22) But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea instead of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. Having been given divine warning in a dream, he turned aside into the region of Galilee. And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, ⁴ *'He shall be called a Nazarene'.*"

Chapter 2 footnotes:

¹ Micah 5(1) Now gather thyself in troops, O daughter of troops: he hath laid siege against us: they shall smite the judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek.

(2) But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, *though* thou be little among the thousands of Judah, *yet* out of thee shall he come forth unto me *that is* to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth *have been* from of old, from everlasting.

(3) Therefore will he give them up, until the time *that* she which travaileth hath brought forth: then the remnant of his brethren shall return unto the children of Israel.

(4) And he shall stand and feed in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God; and they shall abide: for now shall he be great unto the ends of the earth.

(5) And this *man* shall be the peace, when the Assyrian shall come into our land: and when he shall tread in our palaces, then shall we raise against him seven shepherds, and eight principal men.

(6) And they shall waste the land of Assyria with the sword, and the land of Nimrod in the entrances thereof: thus shall he deliver *us* from the Assyrian, when he cometh into our land, and when he treadeth within our borders.

(7) And the remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many people as a dew from the LORD, as the showers upon the grass, that tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the sons of men.

(8) And the remnant of Jacob shall be among the Gentiles in the midst of many people as a lion among the beasts of the forest, as a young lion among the flocks of sheep: who, if he go through, both treadeth down, and teareth in pieces, and none can deliver.

(9) Thine hand shall be lifted up upon thine adversaries, and all thine enemies shall be cut off.

(10) And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the LORD, that I will cut off thy horses out of the midst of thee, and I will destroy thy chariots:

(11) And I will cut off the cities of thy land, and throw down all thy strong holds:

- (12) And I will cut off witchcrafts out of thine hand; and thou shalt have no *more* soothsayers:
- (13) Thy graven images also will I cut off, and thy standing images out of the midst of thee; and thou shalt no more worship the work of thine hands.
- (14) And I will pluck up thy groves out of the midst of thee: so will I destroy thy cities.
- (15) And I will execute vengeance in anger and fury upon the heathen, such as they have not heard.

² Hosea 11(1) When Israel *was* a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt.

- (2) *As* they called them, so they went from them: they sacrificed unto Baalim, and burned incense to graven images.
- (3) I taught Ephraim also to go, taking them by their arms; but they knew not that I healed them.
- (4) I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love: and I was to them as they that take off the yoke on their jaws, and I laid meat unto them.
- (5) He shall not return into the land of Egypt, and the Assyrian shall be his king, because they refused to return.
- (6) And the sword shall abide on his cities, and shall consume his branches, and devour *them*, because of their own counsels.
- (7) And my people are bent to backsliding from me: though they called them to the most High, none at all would exalt *him*.
- (8) How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? *how* shall I deliver thee, Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah? *How* shall I set thee as Zeboim? mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together.
- (9) I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger, I will not return to destroy Ephraim: for I *am* God, and not man; the Holy One in the midst of thee: and I will not enter into the city.
- (10) They shall walk after the LORD: he shall roar like a lion: when he shall roar, then the children shall tremble from the west.
- (11) They shall tremble as a bird out of Egypt, and as a dove out of the land of Assyria: and I will place them in their houses, saith the LORD.
- (12) Ephraim compasseth me about with lies, and the house of Israel with deceit: but Judah yet ruleth with God, and is faithful with the saints.

³ Jeremiah 31:15 Thus saith the LORD; A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, *and* bitter weeping; Rahel weeping for her children refused to be comforted for her children, because they *were* not.

⁴ There is no verse in our modern Bible with this specific quote. It may have been found in a non-extant scriptural or prophetic book. Regardless, the term “Nazarene” may come from the Hebrew “nitzar” meaning “a plant shoot or sprout”.

Chapter 3

(1) “In those days, John the Baptist came proclaiming in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!’ For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, saying: ¹ *‘The voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord, make His paths straight.’* And John himself was clothed in camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist; and his food was locusts and wild honey. Then Jerusalem, and Judea and all the region around the Jordan went out to him and were baptised by him in the Jordan, confessing their errings.

(7) But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, ‘Brood of vipers! Who showed you that you would escape the wrath to come? Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance, and do not think to say to yourselves, “We have Abraham as our father,” for I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones. And even now

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the axe is outstretched to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. I indeed baptise you with water unto repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to pick up. He will baptise you in spirit holy and fire. His winnowing fan is in his hand and he will thoroughly purge his threshing floor, and gather his wheat into the storehouse; but he will burn the chaff with unquenchable fire’.”

At this point, I see a very close affinity between Matthew and John. Matthew is referring to a very similar theme. He looks at John the Baptist in a very similar way as John the apostle did.

(13) “Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptised by him. And John was resisting him, saying, ‘It is I who needs to be baptised by you, yet you are coming to me?’ But Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Let it be for now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfil all righteousness.’ Then he went along with him.”

I can understand John the Baptist being inspired by seeing “something special” in Jesus. Jesus, to this point, had been his follower. He had been learning and growing. He says to John, “...to fulfil all righteousness.” Righteousness is fulfilled in the attitude of surrender. And Jesus recognized and accepted the place that God gave him. In surrendering to God, he was to express outwardly that inner surrender by placing himself under God’s recognized representative. He placed himself at the disposal of God’s anointed teacher and prophet. And to Jesus, John was God’s prophet. And so this prophet has been instructing him and guiding him. And now John sees that there is something special in Jesus, that Jesus is called to something beyond, to progress beyond John. So he acknowledges it. But Jesus says, “It’s OK. I still need to do this. It is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness, to do all the things that God requires of us.”

(16) “Then Jesus, when he had been baptised, upon coming up from the water, behold, the heavens were opened to him and he saw divine spirit descending like a dove and alighting upon him. And behold, a voice out of heaven was heard saying, ‘This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased’.”

Jesus, after demonstrating his surrendered heart to God within the circumstance that He placed him, having fulfilled this, then, as Matthew writes, “... behold, the heavens were opened to him...” See? There is the earthly realm. The earthly being, Jesus, found at this moment the heavenly realm open up to him. His mind was opened to perceive the heavenly with understanding. He had his “paradigm shift” so-to-speak. He went through a transformation. It had been in preparation over a long period of time, according to Matthew, from before he was born in God’s interaction with his earthly parents up until this moment. Then the heavens were finally opened to him. He could see in the spirit the heavenly realm of God. It all made sense. Heaven is not a physical place to be. It is a state, a condition, a mindset. Most of all, it is a type of relationship with God the Creator. Jesus suddenly understood that God had called man from the time of Adam ² to rise above the creation, the flesh condition. He understood that God had called man to become God’s son. He was no longer to perceive God as only the Creator. He was to begin to see and acknowledge God as his Father. He was to pursue and cultivate this heavenly relationship with all of his zeal. His life purpose was clearly defined. God had then revealed his heart and plan to Jesus. And what is God’s reaction to a man who goes through this transition, who surrenders his heart and mind? God responds by acknowledging a son, not a flesh son, a spirit son, a heavenly son. “This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased.” We are told here what pleases God.

In the Old Testament, it is written, as Jesus relates later in Matthew, that the greatest commandment is, ³“*You will love the Lord your God with all of your heart, with all of your soul, with all of your mind, and with all or your strength.*” In other words, “You will give yourself over to God.” This is a deliberate thing. This is not an emotional exercise. It is a deliberate, calculated, premeditated action. And God’s response to a man who dares do this is to acknowledge him as a son. This is what God has said.

Chapter 3 footnotes:

¹ Isaiah 40(3) The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

² Genesis 1(27) So God created man in his *own* image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

(28) And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and ***have dominion*** (be better, superior to and greater than...) over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

³ Matthew 22(37) Jesus said to him, “*You shall love the Lord your god with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind*’.”

Deuteronomy 6(5) And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.

Deuteronomy 10(12) And now, Israel, what doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to fear the LORD thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the LORD thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul,

Chapter 4

(1) “Then Jesus was led by the spirit into the wilderness to be tested by the traducer. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, then he was hungry.

(3) Now when the tester came to him, he said, ‘If you are the son of God, command that these stones become bread.’ But he answered and said, ‘It is written, ¹ “*Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth (-piece) of God*”.’

(5) Then the traducer took him up to the holy city, set him on the winglet of the temple, and said to him, ‘If you are the son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written, ² “*He shall give his angels charge concerning you, and in their hands they shall bear you up, lest you dash your foot against a stone*”.’ Jesus said to him, ‘It is written again, ³ “*You shall not test the Lord your God*”.’

(8) The traducer took him up on a very high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their allure. And he said to him, ‘All these things I will give you if you will fall down and bow to me.’ Then Jesus said to him, ‘Away with you, Satan! For it is written, ⁴ “*You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him alone you shall serve*”.’ Then the traducer left him, and behold, angels came and attended to him.”

This section merits a close examination. Let us remember that Matthew is writing something about Jesus. According to Matthew’s account, Matthew was nowhere near Jesus at this point in time in order to bear witness of such a specific event. Thus we should not get hung up on the details of this event if it indeed occurred literally within the time-frame he recounts. But by examining the story and extracting the theme of the event, what do we find? As a human being, I know what he is talking about because I come from the earthly where “Satan” rules. I found that “Satan” is inside me. He has been personified by people to be an individual outside us, I deduce, to distance the satanic nature away from ourselves. This nature of the adversary (the literal definition of the Hebrew word “satan”) is everywhere, within us. When I am tempted as Jesus is tempted above, I am facing head-on the natural tendencies within. Let’s face it. We are all “endowed” with these tendencies. It is what makes us human. So Matthew is putting a bright spotlight on Jesus’ humanity

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and his share of the human dilemma. And just having been acknowledged as “son of God”, Jesus was beset with great temptations. Human doubt sets in to nibble at him. “If you are the son of God...” seeding doubt. It doesn’t have to be an external, monstrous satanic being coming to tempt him. In fact, if it had been a physical entity doing this, would it have been a temptation? Putting myself in his shoes, it would have in fact dispelled doubt and reinforced my faith in God. But, having experienced this very thing myself, I know that temptation is something inside me. It sometimes feels like a separate entity “speaking” within me. But in the end, I accept that it is “myself” in fact tempting myself, my human nature making its presence known and felt ever so strongly. My earthly “prison cell” will not willingly and easily release me. That would be far too easy. God has placed a great obstacle between us and Himself. He made us in His own image, thus making us direct competitors with Him for the same place, that place of sovereignty. In addition to this, he placed us in a state of “darkness”, a place of ignorance. We are born totally ignorant. We know nothing. Yet, instinctively, we still crave that place of sovereignty. What a clash. Transformation from the earthly mindset to the heavenly mindset is not easy or quick by any means. So these three temptations that are associated with this specific event which Jesus undergoes are in fact very normal. Every man experiences these temptations over the course of a lifetime.

I see the natural tendency in people to be impressed by miracles. I also see the tendency for someone in Jesus’ position who has just been told that he was a son of God to turn around and “use” his position for personal aggrandizement. That is natural. If I had the “power” to do marvelous deeds and was able to impress people, would I not use that power for my own ends? That is the temptation we all face, not just Jesus. So here is Jesus being tempted with the thought of being a son of God. What does that mean to be a son of God? “Does that make me a ‘superman’? A superhero? What? The Old Testament is seeded with clues as to what God can do. In fact, nothing is impossible for God. Even death is meaningless before God. So being a son of God, what does this mean? Hmm...” That is precisely what Jesus was going through at the time. So his mind would have been filled with all the glorifying possibilities that being a son of God could represent. In other words, like any man, he fantasized the most exalting scenarios that could be in store for him. But reason prevailed. He would snap out of his fantasies by coming back to reality, and the real God with whom he was now relating. He decided to overcome his temptations by clinging to the real, the authentic, the genuine: Truth. He decided to pursue this relationship with God first, the God of the Old Testament, the God who revealed Himself to him through the prophets of old. And according to the teachings handed down to him, Jesus knew that God did not want us to “put God to the test”. In other words, he understood that God wanted submission and the willingness to be led as opposed to taking the initiative and hoping that God will empower or back our own initiative. He understood that God wanted him to trust Him in the circumstances in which God would place him.

Another great temptation was to identify with the messiah which the whole nation was already expecting. This messiah was already expected to be an earthly king to rally the people: *to make Israel great again*. So Jesus imagined the scenario wherein he volunteered for this role. And being son of God while leading his people, he could literally conquer the world. The world could be laid at his feet. At least that is the interpretation of the Scriptures to which the Jews clung. Then he was reminded of the difference between the earthly and the heavenly, the temporal human tendencies and God’s ultimate eternal reality. Then Jesus again snapped out of that fantasy. He came back to reality and to the relationship with the real God of the prophets. He reaffirmed his commitment to this God by bringing back to mind the words in the Scriptures that God expressed to him through the prophets. By keeping in mind the words of God expressed through the prophets, Jesus would continue to be led through all of his circumstances in life and he would know what to do that would be pleasing to God with whom he was cultivating this relationship.

(12) “Now when Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, he departed to Galilee.

(13) And leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum which is by the sea, in the regions of Zebulun and Naphtali, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying, ⁵ *‘The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the gentiles: the people who sat in darkness saw a great light, and to those sitting in the region and the shadow of death light has dawned.’*

(17) From that time, Jesus began to proclaim and to say, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand’.

This is a very simple statement. We heard Matthew say earlier that John the Baptist was proclaiming the exact same message, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” So Jesus initially continues the same message as John the Baptist. But we’re going to find out that Jesus is called to go beyond the mandate that had been given to John the Baptist, not a different mandate, just the next step beyond, an increased mandate. Jesus was to progress beyond John the Baptist who fulfilled that which God intended for him. He was to prepare the way for the one who would fulfill the plan of God, the purpose that God had for man. And Jesus embodied that. John preceded it, announced it but he did not go there himself, not fully within his physical lifetime. We can’t read beyond his lifetime. I am certain that as a servant of God, God took him and brought him along to finish the job later on. But that is needless speculation and not relevant to the matter at hand. What is important is learning the overall theme and message that God has for man and seeking to receive it for myself and ultimately benefiting from it by fulfilling it.

(18) “Now Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brothers, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. And he said to them, ‘Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.’ Then they immediately left their nets and followed him.

(21) And going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets. And he called them, and immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.”

At this point, I would like to make a little comment. Having read John, and now reading Matthew, there seems to be a difference between the chronology and the process by which Jesus gathered his disciples. But again, all I need to do is look at Matthew and recognize that Matthew is not there in person and is telling a story. He is right about the fact that these men were called, but the details of how it all happened is not that important because he wasn’t there. He knows they were called and he is filling in the blanks for the sake of telling the story. In the end, the substance is the same as recounted by John. We need not get stuck on the less important details.

(23) “Now Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the well-message (gospel) of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people.”

We normally translate “well-message” as “the gospel” which comes from old English “Godspell”. The Greek word is “euaggelia” which is made of three parts: “eu” meaning “well, proper”, “ago” meaning “to lead”, and “agele” meaning “a herd (that which is led)”. The name not only suggests the message, but it also implies the direct involvement of the messenger bearing the message. In other words, it means “proper guidance”. Jesus not only brought the message to others, he embodied the message. He was the message as well as the messenger. He didn’t just tell people how to go or what to do. He showed the way by example. He led the way as a shepherd leads his flock. That is encapsulated in the word “euaggelia” and the verb form “euaggelizo” (to evangelize).

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(24) "Then his fame went throughout all Syria; and they brought to him all handicapped people who were afflicted with various diseases and torments, and those who were demonized, epileptics, and paralytics; and he healed them. And many crowds followed him: from Galilee, and from Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and beyond the Jordan."

Chapter 4 footnotes:

¹ Deuteronomy 8(1) All the commandments which I command thee this day shall ye observe to do, that ye may live, and multiply, and go in and possess the land which the LORD sware unto your fathers.

(2) And thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, *and* to prove thee, to know what *was* in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no.

(3) And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every *word* that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live.

(4) Thy raiment waxed not old upon thee, neither did thy foot swell, these forty years.

(5) Thou shalt also consider in thine heart, that, as a man chasteneth his son, *so* the LORD thy God chasteneth thee.

(6) Therefore thou shalt keep the commandments of the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, and to fear him.

² Psalm 91(11) For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.

(12) They shall bear thee up in *their* hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.

³ Deuteronomy 6(16) Ye shall not tempt the LORD your God, as ye tempted *him* in Massah.

(17) Ye shall diligently keep the commandments of the LORD your God, and his testimonies, and his statutes, which he hath commanded thee.

(18) And thou shalt do *that which is* right and good in the sight of the LORD: that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest go in and possess the good land which the LORD sware unto thy fathers.

⁴ Deuteronomy 6(13) Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God, and serve him, and shalt swear by his name.

(14) Ye shall not go after other gods, of the gods of the people which *are* round about you;

(15) (For the LORD thy God *is* a jealous God among you) lest the anger of the LORD thy God be kindled against thee, and destroy thee from off the face of the earth.

⁵ Isaiah 9(1) Nevertheless the dimness *shall not be* such as *was* in her vexation, when at the first he lightly afflicted the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, and afterward did more grievously afflict *her by* the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the nations.

(2) The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.

(3) Thou hast multiplied the nation, *and* not increased the joy: they joy before thee according to the joy in harvest, *and* as *men* rejoice when they divide the spoil.

(4) For thou hast broken the yoke of his burden, and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, as in the day of Midian.

(5) For every battle of the warrior *is* with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood; but *this* shall be with burning *and* fuel of fire.

(6) For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

(7) Of the increase of *his* government and peace *there shall be* no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.

Chapter 5

It can be noted here that the first four chapters serve mostly as the introduction by Matthew to his whole message. With chapter five to seven, being known as “The Sermon on the Mount”, we dive head-on into the substance of the message that he absorbed from Jesus over the course of his ministry.

(1) “And seeing the multitudes, he went up on a mountain, and when he was seated his disciples came to him. Then he opened his mouth and taught them, saying,

I have been told over the years that when Jesus went up the mountain he spoke to a great multitude. And yet, if we listen carefully, Matthew doesn’t say that. He says, “Seeing the multitudes, Jesus went up the mountain away from the multitudes. And when he was seated, it was his disciples that approached him in order to hear Jesus speak.” He went away from the multitude. He didn’t address the multitude. Besides, in keeping with other incidents and teachings, Jesus set apart the twelve disciples and prepared them to continue his work. At the time of the feeding of the five thousand with the five loaves and two fishes, he told his disciples, ¹ “You feed them.” We imagine for some reason that Jesus was directly teaching multitudes. Jesus did speak to multitudes. But, according to Matthew later on, when Jesus addressed multitudes, he spoke in parables, in veiled stories, similes and metaphors. He would leave it to the hearers to respond by seeking out explanations and elaborations from him pertaining to his message. ² He explains it very clearly. Jesus said that those who get close to him get the inside information, the explanations. So here, he is addressing, in my understanding, those close to him, not just strangers and potential disciples.

We can examine each statement, or beatitude as they are called, individually.

(3) ‘Blessed are the poor in spirit, for of them is the kingdom of heaven.’

The kingdom of heaven is composed of the “poor in spirit”. To me, it means “poor in attitude”, having the attitude and mindset of being in need or a non-owner. One is simple and humble, not pretentious. He doesn’t say, “Belongs to the poor in spirit” as is traditionally translated. But rather, “is made up of” this kind of person. Jesus is describing a character trait that describes those who are part of God’s kingdom.

(4) ‘Blessed are the sorrowful, since they shall be the called-out.’

Who are the sorrowful? I was one of those “sorrowful” at one point in my life. I’ve met sorrowful people, those experiencing sorrow in their life. The earthly life is not satisfying, or gratifying. It is full of grief, pain, and dissatisfaction. We encounter overwhelming adversity, contrariness to our wills, and it brings sorrow. If we were happy, enjoying life in the flesh, we would never seek to be with God. To be with God requires leaving this earthly realm in preference to His realm. And leaving this world requires being “called out”. So earthly dissatisfaction is a prerequisite to being “called out”. Without this, we would never be receptive to God’s invitation.

(5) ‘Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit their portion of the earth.’

Here is another example where it has been traditionally translated differently than I understand it to mean in the original text. It has been normally translated to say, “...they shall inherit the earth.” This statement comes with the understanding of “ownership”. What I hear Jesus say, just as in the Old Testament model of Israel, along with all of the rest of Jesus’ teachings, is, “Blessed are the lowly in attitude, the non-violent, those with the child-like attitude of being part of a greater whole, the family of God, where ownership is no longer an issue. They are allotted their portion, their place within this community where no one covets anything from anyone because everyone is now the possession of one head and no longer a competing head competing for ownership.” If I were to inherit the earth, I would want it all to myself. But that is not the theme of Jesus’ overall message.

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(6) 'Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled.'

What is righteousness? Has this not been discussed, and disputed over the many centuries? We did hear John give Jesus' description of righteousness. Righteousness is summed up in seeking to be pleasing to one person and one person only. And the only person who's pleasure is worth obtaining is ultimately God. And according to God's instructions, to be pleasing to Him is found in the attitude of surrender, in innocence, not taking upon one's self to be or do anything. It is expressed in the "not eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil." Jesus equates it to being like little children in attitude.

(7) 'Blessed are the merciful, for they shall be shown mercy.'

Does this not sum itself up in no longer placing any demands and expectations on anyone else? Just think, if I think someone owes me something, this will affect my attitude toward that person and ultimately toward God. But if I abandon all thoughts of others owing me anything personally, would this not be a sign of progress toward being a "surrendered non-owner, non-competitor with God?" Let us put all our energies toward one focus and let us not allow anything to distract us from it. Let's ³ "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness..." We can seek God's plan. And in mercy He will give it to us.

(8) 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.'

Earlier in John, I heard him say, "No one at any time has seen God." So if no one has seen God, how will I see God? Jesus also said, "No one knows or sees God or divinity except the one coming down out of heaven." So, remembering what was said to Nicodemus, "Unless one is born from above, one cannot see the kingdom, let alone enter", purity in heart is the surrendered righteous mindset which makes it possible to see God. God will reveal Himself to the pure in heart, to the one who honestly seeks reconciliation with God, not one who has false ulterior motives.

(9) 'Blessed are the reconcilers, for they shall be called sons of God.'

Traditionally, this verse has been translated as, "Blessed are the peacemakers". I've chosen the more striking word of "reconciler" which is the true meaning of "peacemaker" in this context. Normally scholars have taken this verse to mean "peacemakers between horizontal brothers, neighbors, even strangers". But within the context of the whole sermon, and clinging to the theme found in John's gospel, I am understanding this verse to mean "those who seek peace with God". And as I elaborate further on, effecting peace with God in a sense effects peace with the whole of creation by default. What I mean is that I am at peace with the rest of mankind even though mankind is not at peace with me. I obtain "inner peace".

To be a proper reconciler, I need to know what is not right or proper in order to correct it in order to fulfill the conditions of reconciliation with God. I have learned that we, mankind, have been alienated from God since Adam, and have not effected proper reconciliation. God has invited man, Adam, mankind, to return, to reconcile, to make peace with God. It is through reconciliation that we are called "sons of God". And yet, religion has insisted that there is and can only be one son of God. This is not suggested here that there is only one son of God. And we heard John say that ⁴ all those who receive the light are given the power, the ability to generate sons of God in the plural. If there was intended to be only one son of God, why are we chasing God? If there is no possibility of being a son of God, there is nothing left for me to do. There is no purpose to live. And most importantly, all of the Old Testament Scriptures and all of the teachings of Jesus through his apostles were all a pack of lies. There is no simpler and more direct way of saying it. Yet I am convinced of the opposite. I have been taught through the Scriptures and through the teachings of Jesus through his apostles that I can be a son of God. Not only that I can, but that it is God's earnest wish that I become His son by fulfilling the conditions which He has presented before us. And there can be no greater reward in life than to hear God say, "You are my beloved son in whom I am well pleased."

(10) 'Blessed are those who are persecuted on account of righteousness, for of them is the kingdom of heaven.'

I hear him say, "persecuted", and not stopping there, "persecuted on account of righteousness." Many people have been and are persecuted for various reasons. But very few are on account of righteousness. Again, righteousness, according to God's definition, as was said earlier, will automatically bring others into conflict with us. Seeking to be reconciled with God means "no longer being friends with this world". It doesn't necessarily mean becoming a terrorist and actively hurting people. No, it just means "choosing God over the world" and all that it entails. And the kingdom of heaven is made of those who have first chosen peace with God.

(11) 'Blessed are you when they reproach and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for my sake.'

This is basically a repeating of verse 10 placing great emphasis on this message.

(12) 'Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.'

When we read the Old Testament Scriptures, we go through the whole roster of prophets who were set apart and sent to speak to Israel and to the world by extension. In almost every case, they were ignored and rejected. They were not accepted or received. They were ridiculed, abused, and even literally killed. They were persecuted. And he says to us, "Rejoice, and be glad for great is your reward in heaven." You join the select few, the privileged, the elite of God's people. It is a sign of progress. Very similarly, John quoted Jesus as saying, ⁵ "They hated me. They will also hate you..." Whoever follows Jesus, the real anointed Jesus, not the make-believe Jesus, the genuine Jesus, is bound to be rejected and even abused by those of the world. Just as they did to Jesus, the world will want to completely silence him, erase him from existence because the message for which he stands, surrender to God, is completely at enmity with the world's mindset. Jesus is laying it out as it is. He is warning in advance anyone who considers following. But, he also lets us know that it is worth it in the end.

(13) 'You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its purity, how will it be restored? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men.'

In other renditions or translations of this verse, they say, "If the salt loses its flavor..." In reality, salt cannot lose its flavor and remain salt. The only way salt loses its usefulness or value is when it is corrupted as in contamination by foreign substances. Once corrupted, it is no longer suitable to be used for seasoning or preserving food. It is only good for thawing ice as on side walks or streets. It is all that is being said here. And like salt, we are told to remain pure, undefiled, uncorrupted. If the intended keepers of the Word of God are corrupted, they are no longer useful (in God's view) therefore no longer worth keeping.

(14) 'You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lamp stand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in the heavens.'

Jesus is speaking to his own disciples, not prospective followers, but those who are already committed to following him. And he is passing on his ⁶ light of the world to which is referred by John. Again he is making the distinction between the heavenly and the earthly. He is talking about divinity, about being sons of God and all that this entails.

(17) 'Do you think that I came to demolish the law or the prophets? I did not come to demolish but rather to fulfil. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled. Whoever therefore nullifies one of the least of these directions, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does them and teaches

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so, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.'

Here again, Matthew, like John, is confuting, is setting the record straight. He is referring to the religious leaders of the day who did not "get it". They search the Scriptures for a formula, a "magic spell" so-to-speak, in order to bypass or escape the obligations, or more precisely, the conditions required by God to be fulfilled in order to effect reconciliation, or as commonly put, "go to heaven". Matthew and John are relating to us that all of the Old Scriptures are in fact communications from God about the process of transformation which brings us back to God, the Father. It is a transformation of earthly beings into heavenly or ⁷ divine beings.

(21) 'You hear that it was said to those of old, ⁸ *"You shall not murder"*, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment. But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, 'Raca!' shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be in danger of hell fire. Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and going under leadership firstly be converted to your brother, and then having been established, bring your gift.'

What is he saying? I am seeing here very similar statements to what John had said about discipleship, about a brotherhood which is based on discipleship, initially vertical in nature. Jesus, the anointed disciple and authentic son of God, instructed and prepared a select group of offspring upon whom he bestowed his fullness, his full spirit identity. And what he is saying here is that whoever refuses and rejects his offspring, his anointed delegates, is refusing and rejecting him and the One who set him apart, God. And the use of the word "brother" was extremely sly and astute of Jesus. Because he used this term, the message can be misunderstood and taken as "horizontal brother" when in fact he meant "vertical brother". When we read the entire sermon on the mount with this change of perspective, the message comes across loud and clear. Jesus is instructing his disciples about discipleship, not "horizontal earthly brotherly love" as is commonly understood. By "making peace", as is said above, with my "brother", I am making peace with God the Father, my "brother" being my "sponsor" into the family of God, the "branch of the vine" to which I am to be attached. It is awesome to behold! That is how I am established. It is not by imagining God and by receiving some mystical idea, an imaginary Christ "into my heart". Rather, the process of "entry" into the family of God is completely explained by John, and perfectly supported by Matthew.

(25) 'Settle with your plaintiff quickly, while you are on the way with him, lest your plaintiff deliver you to the judge, the judge hand you over to the officer, and you are thrown into prison. Assuredly, I say to you, you will by no means get out of there till you have paid the last coin.'

Is Matthew talking about an earthly court? The context dictates the meaning. Who could be my plaintiff? To whom could I owe if not to God? Ultimately, is not God the Great Plaintiff? Is He not the one with the perpetual outstanding grievance against Man? And is He not insisting on satisfying his grievance against me? By making peace with the Great Plaintiff, there is no more need for additional "punishment" or "justice" or "compensation" to be exacted. And in God's estimation, how do I effect peace with the Great Plaintiff? Matthew was just talking about the "vertical brother", the representative of God to me. By being reconciled to God's representative, I am being reconciled to God for real, not virtually or in make-believe. God wanted righteousness to be demonstrated in a very real way. He saw fit to do it this way. He wants us to demonstrate humility before Him by demonstrating humility before his anointed representative ⁹WHOEVER HE MAY BE.

In my mind, I can fool myself and pretend to submit to God by submitting to a "virtual God" or a "virtual Christ", a product of my imagination. But if Christ is a flesh and blood individual physically before me, do you think I can genuinely fool him for any length of time? How long could I fake it before my true nature and attitude would come screaming out into the open? Upon deep

reflection, it is truly fantastic what God has set up for us. This is the setting where “Armageddon” genuinely occurs (Revelation 16:16). This is where the war that ends all wars takes place.

(27) ‘You hear that it was said, ¹⁰ “*You shall not commit adultery*”. But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.’

Adultery is infidelity toward the one to whom I have committed my fidelity. Adultery with a woman is what Adam did in the garden. Adam preferred the woman over his father. He chose to go along and side with her. If I lust for a woman and pursue after her, she becomes my ¹¹ alternative pursuit to the one above me. Even if it is not done physically, I only need to imagine it. I am focusing my energies, and by default not directing them toward God. I am giving in to my lust thus surrendering to my fleshly tendency.

(29) ‘And if your right eye causes you to stumble, pluck it out and throw it away from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish than for your whole body to be cast into Gehenna.’

This sounds like a very strange statement: “...pluck it out...” We need to remember that we are being addressed concerning spirit matters, not physical ones. They are being played out in the flesh, but they are spirit matters. So looking beyond the flesh, if my “right eye” is preventing me from seeing into the spirit, I am told that I must deal with it. I must learn to override my tendency to trust in my own physical senses and in my own judgment in order to get closer to reconciling with God. I need to focus on the one above rather than on the creation below. I will touch on this more a little later.

(30) ‘And if your right hand causes you to stumble, cut it off and cast it away from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish than for your whole body to go away into Gehenna.’

It is the same idea as above. But on the other hand, it certainly can go beyond that. He was just talking about adultery. In a family, there are different members. And members can be equated to members of a body. The right hand is often referred to as the one who is closest to you. So I must be prepared to let go a family member, even the one I consider the closest to me, if that member is preventing me from progressing toward the Father. This is perfectly in line with the Old Testament Scriptures. For example, Moses instructed that an ¹² unfaithful wife caught lying with another man had to be killed along with the man. The same was said referring to a ¹³ rebellious son. God was making an important point. God was saying just how jealous He was. He was saying just how unbending He was concerning the condition of peace and reconciliation of man toward God. God will not be “second best”.

(31) ‘Further more, it has been said, ¹⁴ “*Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce*”. But I say to you that whoever divorces his wife for any reason except sexual immorality puts her in a condition of adultery; and whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery.’

We are still dealing with the man-woman relationship here. Just how deep do we want to go down that “rabbit hole”? This is extremely serious. Jesus is stating that anyone “marrying a woman who has been divorced commits adultery.” The whole idea of sexual immorality and adultery is of the flesh. Anyone who is “swimming” in that realm is driven and given over to the instincts of the flesh. If I am pursuing my flesh objectives whatever they may be, I am keeping myself from my heavenly objective. It is logical. I am told that I cannot pursue both. It is one or the other. By pursuing the heavenly, I am by default not going to pursue the earthly.

One step further in that same direction, Jesus, in another place, is quoted to say, ¹⁵ “In the regeneration there is no more marrying and giving in marriage.” I will comment further on this at that time.

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(33) 'Again you hear that it was said to those of old, "You shall not swear oaths falsely, but shall perform your oaths to the Lord". But I say to you, do not swear oaths at all; neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; nor by the earth, for it is his footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great king. Nor shall you swear by your head because you cannot make one hair white or black. But let your "Yes" be "Yes", and your "No" be "No". For whatever is in addition to this is from the wicked one.'

Jesus is simply saying, "Be honest and say what you mean, and mean what you say. Do not embellish with oaths and such." By no longer being an independent person but now being under authority of another, I in fact become the "property" of another. I recognize that I do not own anything of my own, not even my own head. But now being under authority, I need not make any more covenants with anyone else. I've made the all encompassing covenant with one already. This is very hard to resolve within one's own self because of our God-like nature which craves sovereignty. So by being the "property" of another, just as a woman was the "property" of her husband in the Old Testament, the man cannot engage in any activities IN INDEPENDENCE. He has made his commitment to the one already. All other commitments would then be superfluous and illegitimate. And by heaping further commitments over and above my commitment to God, I place myself in jeopardy. I become internally conflicted and can not progress toward the heavenly.

(38) 'You hear that it was said, ¹⁶ *'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth'.* But I tell you not to resist a wicked one. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also.'

The practice of "eye for an eye" is found in the flesh realm, not in the spirit realm. So he is inviting us to rise above the earthly to the point of completely forgiving everyone. He means again that if I have forgone my independent sovereignty, my "soul", then I have no business placing independent expectations on others. I am now the ¹⁷ "property" of the one above me.

(40) 'If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have your cloak also. And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two. Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away.'

When we talk about earthly matters, I am not in contention with those of the world. Being the property of the one above me, I own nothing in independence. I am now a steward of someone else's belongings. I place no personal claim on anything I may have in my possession because it all belongs to the one above me. I can only manage his belongings according to his wishes and not my own. As I become heavenly, earthly matters become not important to me. They are only relevant in the learning and the demonstration of faithfulness to God.

(43) 'You hear that it was said, ¹⁸ "You shall love your neighbour" and "Hate your adversary". But I say to you, love your adversaries, and pray for those who ¹⁹ persecute you, by which you may generate sons of your father in heaven; for he makes his sun to rise on the wicked and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.'

What enemies do I have in the world? The conflicts I have in the world are on the earthly level. They are between individuals who cling to their own independent sovereignties. They are gods in conflict. Once we forgo our independent sovereignties and rise to the heavenly level, where is the conflict then? Once I have surrendered, I am at peace with God and as a result, I claim no conflict with anyone else in my independence. If the one above me says, "It's red," alright, it is red. If he says, "It's black," then it is black. Where then is the conflict? My first priority is not to be right, but to be at peace with the one above thus requiring my righteousness, not my rightness. Righteousness, I am instructed, is completely addressed through surrender, nothing more.

(46) 'For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax-collectors do the same? And if you greet your brothers only, what more do you do? Do not even the foreigners do so? ²⁰ Therefore you will be perfect, even as your heavenly Father is perfect'."

Again, he is restating the pursuit of the heavenly and the forgoing of the earthly. And it is possible. Matthew wouldn't write it otherwise. He wouldn't have quoted Jesus erroneously. Jesus said, "You will be perfect even as your heavenly Father is perfect." How will that be? Again, once I have surrendered my will to His, I have become perfect because that is the definition of perfection in the eyes of God. Total surrender and dedication to God are perfection.

Chapter 5 footnotes:

¹ Matthew 14(15) And when it was evening, his disciples came to him, saying, This is a desert place, and the time is now past; send the multitude away, that they may go into the villages, and buy themselves victuals.

(16) But Jesus said unto them, *They need not depart; give ye them to eat.*

(17) And they say unto him, We have here but five loaves, and two fishes.

(18) He said, *Bring them hither to me.*

(19) And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the grass, and took the five loaves, and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he blessed, and brake, and gave the loaves to *his* disciples, and the disciples to the multitude.

² Matthew 13(10) And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables?

(11) He answered and said unto them, *Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.*

(12) *For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath.*

(13) *Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand.*

(14) *And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive:*

(15) *For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.*

(16) *But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear.*

(17) *For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.*

³ Matthew 6(33) *But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*

⁴ John 1(12) But as many as received him (it), to them gave he power to become the sons of God, *even* to them that believe on his name:

(13) Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

⁵ John 15(18) *If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you.*

(19) *If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.*

(20) *Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also.*

⁶ John chapter 1, verses 1 to 13 (DfG):

(1) First and foremost was the Mind, and the Mind was God thinking to Himself, and divine was the Mind. (2) This was originally God reflecting. (3) All through It were created, and apart from It

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none were created which were created. (4) In It was life; and the life was the light of men; (5) and the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not grasp it.

(6) A man was created who was set apart by God who's name was John <Apostle>. (7) This one was given first hand experience, in order that he might bear witness about the light, in order that all could be believing through him. (8) That one was not the light, but was sent to bear witness about the light. (9) It was the authentic light which is enlightening all mankind coming into the world. (10) It was in the world, and the world through it was made, and the world was not aware. (11) It comes unto its own, and its own receive it not. (12) But to all those who receive it, it gives authority to generate children of God, to those believing into His name, (13) who, not of natural blood(line)s, nor of natural will, nor of man's will, but out of divinity were born.

⁷ "Elohim": Hebrew word meaning "gods" or "people of God". In old Hebrew, whenever a place name or a person's name ends in "im", it means "the people of..." This is a commonly misunderstood concept in the old Hebrew culture. Why is God's name "Yehovah Elohim"? It is not that there are many gods, but rather it is in the same meaning as just explained above. It is pertaining to the collectivity of God's people, not just God in exclusivity.

⁸ Exodus 20(13) Thou shalt not kill.

⁹ John 6(28) Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?

¹⁰ Exodus 20(14) Thou shalt not commit adultery.

¹¹ John 5(44) *How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?*

¹² Leviticus 20(10) And the man that committeth adultery with *another* man's wife, *even he* that committeth adultery with his neighbour's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death.

¹³ Exodus 21(15) And he that smiteth his father, or his mother, shall be surely put to death.

Leviticus 20(9) For every one that curseth his father or his mother shall be surely put to death: he hath cursed his father or his mother; his blood *shall be* upon him.

Deuteronomy 21(18) If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son, which will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother, and *that*, when they have chastened him, will not hearken unto them:

(19) Then shall his father and his mother lay hold on him, and bring him out unto the elders of his city, and unto the gate of his place;

(20) And they shall say unto the elders of his city, This our son *is* stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey our voice; *he is* a glutton, and a drunkard.

(21) And all the men of his city shall stone him with stones, that he die: so shalt thou put evil away from among you; and all Israel shall hear, and fear.

¹⁴ Deuteronomy 24(1) When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give *it* in her hand, and send her out of his house.

(2) And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's *wife*.

(3) And *if* the latter husband hate her, and write her a bill of divorcement, and giveth *it* in her hand, and sendeth her out of his house; or if the latter husband die, which took her *to be* his wife;

(4) Her former husband, which sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after that she is defiled; for that *is* abomination before the LORD: and thou shalt not cause the land to sin, which the LORD thy God giveth thee *for* an inheritance.

¹⁵ Matthew 22(30)

¹⁶ Exodus 21(23) And if *any* mischief follow, then thou shalt give life for life,

(24) Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot,

(25) Burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.

¹⁷ John 17(6) *I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: **thine they were, and thou gavest them me**; and they have kept thy word.*

¹⁸ Leviticus 19(18) Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I *am* the LORD.

¹⁹ Greek “dió’kó” which means “to pursue”.

²⁰ Leviticus 20(7) Sanctify yourselves therefore, and be ye holy: for I *am* the LORD your God.

Chapter 6

(1) “ ‘Take heed that you do not ¹ flaunt your charitable deeds before men to be noticed by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your Father in heaven. Therefore when you do a charitable deed, do not sound a trumpet before you as the phonies do in the assemblies and in the streets, that they may be regarded favourably by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward in full. But when you do a charitable deed, do not let your left know what your right is doing, that your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you.’

This portion is basic and simple in theory. But it is a very important aspect of discipleship. Everything that a disciple does is strictly between himself and the one he is following. It has nothing to do with his public reputation, or “face” as some people call it. I’ve heard Christians call it “testimony” which is an erroneous use of this word.

(5) ‘And when you pray, you shall not be like the phonies. For they like to pray standing in the assemblies and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward in full. But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.’

This is only elaboration of the verses preceding it.

(7) ‘But when you pray, do not babble on and on as the foreigners (gentiles) do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words. Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows what you need before you even ask Him.

(9) In this manner, therefore, pray: our Father in heaven, let us hallow Your name; let us be of Your kingdom; let us do Your will here on earth as it is being done in heaven; give us this day the bread of life; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; And do not lead us into testing, but deliver us from the faulty.’

“Our Father in heaven...” Is the Father in a different place? I am to address my Father the heavenly, in the heavenly realm. Again Jesus is reminding his disciples to distinguish between the heavenly and the earthly.

“Let us hallow Your name...” Are we asking permission to hallow His name? I am invited here to contribute what I have to contribute: me. This prayer is simply an indication by the one praying of a willingness and desire to hallow His name, in the way that the Father sees fit. He is praying for himself. He is volunteering himself to place the Father’s name in the highest regard.

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“Let us be of Your kingdom...” This is traditionally translated, “Let Your kingdom come” as an outside phenomenon to impose on everyone else. My understanding of what Jesus is saying is that this is meant to be a communication between a willing participant, a volunteer, and the One above. It is not a wish list as normally perceived. But rather, I am invited to offer the only one over whom I have the authority: myself. “You are the king. Let me be in Your kingdom.” By surrendering one’s self to the king, the king now has a subject in his kingdom. A king is a king when he has, at least, one willing subject.

“Let us do Your will here on earth as it is being done in heaven...” The kingdom, again, is not a physical location or domain. It is a set of relationships based on surrender and obedience. Those who are members of the heavenly realm do God’s will. Those who do not do God’s will are not in the heavenly realm. It is an automatic condition of membership: those who do God’s will are of the heavenly realm. The actual physical location is TOTALLY IRRELEVANT. So “let me be of the heavenly mindset even here in this world, in this age.” I shouldn’t need to physically die before this takes place. It is another way of saying, “I volunteer myself to do Your will here and now, not tomorrow or at some indefinite future time.”

“Give us this day the bread of life...” This has traditionally been understood to mean the food that sustains our bodies. It can include that. But elsewhere Jesus says that God already knows that I have need of all of these things in the flesh. What is being said that is so relevant to God’s interest? Jesus is teaching about the heavenly. So in my understanding, he is talking about the ²“bread of life” as is mentioned by John. He means the “spirit bread”, the “bread which comes from above”, the “bread of life”.

“Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors...” What are debts when it comes to the spirit? And what is to forgive our debtors? First of all, who is in fact indebted to me? Spiritually, who is indebted to me? I don’t need to forgive anybody if nobody is indebted to me. The only people I could consider indebted to me are those from whom I demand something. As was mentioned earlier, if I relinquish all my expectations and demands I have on others, I have forgiven all my debtors. On the other hand, there is also another way of looking at this. If I keep in mind the model of the vine mentioned by John, Jesus taught his disciples regarding “forgiveness”, the practice of removing guilt from others by removing their sin or accountability before God. A disciple forgives someone in exchange for his submission and following. A disciple is the mediator, the “go between” in order to bring reconciliation and “attachment to the vine”. All those of the vine were and are forgiven as far as God is concerned. Absolutely everything that an individual did in the past is forgiven, no longer held against him by God. He is now a new being: a child of the kingdom. In exchange for my commitment of submission, I am given “absolution”. But the condition of forgiveness only persists as long as I am faithful to the one I am committed to serve. I will elaborate further on this later. This is so crucial that I will dedicate an entire section to this most important topic.

“Do not lead us into testing...” During the time of transition between the earthly and the heavenly, I undergo a process of change which is difficult and traumatic in nature. And it is laden with trials, tribulation, and testing. This is a realistic appraisal of this transformation. It is not to say that this change is impossible, but when I say to God, “I love you,” God’s first reaction is, “I don’t believe you. Prove it.” That is what the tests of life are all about. Why did God want Jesus himself to go through all of his horrible trials? As Jesus says, ³ “That the world may know that I love my Father.”

“Deliver us from the faulty...” What is the faulty? The faulty is from the beginning in the garden. Whatever misunderstandings or errors in judgement regarding my harmonious relationship with God is the faulty. Self deception based on my own wishful thinking is the faultiest of them all. My giving in to my nature “to be like God”, to be a contender for sovereignty, is the “great faulty one”. And today, everything that would be erroneous in regards to my reconciliation with God, anything that distracts me from this pursuit, be it internally generated or deceptions and lies generated by others which I adopt for myself, would be considered faulty. In other words, I am asking God to make sure that I come home to Him, nothing more complicated. God tests everything, especially our hidden motives. He tests our sincerity.

(14) 'For if you forgive men their side-slides, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their side-slides, neither will your Father forgive your ⁴ side-slides.

(16) Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the phonies, with a sad countenance. For they disguise their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward in full.

(17) But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

(19) Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.'

He is saying in the preceding verses that in whatever we do, if we do it to be acknowledged by men, we are forfeiting the acknowledgement which comes from above. Is this the reward we earnestly seek, to be acknowledged by mere mortals? Or do we seek to receive honor from God above? This is a tough choice... He is making the distinction between the heavenly and the earthly. All of my treasures are whatever I hold dear, that in which I find value, my opinions. And basically everything I hold dear is what exalts me in my opinion. If I own earthly possessions, they are for the sake of being exalted before those around me. If I hold my intellect and education dear, I value this for the purpose of exalting me before those around me. If I have a skill which others find very valuable, and my skill is in demand to the point where others are willing to trade with me, or pay me with money, then I value my skill for the purpose of exalting me before those around me. Everything I treasure somehow has the purpose of exaltation in this world. But Jesus is reminding us of what is truly relevant in the long run. Is not my eternal exaltation more important than a brief temporal exaltation? In the end, do my opinions matter before God? I once heard someone give me the "Golden Rule": "He who has the gold makes the rules". "Heaven and earth will pass away..." We can bring nothing from this earthly realm with us except our story, our history, all that we've done. ⁵ Again, this is a tough choice...

(22) 'The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is unobstructed, your whole body will be full of light. If therefore your eye is obstructed, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness! **No one can serve two masters**; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will adopt the one and reject the other. It is not possible to belong to divinity and to humanity.'

This has been traditionally translated as, "You cannot serve both God and Mammon." I have examined the text and the context dictates more than just a mere serving in the human sense. He is referring to the aspect of "being part of", "being the possession of", "belonging to". Here, Jesus is again reminding his disciples of the difference between the heavenly and the earthly, and the seriousness of the distinction, and to not underestimate the extent of the difference. Where my priority is, that is where I am. If my priority is to obtain exaltation in the world ON THE WORLD'S TERMS (Mammon), then that is where I will be. I will be completely involved and part of that. But if my priority is God and His realm, then I will be completely involved and part of that. Jesus seems to leave no room for both priorities to reside within a man. As long as I cling to the earthly realm, by default I have nothing to do with the heavenly realm. It stands to reason. I can pursue only one direction. And God being a perfectly jealous God, will not settle for second place. God is merciful. He meets us where we are: in the world. And He invites us to willingly leave the world behind for Him. But that is our own free choice.

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I would also like to look more closely at the concept of the “eye”. Jesus did say that “the eye is the lamp of the body”. But if we are speaking of spirit matters, what is light? Again, just as referred before, John says that “the Light” is God’s communication, God’s intent for man. And for mankind who is alienated from God, “the Light” must represent “the understanding of what God requires of us which will effect reconciliation with Him.” In other words, if I have a spirit eye which allows me to see into the heavenly, I will see what God intends for me. But if my spirit eye is faulty or obstructed, then I cannot see into the spirit realm. I will be denied the information or revelation of God’s intent for my reconciliation. It is like having an instruction manual written by someone who knows nothing of the matter about which he is writing. Or better yet, it is like the statement Jesus makes elsewhere, ⁶ “If the blind are leading the blind, they will both fall into the pit.” Jesus also said, ⁷ “I am the light of the world.” In my understanding, in the theme I have found in John, Jesus must mean that the “eye” is actually the *person* who is my mediator, my connection with God, my “prophet”, my “apostle”, my “spirit guide”. And if the “one” I am following is not a genuine appointed mediator, leader, or angel, then I will remain in all of my erroneous concepts, ideas and as a result, ways. I’ll be following an erroneous map. I’ll be relying on my own wisdom, going my own way. But in the end, it will lead me nowhere except “to perdition” as Jesus puts it. In other words, ⁸ I will remain lost and confused.

(25) ‘Therefore I say to you, do not be preoccupied about yourself, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body what you will wear. Is not your soul (identity) more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into store houses; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you rather different from them?’

(27) Which of you by being preoccupied can add one cubit to his stature? So why are you preoccupied about clothing? Be taught in observing the flowers of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his splendour was not arrayed like one of these. Now if God so clothes the vegetation of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, would not rather as much ye of little faith?

(31) Therefore do not be preoccupied, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For after all these things the foreigners pursue. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore do not be preoccupied about tomorrow, for tomorrow will take care of itself, the troubles of the day being sufficient’.

From an earthly point of view, it is very scary to consider trusting in an unseen God. “Even though you need them,” Jesus says, “your preoccupation over these things will not in any way prevent you from physically dying anyway.” We were sentenced to death the moment we came into being. The only question is “when will it happen?” But through all of this, we are invited to consider the invitation to “everlasting life” by transiting, by passing over from the earthly to the heavenly, from the mortal to the immortal. But there is a great big condition associated with eternal life. Jesus expounds upon this throughout the gospels. And he is only reiterating what was explained throughout the Old Testament. If I have a problem with trusting in this God to provide for my earthly sustenance, I just have to examine the story of Moses, the story of when God took the Hebrew people out of Egypt and into the wilderness.

We consider this story as being far fetched because here, God drags over a million people out of a relatively secure condition in Egypt and into a wilderness where people and their animals could not normally survive. In Egypt, they were working for a living, they could eat, sleep, and procreate. We must remember that they had been given the very best land in Egypt through Joseph. So their condition was not as bad as we imagine. In fact, it was probably very similar to the conditions of normal wage-earners of today. But somehow, there was an unexplainable yearning within them for something more, for something better.

In response to that yearning which God had placed within them, He brings them out into a desolate place and destroys Egypt in the process. Even though Israel wanted to return to that more secure place in Egypt, God made sure that there was nothing to which they could go back. But in bringing them out, God did not provide Israel's needs according to the normal earthly customs or ways. He didn't give them money to buy what they needed. He didn't give them a year's worth of supplies to carry with them. No, he looked after them in ways that were totally unforeseen and completely out of human control. Just imagine what it looked like: a huge crowd of people being led through the wilderness toward a promised land called Canaan. They also brought a multitude of animals with them. There was virtually no food along the way for any of them. They were on a journey from one place to the other. So God fed them manna to sustain them along the journey.

To me, it's a strong representation of the transition to which we are invited, from one realm to the other. But this transition is difficult and demanding upon us as in the Exodus story. But if God can safely carry a huge crowd of people through seemingly impossible conditions and face undefeatable foes, then could he not do the same with me today if I ask Him? It takes two things. It requires that He be willing to do so, and that I be willing that He do so. We must be in agreement in this matter. This is the message that Jesus was proclaiming. He was saying that this very thing was available to us. God was already expressing His willingness on His part. He was now waiting for us to express our willingness to collaborate with Him to this end.

So the Exodus story is a pictorial representation in the flesh of a spirit journey to which we are invited. We are invited to "pass over" from "Egypt" to "the Promised Land". We are invited to pass over from the earthly to the heavenly. But the movement from the one to the other is a fearful prospect when I look at it with earthly eyes, with an earthly mindset. But God has already proven that He does this. I only need to accept. I am required to surrender to Him in every way for this transition to take place.

Chapter 6 footnotes:

¹ In our interlinear bible, the Greek texts reads "êlêémosu'né" which means "compassionate deeds". "Dikaïosuné" means "justification, righteousness".

² John 6(32) Then Jesus said unto them, *Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven.*

(33) *For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.*

(34) Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread.

(35) And Jesus said unto them, *I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.*

³ John 14(31) *But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence.*

⁴ Matthew 18(23-35) The parable of the slave owing 10,000 talents.

⁵ Matthew 23(12) *And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.*

⁶ Matthew 15(14) *Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.*

⁷ John 8(12) Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, *I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.*

⁸ Isaiah 53(6) All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Chapter 7

(1) “ ‘Judge not, that you be not judged; for by what standards you judge, you will be judged. And with the same measure you use, it will be measured back to you. And why are you concerned with the chaff in your brother’s eye, while not noticing the pillar in your own eye? Or, how can you say to your brother, “Let me remove the chaff from your eye”; and look, there’s a pillar in your own eye?

(5) Phony! First throw out the pillar from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to throw out the chaff out of your brother’s eye.’

What is it that motivates us to judge, to pass judgment on others? It is the compelling nature within us to eat the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. It is our desire to be like God, to be sovereign, including sovereignty over others. It is not enough that we be subordinate to someone else. We have the irresistible drive to evaluate things, to form opinions about things. We decide what is right and wrong, not subordinating our opinions to someone else’s opinions. Who decides for me how I should behave? Who decides for me what I should eat and drink? Who decides for me how I should clothe myself? Who decides for me how I should deal with others? Who is the formulator of my opinions? Do I not naturally do so according to my own will? Is not the whole economic world built on this very principle? Is it not based on people’s evaluations and opinions? Is it not based on independent personal values? There is an old saying: “Beauty is in the eyes of the beholder”. And pertaining to God and the “spirit world”, we have that same tendency, that same drive to build systems of evaluating. Then we impose our own self generated systems of good and evil upon others around us. It ends up that we use God for bashing each other on the head instead of seeking to be at peace with Him ourselves. Is this not typical? Is this not the way things are? Jesus invites us to adopt the Father’s values and opinions firstly, not to impose them on others. I seek to be a son of God for me first, not to impose it on others. I seek to be acceptable and acknowledged as God’s son first, for me. Then after being acknowledged, the best I can do is be a beacon, a shining light to the world around me, to be a son of God in the midst of a hostile world. That is the very theme that Matthew is conveying throughout this “sermon on the mount”. For me, God’s opinion of me is the only one that is relevant in the eternal scheme of things. He is the creator, the giver of life. What can I say? People’s opinions, after all, have no eternal impact on me. God’s opinions trump them all.

Chaff is just a speck of straw. In the eye, it can certainly blur one’s vision. But a pillar is huge and it completely obstructs the vision. And what is a pillar? It is a main component of construction, particularly of a building. In fact, it is traditionally a foundational component of construction. It is very similar in purpose as a keystone. So symbolically, Jesus is saying that if my pillar, or foundation, is faulty, then the entire building is faulty or in jeopardy. So he is suggesting that I remove the faulty “pillar” from my eye in order to see clearly into affairs of God. After that, then I can be of help to others as a result.

(6) ‘Do not give what is holy to the dogs; nor cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you in pieces. Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened up. Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent?

(11) If you then, being faulty as you are, know to give good gifts to your own children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good to those who ask Him!’

Again, we go back to the heavenly/earthly contrast. The Father in heaven knows what is good from His point of view. The child does not naturally know what is good for himself. So as a child, I can’t declare what is good for me. I must trust in my Father. So going to the heavenly,

what I receive from my Father is always good in His opinion whether I like it or not. In trust, I ask and accept what the Father gives me. I can't ask whatever I feel like and expect God to deliver on my wishes like a genie. I ask and receive what He gives me according to His judgment, according to His opinion of what is good for me. In fact, becoming as a child, as Jesus says later on in Matthew, is the very thing that God desires for me. And becoming like a child means having a relationship like a child with an adult parent. The earthly parent knows instinctively to treat his child in a certain way. The adult knows that a child does not see things like an adult does. A child does not know what is "good" for him within this hostile and perilous world. So just as a child needs to trust in parents, so does an adult child of God need to trust in the heavenly Parent in all things.

(12) 'Therefore, whatever in your opinion you would want men to do, do yourselves, for this is the law and the prophets.'

Just as is expressed a few verses earlier, instead of imposing my standards on others, I am to simply live my life according to the standards given to me from above first and foremost. I am invited to "put up or shut up". I must firstly be acknowledged by the Father before anything else. And once acknowledged, the Father has a father/son relationship with me wherein I live my life according to His expressed wishes, whatever they may be, not putting any limits or conditions upon Him as to what I would be willing to do or not do. My relationship with Him is for me. I am firstly to be a son, not a father, not a leader, not a dictator, not a domineering bully placing all kinds of expectations and demands on my neighbors. This is a difficult tendency to overcome. But it is the direct result of reconciliation with the Father. It is in fact a sign.

(13) 'Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to perdition, and there are many who go through it. How narrow is the gate and cramped is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.'

Do I take his teachings seriously? Or am I going to gloss them over with religious ideas, traditions of men, and human mindsets? For me to think that "all men are safe" is not what this is saying. For me to think that everyone is exempt of taking Jesus seriously is not listening. I have a hard time reconciling this statement with the commonly accepted doctrine of appropriating the blood of Christ, spilling it all over my body, and then I will be exempted of passing through the narrow gate. Strangely enough, it is not what Jesus says here. He says that the gate is cramped, and that FEW FIND IT. Do we believe that we can be exempt in any way of following Jesus? Do we believe that there is an alternate way or path to reconciling with God? How can we claim to believe in Jesus and ignore all that he said? This passage about the narrow gate along with the following passages up to verse 23, have been key scriptures that have spurred me on to seek the genuine.

(15) 'Beware of false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thorn bushes, or figs from thistles?

(17) Even so, every good tree bears appropriate fruit, but a corrupt tree bears faulty fruit. A good tree cannot bear faulty fruit, nor can a corrupt tree bear appropriate fruit. Every tree that does not bear appropriate fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore by their fruits you will know them.

(21) Not everyone who says to me, "Lord, lord", shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father in heaven.'

I do not see anyone here saying, "...but he who gets sprinkled by the blood of the perfect sacrifice." He is saying, "He who does the will of my Father in heaven."

(22) 'Many will say to me in that day, "Lord, lord, have we not prophesied in your name, cast out demons in your name, and done many wonders (impressive works) in your name?"

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(23) And then I will repeat to them, “I never knew you; depart from me, you who practice lawlessness!”¹

I find those words so cutting to the heart. How easily religion has appropriated the name of Christ, the name of God. It does, says, teaches, and prophesies in His name. It “casts out demons”, and does what it considers to be many wonders, all in His name. It disturbs me. It concerns me that He could turn around and say to me, “I never knew you.” I really don’t want to hear those words. I would much rather be acknowledged. I want the day to come in which He says to me, “You are my beloved son in whom I am well pleased,” not, “I never knew you.”

Then he says, “Depart from me, *you who practice lawlessness!*” He doesn’t just tell them to depart without a reason or even because of things that they claimed they did. No, he says specifically, “...you who practice *lawlessness!*” pointing out the very core of Jesus’ teachings and this specific message. What is the practice of lawlessness? Is it not coming right back to the saying in the garden, ¹“*Thou shalt not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for in the day that you eat of it, you shall surely die*”? If I create for myself a formula of right and wrong, if I make up a list of dos and don’ts, if I live and depend on my own opinions about everything, am I not eating from the Forbidden Tree? Being under law simply means “under someone else’s authority”. We can pick and choose which laws to apply and which ones to reject. We can interpret “law” based on our own mindsets and opinions if we choose. In fact, this was the very ²temptation the serpent placed before the woman, Eve, in the garden. But no matter what, it always comes back to clinging to our own independence, our own sovereignty.

I can even go to the point of putting words in God’s mouth. I can claim that He said something. I can claim that He instructed me to do something. I can decide for myself what is pleasing to God and call it “inspiration of the holy ghost”. But as long as God is not physically there to say or do anything to contradict me, I, for a time, get away with it. In fact, religion encourages me in this very practice. But if I were under the authority of a flesh and blood human being, as unto God, I couldn’t fake it for very long. I couldn’t put words in his mouth and not face correction.

(24) ‘Therefore whoever hears these sayings of mine, and puts them into practice, I will liken him to a prudent man who built his house on the rock-mass:

(25) and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock-mass.’

It is not enough to appropriate, to claim the name of Jesus. It is not enough to claim to “have him in my heart”. It is certainly not enough to just declare myself a Christian. I will not be allowed to claim God’s name in vain as the ³Scripture says in Exodus. If I claim His name without His confirmation of approval, I am taking it in vain. It is totally a waste of time. If I claim His name for myself, I must be certain that I fulfill His conditions, that I abide with those instructions which come with taking His name. I must be certain that He in fact “gives” me His name, and that I do not steal it. Otherwise, I should not claim it at all. I am to hear His instructions and put them into practice. With that, all will be well for me.

(26) ‘Now everyone who hears these sayings of mine, and does not put them into practice, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand:

(27) and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. How great was its fall!’

(28) And so it was when Jesus had ended these sayings, that the people were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one having mastery, and not as the scribes.”

In other words, Jesus spoke as having perfect knowledge and understanding of what he was teaching. He was what he taught. He did what he taught. What he taught was not just memorized words coming from text books. He was not like a scribe. A scribe was the equivalent of a secretary, one who took dictation from someone else not necessarily understanding what he heard and wrote.

Whereas a master, as in a university course, was one who studied material for a period of time, and then put what he learned into practical use, or practice, in order to test, to prove, and to understand what he learned. It becomes part of him.

Chapter 7 footnotes:

¹ Genesis 2(17)

² Genesis 3(4) And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die:

(5) For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.

³ Exodus 20(7) Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

Chapter 8

(1) "When he had come down from the mountain, many crowds followed him around. And behold, a leper came and bowed to him, saying, 'Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean.' Then Jesus put out his hand and touched him, saying, 'I am willing; be cleansed.' And immediately his leprosy was cleansed. And Jesus said to him, 'See that you tell no one; but go your way, show yourself to the priest, and ¹ offer the gift that Moses prescribed, as a testimony to them.'

(5) Now when Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to him, pleading with him, saying, 'Lord, my boy is lying at home paralysed, dreadfully tormented.' And Jesus said to him, 'I will come and heal him.' The centurion answered and declared, 'Lord, I am not fit that you should come under my roof. (He was acknowledging that by Hebrew tradition, Jews were not allowed to enter Gentiles' homes.) But only speak a word, and my boy will be healed. For I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to this one, "Go", and he goes; and to another, "Come", and he comes; and to my slave, "Do this", and he does it.'

(10) When Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said to those following, 'Assuredly, I say to you, I have found no one with such faith, not even in Israel. And I say to you that many will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. Yet the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' Then Jesus said to the centurion, 'Go your way; and as you have believed, so let it be done for you.' And his servant was healed that same hour."

We hear Jesus indicating here, giving us a clue to the fact that the kingdom was not limited to Jews, the biological blood-line of the Hebrew people. God's people are not due to biological lineage. It is spirit lineage. Anyone in the world has the potential, no matter what race, color, background, ancestry, gender, whatever, anyone can enter the kingdom of God by fulfilling the criteria. The criteria are not physical or biological. They are not earthly. They are heavenly. They all reside within the realm of free choice, of the will, not inheritance by earthly means and entitlements. When one is offered the invitation to enter the kingdom of God, whoever he may be, that person has the choice to either accept or reject the invitation. This point was made by Jesus on ² a number of occasions.

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(14) “Now when Jesus had come into Peter’s house, he saw his wife’s mother lying down with a fever. And he touched her hand, and the fever left her. Then she arose and attended to him.

(16) When evening had come, they brought to him many who were demonized. And he cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were sick, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet saying, ³ *‘He himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses.’*

(18) Now when Jesus saw a crowd around him, he gave the order to depart to the other side. Then a certain scribe came and said to him, ‘Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go.’ And Jesus said to him, ‘Foxes have dens and birds of the air have roosts, but the son of man has nowhere to lay his head’.”

Again we see the emphasis on the distinction between the heavenly and the earthly. The earthly man stakes claims of ownership, including a place on earth which he calls his own. Ownership is crucial within the earthly realm. Whereas the heavenly minded doesn’t consider himself entitled to his own place here on earth. Like a child, he trusts God to provide everything for him, so he doesn’t need to make a personal claim anywhere. It is all in the attitude, in the mindset. By becoming like a little child, I receive what is entrusted to me by my Father who is above me, whatever it may be. I don’t take or appropriate anything for myself. God owns everything in reality. He is the all-owner whether people accept this or not. I am simply invited to acknowledge this for myself, personally.

(21) “Then another of his disciples said to him, ‘Lord, let me first go and bury my father.’ But Jesus said to him, ‘Follow me, and let the dead bury their own dead’.”

Jesus is commenting on the value of earthly relationships, earthly family. Family in the earthly mindset is contrary to what Jesus had in mind. In his mind, which is God’s mind, it was to be based on the heavenly. God had and has in mind, from the very beginning, one family, and one family only, with only one head. His intent was not to have millions of families each going their own separate way, ⁴ each building their own house, each claiming a “piece of the pie”. That is of the earthly. As far as Jesus was concerned, “Let the dead bury their own dead.” This is a powerfully condemning statement. We totally understate it. Those who are not in the kingdom are not at all considered alive by God. Those in the world consider themselves alive by the fact that they are alive in the flesh. But in the end, it is not what Jesus is explaining. According to Jesus, Life and Death has everything to do with the relationship with God, with “my place in the heavenly”. All who practice independence are dead.

(23) “Now when he got into a boat, his disciples followed him. And suddenly a great tempest arose on the sea, so that the boat was in danger of being swallowed by the waves. But he was asleep. Then his disciples came to him and woke him, saying, ‘Lord, help! We are perishing!’ But he said to them, ‘Why are you afraid, you of little faith?’ Then he arose and took charge of the winds and the sea. And there was a great calm. And the men marvelled, saying, ‘Who can this be that even the wind and the sea obey him’?”

Here is another example of the distinction between the earthly and the heavenly mindsets. Jesus was not at all concerned about the apparent danger of a storm on the water. It was God’s storm, no one else’s. God created the storm. Being surrendered to the same God, why be concerned? It’s not to say that, in the flesh, the storm was no threat to their physical life. But knowing and appreciating his relationship with God, he knows that this storm, as anything else in the world, is not a threat to his everlasting life. God will perfectly sustain him in the flesh for as long as He so chooses, and in the way that He so chooses. If God wills that his body expire, so be it. It will not affect his everlasting standing with God. The flesh is only the Great Temptation for man. God is asking man whether he values his pitiful little life over his relationship with the Creator of life.

In addition, Jesus was confident in all circumstances due to his relationship with God. God had already revealed to him what he was called to do and what fate awaited him. And he knew that God would not cause anything to prevent it. He was able to have a quiet peaceful attitude through even a life-threatening circumstance like a storm at sea. It is all part of the relationship with the almighty God. This thought is carried nicely into the very next little anecdote.

(28) “When he had come to the other side, to the country of the Gadarenes, there met him two demonized men coming out of the tombs, **abnormally fierce**, so that no one would pass that way. And look, they cried out saying, ‘What have we to do with you, son of God? Have you come here to torment us before the appointed time?’

(30) Now a good way off from them there was a herd of many swine feeding. So the demons called him, saying, ‘Your dismissal will send us into the herd of swine.’ And he said to them, ‘Go.’ So when they had come out, they went into the herd of swine and look, the whole herd panicked down the precipice into the sea, and perished in the water.

(33) Then those who kept them fled; and they went away into the city and told everything, including what had happened to the demonized men. And behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus. And when they saw him, they demanded that he depart from their region.”

I’d like to comment about this. When I listen to the reports of Jesus through Matthew, John, or otherwise, I hesitate to exaggerate or amplify the stories to the point of making them unrealistic or biased due to human, earthly mindsets.

Jesus is walking along, and he encounters so-called “demonized men”. If we stop and examine this situation with eyes of realism and keeping in mind all that God has taught through the Scriptures, what did they really look like? Are there not “demonized men” today? There are all kinds of “demonized” men. I can see them as “biker toughs”, fierce, deranged individuals who take pleasure in instilling fear in people.

So people are afraid to pass by that place due to their reputation. What happens when Jesus comes along? Jesus shows no sign of fear. As was noted just above, Jesus is perfectly confident in his God and Father who is above all petty earthly situations and conditions. Do you think that a couple of thugs are going to intimidate him in any way? It completely throws these two guys off. They’re accustomed to having people panic at their threats. Here comes Jesus, and he is not panicking. He is not intimidated. He probably smiles at them or something. It demoralizes them. Since they can’t scare Jesus, they still need to do something scary, to maintain their reputation. So they taunt Jesus by telling him that they will go and scare the nearby swine. Maybe that will scare him and those around him.

We shouldn’t get into contention over this story. We should learn to look at this realistically while remembering all that God taught in the Old Testament and all that Jesus was teaching his disciples. When Jesus reportedly “cast out demons”, was he not casting them out of people’s minds? Was he not bringing to light the word from God that said, “I, the Lord, am one, and beside me there is no other (god)”? Is not Jesus teaching his disciples that God is absolute in power and authority? And did not Jesus teach that man is the sinner, and that it is man that needs to repent and to stop eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil? Did not Jesus teach that man can not justifiably “pass the buck”, or renege on his responsibility over himself and his actions? That would make God a liar. God said through Ezekiel that ⁵“**each man will die for his own sin**”.

John says in his first letter, ⁶“Perfect love casts out all fear.” How can these men scare Jesus? Jesus loves his Father. This is the message, I think, that we should receive from this event, not the silly “pig show”. There is nothing said here that Jesus cast out some “demons” from these guys and that they were then OK. That is a false assumption. Were these demons cast out? Or did Jesus merely resist the temptation to succumb to fear? There is nothing clearly stated here about what happened to the two men. It is mentioned that the locals blamed Jesus for the swine being

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destroyed and that they were so upset that they told him to leave their region. We must remember that the flesh profits nothing. And God speaks in pictures. The flesh has only one purpose: for intangible concepts and ideas to be expressed and manifested. The sooner we completely understand and accept God for who He is, and who we are in respect to Him, the sooner we can come to a place of harmony and rest.

Chapter 8 footnotes:

¹ Leviticus 14(1) And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

(2) This shall be the law of the leper in the day of his cleansing: He shall be brought unto the priest:

(3) And the priest shall go forth out of the camp; and the priest shall look, and, behold, *if* the plague of leprosy be healed in the leper;

(4) Then shall the priest command to take for him that is to be cleansed two birds alive *and* clean, and cedar wood, and scarlet, and hyssop:

(5) And the priest shall command that one of the birds be killed in an earthen vessel over running water:

(6) As for the living bird, he shall take it, and the cedar wood, and the scarlet, and the hyssop, and shall dip them and the living bird in the blood of the bird *that was* killed over the running water:

(7) And he shall sprinkle upon him that is to be cleansed from the leprosy seven times, and shall pronounce him clean, and shall let the living bird loose into the open field.

(8) And he that is to be cleansed shall wash his clothes, and shave off all his hair, and wash himself in water, that he may be clean: and after that he shall come into the camp, and shall tarry abroad out of his tent seven days.

(9) But it shall be on the seventh day, that he shall shave all his hair off his head and his beard and his eyebrows, even all his hair he shall shave off: and he shall wash his clothes, also he shall wash his flesh in water, and he shall be clean.

(10) And on the eighth day he shall take two he lambs without blemish, and one ewe lamb of the first year without blemish, and three tenth deals of fine flour *for* a meat offering, mingled with oil, and one log of oil.

(11) And the priest that maketh *him* clean shall present the man that is to be made clean, and those things, before the LORD, *at* the door of the tabernacle of the congregation:

(12) And the priest shall take one he lamb, and offer him for a trespass offering, and the log of oil, and wave them *for* a wave offering before the LORD:

(13) And he shall slay the lamb in the place where he shall kill the sin offering and the burnt offering, in the holy place: for as the sin offering *is* the priest's, *so is* the trespass offering: it *is* most holy:

(14) And the priest shall take *some* of the blood of the trespass offering, and the priest shall put *it* upon the tip of the right ear of him that is to be cleansed, and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot:

(15) And the priest shall take *some* of the log of oil, and pour *it* into the palm of his own left hand:

(16) And the priest shall dip his right finger in the oil that *is* in his left hand, and shall sprinkle of the oil with his finger seven times before the LORD:

(17) And of the rest of the oil that *is* in his hand shall the priest put upon the tip of the right ear of him that is to be cleansed, and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot, upon the blood of the trespass offering:

(18) And the remnant of the oil that *is* in the priest's hand he shall pour upon the head of him that is to be cleansed: and the priest shall make an atonement for him before the LORD.

(19) And the priest shall offer the sin offering, and make an atonement for him that is to be cleansed from his uncleanness; and afterward he shall kill the burnt offering:

(20) And the priest shall offer the burnt offering and the meat offering upon the altar: and the priest shall make an atonement for him, and he shall be clean.

(21) And if he *be* poor, and cannot get so much; then he shall take one lamb *for* a trespass offering to be waved, to make an atonement for him, and one tenth deal of fine flour mingled with oil for a meat offering, and a log of oil;

(22) And two turtledoves, or two young pigeons, such as he is able to get; and the one shall be a sin offering, and the other a burnt offering.

(23) And he shall bring them on the eighth day for his cleansing unto the priest, unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, before the LORD.

(24) And the priest shall take the lamb of the trespass offering, and the log of oil, and the priest shall wave them *for* a wave offering before the LORD:

(25) And he shall kill the lamb of the trespass offering, and the priest shall take *some* of the blood of the trespass offering, and put *it* upon the tip of the right ear of him that is to be cleansed, and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot:

(26) And the priest shall pour of the oil into the palm of his own left hand:

(27) And the priest shall sprinkle with his right finger *some* of the oil that *is* in his left hand seven times before the LORD:

(28) And the priest shall put of the oil that *is* in his hand upon the tip of the right ear of him that is to be cleansed, and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot, upon the place of the blood of the trespass offering:

(29) And the rest of the oil that *is* in the priest's hand he shall put upon the head of him that is to be cleansed, to make an atonement for him before the LORD.

(30) And he shall offer the one of the turtledoves, or of the young pigeons, such as he can get;

(31) *Even* such as he is able to get, the one *for* a sin offering, and the other *for* a burnt offering, with the meat offering: and the priest shall make an atonement for him that is to be cleansed before the LORD.

(32) This *is* the law *of him* in whom *is* the plague of leprosy, whose hand is not able to get *that which pertaineth* to his cleansing.

² Matthew 13(37-50), the harvest at the end of the age;

Matthew 22(1-14), the parable of the wedding feast;

Matthew 25(31-46), separating the sheep from the goats;

John 10(16), one fold, one shepherd.

³ Isaiah 53(4) Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

⁴ Haggai 1(2) Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, This people say, The time is not come, the time that the LORD's house should be built.

(3) Then came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet, saying,

(4) *Is it* time for you, O ye, to dwell in your cieled houses, and this house *lie* waste?

(5) Now therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways.

(6) Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages *to put it* into a bag with holes.

(7) Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways.

(8) Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the LORD.

(9) Ye looked for much, and, lo *it came to* little; and when ye brought *it* home, I did blow upon it. Why? Saith the LORD of hosts. Because of mine house that is waste, and ye run every man unto his own house.

(10) Therefore the heaven over you is stayed from dew, and the earth is stayed *from* her fruit.

(11) And I called for a drought upon the land, and upon the mountains, and upon the corn, and upon the new wine, and upon the oil, and upon *that* which the ground bringeth forth, and upon men, and upon cattle, and upon all the labour of the hands.

⁵ Ezekiel 18(20) The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.

(21) But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die.

(22) All his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him: in his righteousness

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that he hath done he shall live.

(23) Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord GOD: *and* not that he should return from his ways, and live?

(24) But when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, *and* doeth according to all the abominations that the wicked *man* doeth, shall he live? All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned: in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die.

(25) Yet ye say, The way of the LORD is not equal. Hear now, O house of Israel; Is not my way equal? are not your ways unequal?

(26) When a righteous *man* turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and dieth in them; for his iniquity that he hath done shall he die.

(27) Again, when the wicked *man* turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive.

(28) Because he considereth, and turneth away from all his transgressions that he hath committed, he shall surely live, he shall not die.

(29) Yet saith the house of Israel, The way of the LORD is not equal. O house of Israel, are not my ways equal? are not your ways unequal?

(30) Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord GOD. Repent, and turn *yourselves* from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin.

(31) Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel?

(32) For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord GOD: wherefore turn *yourselves*, and live ye.

Ezekiel 33(10) Therefore, O thou son of man, speak unto the house of Israel; Thus ye speak, saying, If our transgressions and our sins *be* upon us, and we pine away in them, how should we then live?

(11) Say unto them, *As* I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?

(12) Therefore, thou son of man, say unto the children of thy people, The righteousness of the righteous shall not deliver him in the day of his transgression: as for the wickedness of the wicked, he shall not fall thereby in the day that he turneth from his wickedness; neither shall the righteous be able to live for his *righteousness* in the day that he sinneth.

(13) When I shall say to the righteous, *that* he shall surely live; if he trust to his own righteousness, and commit iniquity, all his righteousnesses shall not be remembered; but for his iniquity that he hath committed, he shall die for it.

(14) Again, when I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; if he turn from his sin, and do that which is lawful and right;

(15) *If* the wicked restore the pledge, give again that he had robbed, walk in the statutes of life, without committing iniquity; he shall surely live, he shall not die.

(16) None of his sins that he hath committed shall be mentioned unto him: he hath done that which is lawful and right; he shall surely live.

(17) Yet the children of thy people say, The way of the Lord is not equal: but as for them, their way is not equal.

(18) When the righteous turneth from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, he shall even die thereby.

(19) But if the wicked turn from his wickedness, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall live thereby.

⁶ 1John 4(18) There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.

Chapter 9

(1) "So he got into a boat, crossed over, and came to his own city. And behold, they brought to him a paralytic lying on a bed. And Jesus, seeing their faith, said to the paralytic, 'Child, be of good cheer; your errands are forgiven you.' And at once some of the scribes said within themselves, 'This man blasphemes!' But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, 'Why do you harbour faulty thoughts in your heart? For which is easier, to say, "Your errands are forgiven you", or to say, "Arise and walk"? But that you may know that the son of man has authority on earth to forgive errands.'—Then he said to the paralytic, 'Arise, take up your bed, and go to your house.' And he arose and departed to his house. Now when the crowds saw it, they were afraid and glorified God who had given such authority to men."

It is interesting to note that Jesus is referring to the son of man, not the son of God. He is showing that he is identifying with man. More and more as we read the gospels, Jesus is using the term "son of man" as a generic term to which anyone can identify. He doesn't use the term in exclusivity or in isolation. In Jesus' mind, the son of man is a template, a pattern sent from above for man's teaching. It is the process through which man is called to pass in order to become a sealed son of God. The term, son of man, is extremely deliberate and enigmatic upon introduction. But as one progresses on his walk toward the Father, the term is given deeper and deeper meaning with greater and greater understanding.

Son of man is again the reference to the transformation from the earthly to the heavenly. Son of man is at the same time earthly and heavenly. He is in process, in transit. He is a pilgrim. He is very similar to the Hebrews in the wilderness during the Exodus experience. He has left Egypt, and has not yet arrived into the "Promised Land". He is being led by God already. He is cultivating his rapport with God while "in between". God is teaching him all that it entails to be a mature son of His. And son of man grows in knowledge, understanding, and wisdom toward God. The more he grows in stature here on earth, the more authority, responsibility, and vindication God gives him while in transit. It is a two way feedback relationship.

(9) "Then as Jesus passed on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax office. And he said to him, 'Follow me.' And he arose and followed him."

Now this gospel we are reading is according to this Matthew to which we are finally being introduced. So the chronological order of his account of this gospel reveals that he was not present to most if not all of what was recounted prior to this event. He is suggesting to us indirectly to consider his account prior to his personal witness as being second hand account or second hand witness which is called "hearsay". So the details of the accounts during this time are based mostly on what he learned of Jesus from that time on. The details of those prior accounts are therefore not relevant, but rather the theme or substance of those accounts is relevant. In a court of law, second hand witness is not admissible. So we must deduce the meaning of what Matthew is saying rather than strain at the details. There are undoubtedly what appears to be contradictions with John if we cling to the details. But Matthew is trying to describe a person and his understanding of God when he tells of Jesus. So let us listen with that in mind.

(10) "And so it was, as Jesus sat at the table in the house, that behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat down with him and his disciples. And when the Pharisees saw it, they said to his disciples, 'Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?' But when Jesus heard that, he said to them, 'Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick do. But go and learn what this means, ¹ *"I desire mercy and not sacrifice"*. For I did not come to call the righteous, but the sinners'."

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The condition of mankind is that of alienation with God. We are all sinners in the strictest sense. But we've taken the word "sin" to mean something more terrible and horrible than it is. In reality, it is no more horrible than a cold or an illness. It is a faultiness. It is a character fault or condition that is correctable. "Sinner" means "someone who misses the mark". It is our very nature, our very being created in the image of God that is our obstacle to harmony with Him. Or more specifically, our resemblance to God within the state of total ignorance is our challenge. God did not make a mistake or an error in creating us in His own image. It was and is His will. But our stubbornness in remaining independent is the only thing that He finds unpleasant and undesirable in us. That is the essence of our sin. We remain competitors with God.

So what Jesus is saying in the verse above is that he is sent to call enemies of God to make peace with Him. He is sent to invite "sinners" to repent and be reconciled with God, not those who are already reconciled or at peace with God. He was being somewhat sarcastic in his statement because there really didn't seem to be any who were reconciled with God at that time, including the religious leaders. In fact, the religious leaders were the ones that seemed to be the farthest and the most stubborn, the ones who could not be corrected. They considered themselves "righteous". They had already placed God in a box and had already decided that God was pleased with their religious traditions and rituals. For whatever reasons, they did not consider themselves alienated from God needing reconciliation. Until one acknowledges his own alienation, one cannot begin the process of return as God states repeatedly through the Old Testament prophets. This is not reserved exclusively for the Jews of Jesus' day. That is why he sends us to Hosea with his statement, "I desire mercy and not sacrifice." That chapter 6 of Hosea almost summarizes the whole of Jesus' teachings and mandate.

(14) "Then the disciples of John came to him, saying, 'Why do we and the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?' And Jesus said to them, 'Can the sons of the bride chamber mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast. No one puts a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment; for the patch pulls away from the garment, and the tear is made worse. Nor do people put new wine into old wine skins, or else the wine skins burst, the wine is spilled, and the wine skins are ruined. But they put new wine into new wine skins, and both are preserved'."

The same theme is preserved. The disciples of John the Baptist and the Pharisees practiced the ritual of fasting. Jesus told them that it is not about rituals, fasting or otherwise. It is about relationship. And when the "groom" is in your presence, why fast? It is time to celebrate. But he also foretells that the "groom" will be taken away, and then there will be fasting. And two thousand years later we know that he was indeed taken away. And we have been going without the real heavenly food during that time. We have been denied due to our preference for the false gospel and its proponents. We have been denied the genuine food, the bread of life. So we have been fasting.

And he says that you don't put new wine into old wine skins. So the transformation and contrast is not partial, it is total. We can't bring our former earthly mindset to God's table. We need to "check" our preconceptions and mindsets at the door, so-to-speak. In Matthew 13:52, Jesus says, "Therefore every scribe disciplined into the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who **throws out (NOT "brings out")** of his treasure things new **and** old." We need to "throw out the baby with the bathwater". We can't pick and choose what we want to keep and what to exclude. That is picking from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. No, we need to surrender ourselves to God and His prescribed process of change in order to be pleasing to Him. It is very similar to what Esther in the Old Testament underwent before being chosen as the new queen. She was used as an example for our benefit twenty-five hundred years later.

(18) "While he spoke these things to them, behold, a ruler came and bowed to him, saying, 'My daughter has just died, but come and lay your hand on her and she will live.' So Jesus arose and followed him, and so did his disciples.

(20) And behold, a woman who had a flow of blood for twelve years came from behind and touched the hem of his garment; for she said to herself, 'If only I may but touch his garment, I shall be made well.' But Jesus turned around, and when he saw her he said, 'Be of good cheer, daughter; your faith has made you well.' And the woman was made well from that hour.

(23) And when Jesus came into the ruler's house, and saw the flute players and the noisy crowd wailing, he said to them, 'Make room, for the girl is not dead, but sleeping.' And they laughed him to scorn. But when the crowd was put outside, he went in and took her by the hand, and the girl arose. And the fame of this went out into all that region."

We are so impressed with these miracles that Jesus seems to be doing. Imagine today a man doing what Jesus "did", healing all types of diseases and conditions, and even raising the (biologically) dead. There are huge numbers of remarkable healings and such attributed to Jesus. But do we stop for a moment and realize that despite these physical healings, however miraculous and wonderful, people still ended up aging and dying? And how did people respond to these inexplicable God signs? Most of them returned to their "normal" lives and remained stuck in the flesh. Did people make wholesale changes, follow Jesus all the way to the Father? What happened in reality? At the time of Jesus' execution, how many of his disciples were with him being executed? Not one. Yet Jesus, knowing this, kept on going, not distracted from doing what he was called to do regardless of anyone following him or not.

They were, and today, we are impressed by these reported miracles. We honor, we go to the point of worshiping and adoring Jesus as though he were God, and that is where we keep him. And we keep ourselves from listening to him and following him to where he is. He invites us to join him where he is. That was the reason for the God signs. It was God telling people that He was pleased with this man, and that they were to listen to him, receive what he had for them on God's behalf. The miracles were supposed to make us ENVIOUS of Jesus. Instead, we isolated him and relegated him to "superman", "superhero" status, "already God from birth", "not human", etc. We did this in order to excuse ourselves from actually listening to Jesus and actually learning from him in order to actually do the things that he instructs us through his delegated apostles. We prefer "old wives' tales" and impressive legends to reality.

There was, and is, only one miracle of eternal value to me: the miracle of reconciliation with the God and Father of Jesus. I trust that, once reconciliation is obtained, all physical pains and hindrances will be removed. But I am made to understand that reconciliation is the only way of obtaining this. We need to remember that Jesus healed no one. It was God Himself doing the healing in order to vindicate His son certifying that he was authentic.

(27) "When Jesus departed from there, two blind men followed him, crying out and saying, 'Son of David, have mercy on us.' And when he had come into the house, the blind men came to him. And Jesus said to them, 'Do you believe that I am able to do this?' They said to him, 'Yes, lord.' Then he touched their eyes, saying, 'According to your faith, let it be to you.' And their eyes were opened. And Jesus sternly warned them, saying, 'See that no one knows it.' But when they had departed, they spread the news about him in that country."

Firstly, Jesus appears to be expressing disinterest in fame and the "limelight". His motives were genuine and were as mentioned earlier, fully focused upon his relationship with his Father.

Secondly, we have the tendency to be so caught up with the "gift" that we ignore and fail to properly respond to the "gift giver" and His communication.

(32) "As they went out, behold, they brought to him a man, mute and demonized. And when the demon was cast out, the mute spoke. And the multitudes marvelled, saying, 'It was never seen like this in Israel!' But the Pharisees said, 'He casts out demons by the ruler of the demons'."

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It is so funny how, when events take place, multiple witnesses will have different points of view and different interpretations of what they saw.

(35) “And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their assemblies, proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.”

“...Proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom.” Are those words too hard to understand? A kingdom is a society in which there is one king and the rest are subjects. The subjects are faithful to the king. God’s kingdom is one composed of faithful, obedient believers, those who are willing and committed to doing His will instead of their own. There is no room for independence in the kingdom. Did Jesus proclaim the “democracy of God”? And if it is indeed a kingdom that God is establishing, then the onus is on me to seek to fit in, seek to know what I need to know, do what I need to do, be what I need to be to be included. I can’t guess. I can’t use make-believe. I can’t just hope my way in. I must surrender my way in. There is nothing that I have in this world that is so important as to need to be kept or retained. I am invited to let go of everything and receive everything in order to be allowed into this kingdom. And if God will go out of His way to vindicate His appointed delegate to me, then the rest falls on me to pursue that one and receive what he gives me, not just marvel and applaud. ² “Whoever receives whomever I bid, receives me; and whoever receives me receives the One bidding me.”

(36) “But when he saw the crowds, he felt a deep yearning about them, for, like sheep without a shepherd, they were fleeced and scattered. Then he said to his disciples, ‘The harvest truly is plentiful, but the labourers are few. Therefore, pray the lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest’.”

Chapter 9 footnotes:

¹ Hosea 6(1) Come, and let us return unto the LORD: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up.

(2) ***After two days will he revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight.***

(3) Then shall we know, *if* we follow on to know the LORD: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter *and* former rain unto the earth.

(4) O Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee? O Judah, what shall I do unto thee? for your goodness *is* as a morning cloud, and as the early dew it goeth away.

(5) Therefore have I hewed *them* by the prophets; I have slain them by the words of my mouth: and thy judgments *are as* the light *that* goeth forth.

(6) ***For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.***

(7) But they like men have transgressed the covenant: there have they dealt treacherously against me.

(8) Gilead *is* a city of them that work iniquity, *and is* polluted with blood.

(9) And as troops of robbers wait for a man, *so* the company of priests murder in the way ***by consent***: for they commit lewdness.

(10) I have seen an horrible thing in the house of Israel: there *is* the whoredom of Ephraim, Israel is defiled.

(11) Also, O Judah, he hath set an harvest for thee, when I returned the captivity of my people.

² John 13(20) Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that receiveth whomsoever I **send** receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me.

Chapter 10

(1) “And when he had called his disciples to him, he gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease.”

I would like to stop here and comment. He gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out. What in fact are unclean spirits? If God is the only God, and there are no anti-gods competing with God except people, then what is an unclean spirit that could be cast out? Is not an unclean spirit, as far as God is concerned, an unwanted attitude within a person? Is it not a motivating “force” within a human which does not bring him to reconciliation with God? Remember, we should look at it from God’s point of view. If God desires my repentance (my active pursuit of reconciliation with Him), then is not any attitude or “driving force” within me acting against that one purpose “unclean”? If God has decreed that man cannot be well or fulfilled outside of Himself, then as far as we are concerned, it is absolutely “unclean” or “unhealthy” for that person to remain at odds with God.

(2) “Now the names of the twelve apostles are these: first, Simon (Simeon), who is called Peter (Cephas), and Andrew his brother; James (Jacob) the son of Zebedee, and John (Yonas) his brother; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James (Jacob) the son of Alphaeus, and Thadeus; Simon (Simeon) the Canaanite, and Judas (Judah) Iscariot (citizen), who also beside-gave him (presented him falsely).”

(5) “These twelve Jesus delegated and gave them orders saying, ‘Do not go in the way of the foreigners, and do not enter a city of the Samaritans. But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as you go, proclaim, saying, “The kingdom of heaven is at hand”. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give. Provide neither gold nor silver nor copper in your belts, and no baggage for your journey, nor two changes of garments, nor sandals, nor staffs; for a worker is worthy of his sustenance’.”

Here in this situation, do we find a specific instruction pertaining to a specific short space of time? Or was Jesus giving his disciples long term instructions to carry them through many years after Jesus was gone? From the indications in the gospels, the disciples were not yet ready to represent Jesus within Jesus’ lifetime. They still harbored a false image of him at the time of his arrest and execution. They all deserted him as he foretold. But after Jesus’ resurrection, or better yet, vindication, they were then sent out to continue Jesus’ mandate with a much improved understanding of who he was and what his mandate really was. Matthew also mentions it, not only for the immediate apostles, but also as a teaching mechanism to instruct all subsequent generations of disciples yet to come.

(11) “ ‘Now whatever city or town you enter, inquire who in it is worthy, and stay there till you leave. And when you go into a household, greet it. If indeed the household is worthy, let your peace come upon it. But if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. And whoever will not receive you nor hear your words, when you depart from that house or city, shake off the dust from your feet. Assuredly, I say to you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city!’”

Here, Matthew is saying something very serious similar to what was seen in John’s gospel. Jesus passed on his complete authority and status to his disciples through his teachings and the work of God’s spirit transforming them, as described a little earlier, into sons of God from sons of man. The disciples were equally sons of man, just as Jesus was. Once God had revealed to the disciples who Jesus was, and they had received him as such, they were “born from above”. They were then like Jesus. They were now offspring of Jesus, Jesus’ sheep, Jesus’ branches, or whatever analogy you want to use. But they were not yet mature children. They were on the way to the Father which is the calling of mankind. This helps to bring understanding to what ¹ John says in chapter 2 of his first letter. If we call Jesus “Christ”, then his offspring are also “Christ”, of the same name, of the same family, of the same KIND. That is what John stressed in his letters. John also warned his offspring to beware of those coming to them trying to “sell” them on some other version of the gospel. John told his disciples that they already had the anointing (christ status) and that

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they needed not to look anywhere else. They were already children of God. The word “christ” means “anointed”. It is not a title or name reserved exclusively to Jesus. It is a description, a characteristic describing one who has been “born from above”, one who is of God’s family. Christ is not a name, it is an adjective. God’s name is Yehovah ELOHIM, the family name being ELOHIM, the plurality or people of God.

So when Jesus instructed his disciples about entering a town, he told them to inquire in it who is worthy. And whoever was worthy, there they were to stay indefinitely. They were to offer their peace to that household. If they indeed received a disciple, the household would receive his peace. So what was a disciple’s “peace”? Was not Jesus talking exclusively about “peace with God”? So if a household received the disciple and his teaching, they would receive in consequence peace with God. Simple. “But if they don’t accept you, don’t fret over it. Your peace with God still remains intact. And let them be. You don’t twist their arms or force them into anything. But you, keep on going and don’t let their refusal hinder you in any way. Go to the next place.”

(16) “ ‘Behold I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be prudent as serpents and pure as doves. But beware of men, for they will deliver you up to councils and scourge you in their assemblies. And you will be brought before governors and kings on my account, as a testimony to them and to the foreigners’.”

Jesus is addressing his authentic disciples, no one else. That extends to the disciples of the disciples as well, unto any number of generations. He is instructing those who are committed to the reconciliation process as prescribed by God through Jesus and his disciples.

(19) “ ‘But when they deliver (“paradidomi” the same word used in regards to Judas, “to hand over, to deliver, to present”, not “betray”) you up, do not worry about how or what you should say. For it will be given to you in that hour what you should say; for it is not you who speak, but the spirit of your Father who speaks in you’.”

Upon being transformed into the god-kind, the christ-kind, the heaven-kind, the spirit of God and the knowledge of God is in you. And God speaks through you because you know who you are. You are who you are. There is no need for a special effort to “conjure” your father. He already is in you.

(21) “ ‘Now brother will deliver (beside-give) brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death. And you will be hated by all on account of my name. But he who has endured to the end will be saved. But when they persecute you in this city, flee to another. For assuredly I say to you, you will not complete the cities of Israel before the son of man comes’.”

Coming back to what I said earlier, this must be a long term prophesy, a long term instruction pertaining to a time after Jesus had left them to their mandate. From this statement, there have been the expectation and anticipation of the return of the individual man called Jesus. But the son of man is not Jesus in isolation. It is the process of reconciliation to which Jesus ascribed and which he promoted. Jesus was foretelling the rejection of this gospel for a long period of time, but that there would be a “revival” of this genuine gospel in a latter time. He states this in ²Matthew chapters 17 and 20. Is this what has in fact transpired historically speaking? This is the very question that has haunted me during these many years, and I have had to come to the conclusion that, yes, Jesus was correct. He did foretell it and it did in fact come to pass. If a day is a thousand years, and a thousand years is like a day to God, then yes, we are at the dawn of this third day wherein the SON OF MAN is returning. Why? Because God is sovereign. The very next few verses only amplify the very same message.

(24) “ ‘A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. It is **enough** for a disciple that he become **like** his teacher, and a slave **like** his master. If they have called the master of the house Baalzebub, will those of his household be called any less? Therefore do not fear them. For there is nothing

that is covered that will not be uncovered, and hidden that will not be revealed'."

Prophetically speaking, God reveals all things in due time.

(27) " 'Whatever I tell you in the dark, speak in the light; And what you hear in the ear, proclaim on the housetops. And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in Gehenna. Are not two sparrows sold for an assarion? Yet not one of them falls to the ground outside of your father. But the very hairs of your head are numbered. Do not fear then; your worth exceeds many sparrows'."

Returning to the idea of reconciliation, do not fear. Birds are only birds. Ye are called to a much higher place than animals. Let that sink into your very being. Believe. Trust. Surrender. God's intent for you is not malicious. He desires to lift you up to His level, to reconciliation, harmony and fulfillment. But He will only lift us up to His level on His terms, not on ours.

(32) " 'Therefore whoever endorses (same-speaks) me before men, him I will also endorse (same-speak) before my Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies me before men, him I will also deny before my Father who is in heaven'."

Is this ever an important statement! We cannot overstate its significance. "Whoever ENDORSES (SAME-SPEAK) me before men..." "Whoever accurately represents me without changing me..." "Whoever receives me honestly and without prejudice..." "Whoever does not BESIDE-GIVE me..." He is talking about being a faithful repeater, a faithful reproduction of the original. It is not difficult to understand this concept in this digital age. When a digital signal is transmitted in one way or another, the signal must be kept intact and faithfully transmitted in order to fulfill its given purpose. Thusly Jesus is placing importance on his message, his gospel.

In like kind, if one is faithful in repeating Christ, so will Jesus faithfully bring him to the Father. It is a two-way deal. It is not a one-way covenant. The faithful repeating of Jesus' identity and message will automatically bring one to God, the Father.

How do I deny him before men? It has to be the opposite to "acknowledge (same-speak)". If I withhold the true message and identity of Christ from men, I will automatically be denied reconciliation for myself and for anyone else I might influence. If I change his message and his identity and present this to men, I will be denied reconciliation and sonship, both for me and for those I mislead. God is extremely strict about the conditions of reconciliation. Jesus is saying that if His conditions are not met, reconciliation and sonship are denied.

We should maybe begin to look inwardly and ask those pertinent questions. Am I faithfully listening to Christ's teaching? Am I faithfully adopting his teaching and putting it into practice? Am I going where he was going? Am I becoming what he was becoming? Am I following the one whom he has anointed as his successor, his representative? Do I believe that there is an easy way out of following Jesus? Am I willing to do and to be whatever it takes to become a son of God? These questions remain paramount in my mind.

(34) " 'Do you think that I came to bring peace on earth? I did not come to bring peace but a sword. For I have come to *set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's foes will be those of his own household.*

(37) He who has affection for father or mother more than me is not worthy of me. And he who has affection for son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he who does not take up his banner and follow after me is not worthy of me. He who finds his identity will relinquish it, and he who relinquishes his identity for my cause will find it'."

How important these words are! Again, he talks about the distinction between the earthly and the heavenly. He distinguishes between earthly family relationships and identity as opposed to heavenly family ties and identity. He is saying that if I value earthly relationships and earthly treasures of any kind, I am not "worthy of him". I am not going to fulfill the requirements set forth

by God in order to effect reconciliation with Him. I am not going to have anything to do with Jesus because his entire purpose is that very goal: reconciliation with God, the Father. If that is not my goal, my cause, then I really have nothing to do with Jesus. In order to go where Jesus was going, do what Jesus was doing, and become what Jesus was becoming, I can't let anything distract me.

Jesus was talking about abandoning the earthly identity in exchange for the heavenly identity. It is the summary of his teachings. If I adopt this as my purpose in life, then I will surrender to the process of transformation as outlined by Christ. In the next verse, Jesus amplifies and highlights the whole process of heavenly family.

(40) “ ***‘HE WHO RECEIVES YOU (apostle) RECEIVES ME, AND HE WHO RECEIVES ME RECEIVES HIM WHO SET ME APART (made me an apostle)’.***”

This is extremely direct. How could we have missed this for so long? By receiving a delegate of Jesus, one of his offspring, we receive Jesus. And by receiving Jesus, we receive God who established him as His son. This finally brings to light what Jesus meant when he appeared to Saul of Tarsus on the Damascus road and told him, “Saul! Saul! Why are you persecuting ME?” Jesus was again reconfirming his message from out of heaven to Saul the absolute importance of receiving the offspring of Christ. Saul was told that by persecuting the disciples of anointed Jesus he was in fact persecuting him by extension. How more clear can it possibly get? Saul was invited to receive the real anointed Jesus right after that by being blinded and brought to town and three days later have his sight restored by God ***through one of Christ’s disciples***, Ananias. Jesus was confirming from heaven the authenticity of his disciples, specifically the one who was sent to bring him his sight. Saul was invited at that moment to become a disciple of Christ by receiving Christ IN THE FLESH (in the person of Ananias).

(41) “ ‘He who receives a prophet into the prophet’s name shall receive a prophet’s reward. And he who receives a righteous man into the righteous man’s name shall receive a righteous man’s reward. And whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of refreshment into the disciple’s name, assuredly, I say to you, he shall by no means lose his reward’.”

In other words, if I receive the person of a prophet, I will receive the corresponding reward. If I receive the person of a righteous man, then I will receive the corresponding reward. I will share the fate of the one I receive. He is also talking about the open recognition of these people, not just receiving strangers as guests. If I give a disciple a cup of refreshment BECAUSE OF WHO HE IS, recognizing who he is, then I will receive my corresponding reward.

It is all about with whom we identify. ³ In another place, Jesus told the Jews and Pharisees that they did the will of their father. Who was their father according to Jesus? It was the traducer. With whomever you identify, you share his fate. To identify includes doing the works of the one with whom we identify, not just claiming through word alone. If you identify with the traducer, the independent, the rebellious, you share his fate. If you identify with the son of God, you share his fate. If you identify with anything that withholds you from identifying with Christ and with God, then so be it. There is the automatic consequence that follows.

Chapter 10 footnotes:

¹ 1John 2(12) I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake.

(13) I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him *that is* from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father.

(14) I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him *that is* from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.

² Matthew 17(22) And while they abode in Galilee, Jesus said unto them, *The Son of man shall be betrayed* (paradidomi, “beside-given”) *into the hands of men:*

(23) *And they shall kill him, and the third day he shall be raised again.* And they were exceeding sorry.

Matthew 20(18) *Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be betrayed* (paradidomi, “beside-given”) *unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death,*

(19) *And shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify (put on stake) him: and the third day he shall rise again.*

³ John 8(44) *Ye are of your father the devil (traducer), and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.*

Chapter 11

(1) “Now it came to pass when Jesus finished instructing his twelve disciples, that he crossed over from there to teach and to proclaim in their cities.

(2) And when John had heard in prison about the works of the anointed one (christ), he sent word through his disciples to ask him, ‘Are you the coming one, or do we look for another?’ Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Go and tell John the things which you hear and see: the blind receive their sight and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up and the poor ¹ are evangelized (properly-guided). And blessed is he who is not offended by who I am.’

(7) As they departed, Jesus began to say to the crowds concerning John, ‘What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? But what did you go out to see? A man clothed in soft garments? Indeed, those who wear soft clothing are in king’s houses. But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I say to you, and more than a prophet. For this is he of whom it is written, ² “Behold, I send my angel before your face, who will furnish your way in front of you.” (Isaiah 40:3-5; see also Exodus 23:20-33)

(11) Assuredly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. From but the days of John the Baptist henceforth the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent are usurping it. For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. And if you are willing to receive it, he is Elijah who is to come. He who has an ear, let him hear’.”

Jesus again makes the distinction between the heavenly and the earthly. Referring to John the Baptist, Jesus says, “All born of women...” What does he mean by that? He must mean all those born in the natural, of the flesh, of the earthly, not born from above as mentioned in John chapter 3. None is greater than John the Baptist, not even the great names from the Old Testament, including Moses, Elijah, Isaiah, Solomon, David, etc. But the least in the heavenly is greater than John the Baptist. The distinction is being made. But in addition to that, Jesus is stating where John was, what his status was. However great a status in the earthly John had attained, he had not yet “crossed over” into the heavenly as Jesus had. If John had fully recognized and grasped Jesus as the One to come and who he was, he would have become his disciple, his offspring. It would have been strange to see the leader become the follower, the prophet become the disciple. John did not receive the full measure needed to pass over from the earthly to the heavenly. God would have to deal with John accordingly.

Beyond this, he goes on to say, “For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John.” He is indicating that up until John, there have been a series of prophecies and prophets sent by God

piecemeal which finally culminate at the time and in the person of John. He is suggesting that John represents all of the prophets and all of the prophecies of the Old Testament. In incorporating the sum total of God's prophecy, he could have been the first to receive the message and apply it to himself instead of only being a carrier and re-transmitter of the message. But John was content to see himself as one of those prophets rather than a full-fledged recipient of the prophecy. That explains what Jesus meant in the above statement.

Going further, Jesus says, "From but the days of John the Baptist henceforth the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent are usurping it." I understand him saying that from the time of John the Baptist and himself henceforth, rather than receive the kingdom of heaven properly and without violence, men claim the kingdom, take it improperly, not according to God's instructions. You could say that people are claiming the name of God in vain. Jesus was demonstrating and teaching the proper way into the kingdom, and yet people have continued to conjure and look for alternate ways to enter, every time it being a waste of time, a vain effort because God will not yield for a moment in any way to our caprices. If we wish to enter the kingdom, God has already prescribed the way in. Either we accept, or we don't. Why do we look for some other way in? Religion claims the kingdom mystically rather than in reality.

By the way, Jesus was also born of a woman.

A little further, he says "...he is Elijah to come..." What is this mysterious allusion to Elijah? It is a clue for our benefit. When we go back to the book of Malachi in chapter four we read,

4:5-6 "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse."

The above message is that of reconciliation, the allusion to the restored family relationships as prescribed by God. It leads us right back to the garden where it all started, and where the family of God broke up upon Adam's leaving. It has remained that way all that time up until Jesus who received the message and reversed the Adamic condition for himself, and invited others to do likewise. Religion has distorted the picture with all kinds of human thoughts and opinions. But God has stated His position. Jesus was the first to completely grasp this and to put it into action. Jesus went back to the garden, and stood in Adam's place and said to Eve (the flesh, the world), "Yes, God has indeed said. I will not eat from the tree as you are suggesting. I choose to side with my Father, not with creation." He who is given understanding, let him heed.

(16) " 'But to what shall I liken this generation? It is like children sitting in the market places and calling to their companions, and saying, "We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we wailed to you, but you did not beat yourself." For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, "He has a demon." The son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, "Look, a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber, a friend of tax-collectors and sinners." But wisdom is evidenced by works'."

He is saying that the prophets came, they brought a message, but they were rejected. The "son of man" (the summary of all prophecy), the one who is willing to repent, comes along and celebrates the whole thing of repentance rather than religious traditions and formalities.

Wisdom cannot be real or genuine without action. ³ As James says in his letter, "We do what we believe, not say what we believe." And earlier, ⁴ John the Baptist rebuked the Pharisees for the very same thing.

(20) "Then he began to reproach the cities in which his mighty works had been done, because they did not repent, 'Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and in ashes. But I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you.

(23) And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? You will be brought down to Hades (Oblivion); for if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say to you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for you.'

(25) At that time Jesus answered and said, 'I acknowledge, Father, lord of heaven and earth, that you have concealed these things from the wise and intellectual and have revealed them to children (open-minded). Yes, Father, for so it was good in your sight that it happened thus. Everything has been entrusted to me about my Father, and no one knows the son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the son, and he to whom the son wills to reveal Him. Come to me, all you who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, since I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is the appropriate instrument yet my task is bearable'."

Here Jesus is making an important point. He looks at the nature of man and at the reluctance that man has toward receiving that which is from God. Man does not want to see it from someone else's point of view. Man wants everything to fit his own perspective. We establish Bible schools and Bible colleges. We study theology, Bible, and all kinds of things. We spend lifetimes in the study of "God". But Jesus says, "Isn't it marvelous that God has withheld the true knowledge from the wise and intellectual, but has granted it to the simple or open-minded?" The Bible scholars and religious leaders of his day had a closed mind. Things had to fit their own prejudices and frame of mind. They didn't realize that their frame of mind was a human frame of mind. It didn't sink in to them that in order to reconcile and be at peace with God they had to adopt God's frame of mind, His perspective, His point of view.

Naturally, we resist this process having been made in the image of God. I cannot overstate this fact. Being made in the image of God, I have the instinctive desire to be sovereign, supreme, under no one else's will or authority. I want to be God in my own right. I want to be the head. I want to be the teacher. I want to be the leader. I want to be the father. So naturally I want everything to revolve around me, to revolve around my own point of view or opinion. I "cling to my own life". But Jesus was preaching the very opposite. He was preaching the forgoing of one's "own life" or sovereignty, and surrendering it to someone else, be it God, or God's appointed delegate. This is man's Great Conflict. Ironically, I want others to be under me. But just like me, they themselves want to be like me, supreme, hence the eternal conflict. Everyone covets "the top job". Everyone wants to be supreme, but no one wants to be subordinate and led.

Chapter 11 footnotes:

¹ "euaggelizo": "eu" meaning "well, proper"; "ago" meaning "to lead"; "agele" meaning "herd, that which is led".

² Isaiah 40(3) The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

(4) Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain:

(5) And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see *it* together: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken *it*.

³ James 2(17) Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. (18) Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.

⁴ Matthew 3(7) But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?

Confronting The Cloudiness

(8) Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance:

(9) And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to *our* father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.

(10) And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

Chapter 12

(1) "At that time Jesus went through grainfields on the Sabbath. And his disciples were hungry, and began to pluck heads of grain and to eat. But when the Pharisees saw it, they said to him, 'Look, your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath.' Then he said to them, 'Have you not read what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him, ¹ how he entered the house of God and ate the showbread which was not lawful for him to eat, nor for those who were with him, but only for the priests? Or have you not read in the law that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath, and are blameless? But I say to you that in this place there is something greater than the temple. But if you had known what this means, ² *'I desire mercy and not sacrifice'*, you would not have condemned the innocent. For the son of man IS the Sabbath of the Lord'."

Here is an interesting point. It is traditionally read, "For the son of man is lord of the Sabbath." Granted, it makes sense in the other way as well. But the Greek lends itself to saying it as "Sabbath of the Lord". When we stop to think about it, considering the creation story from God's point of view, does it not say that God created the world and all that is in it in six days, and then rested on the seventh? Did not God subtly suggest that man is not yet completed until the end of the sixth day? Even Jesus elsewhere said, ³ "Until now my Father has been working and I am working." So we can deduce that the creation story is yet to be completed. If we realistically assess the situation, is mankind at peace with God? Is mankind in a state of reconciliation and one with the Father? For God, what would be considered "work"? Is not God's labor us? Is not His work to generate a pleasing family? So that is the challenge that God gave Himself. We being at odds with God causes man to work, to labor, to suffer, all the things we take for granted in life. But Jesus invited us to come to that place of rest that he had received. The "son of man" which is the appointed way of reconciliation with God should be considered our place of rest. We need not look any further for how to be at peace with God. It is no longer our labor. In our surrender, God gives us rest. In Isaiah 30:15, God says, "For thus saith the LORD GOD, the Holy One of Israel; *In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength: and ye would not.*" We tend to complicate things when we come with our human mindset. But in reality, from God's point of view, everything is very simple. And we are invited to adopt His point of view if we are willing. Our stubbornness IS our labor. When we become "son of man", not only do we rest, but God rests as well.

(9) "Now when he had departed from there, he went into their assembly. And behold, there was a man who had a withered hand. And they asked him, saying, 'Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?' —that they might have pretext to accuse him. Then he said to them, 'What man is there among you who has one sheep, and if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will not reach and lift it out? How is man different to sheep? Therefore it is lawful to do the appropriate thing on the Sabbath.' Then he said to the man, 'Stretch out your hand.' And he stretched it out, and it was restored as whole as the other. Then the Pharisees went out and conspired against him, how they might destroy him."

Isn't it almost funny? In this situation, God heals a man, not Jesus, but God heals a man before the eyes of the religious "men of God" of the day. God heals a man in vindication of Jesus demonstrating the contrast between him and the Pharisees. They are insulted at what transpires. Rather than seek to know this Jesus and his God, they conspire to destroy him. They can not, they will not consider for a moment that maybe they had missed it all along. It is unthinkable that they be mistaken.

I look at them and realize just how deeply this nature runs in us. I don't point my finger at them, but I identify with them with understanding. I know just how harsh and difficult it is to come to terms with the real Jesus, the real gospel, the real God. I know how difficult it is to overcome my own pride and to choose humility. It is no "cake walk".

(15) "But when Jesus knew it he withdrew from there; and many followed him around, and he healed them all. And he warned them not to make him known, that it might be fulfilled which was ⁴ spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying, '*Behold, My servant whom I will uphold, who qualifies by delighting in My soul; I will put My spirit upon him, and from justice he will guide the nations. He will not contest nor complain, nor will anyone hear his voice in the streets. A bruised reed he will not break, and smoking wick he will not quench, till he succeeds in having the verdict overturned.*' And foreigners will look forward to his name'."

Mindset tends to bias translations. In the Hebrew text of Isaiah along with this Greek text, the phrase is traditionally translated as, "*Behold, my servant whom I have chosen, my beloved in whom my soul delights.*" Looking throughout scriptures, God approves of the soul who delights in Him. That is in essence what separates us one from another. It is not in the fact that God delights in a soul that makes him valuable. From God's point of view, what makes a man extraordinary is in his delighting in God. In Psalm 37, verse 4, it says, "*Delight thyself also in the LORD: and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.*" He doesn't say, "I will delight in you and therefore spoil you." The one whom God considers beloved is the one who genuinely delights in God. It goes against our human nature to delight in anything or anyone else other than ourselves. That is why Jesus was so special. Prophetically, David spoke of the spirit of Jesus in ⁵Psalm 40 pertaining to this very theme.

(22) "Then one was brought to him who was demonized, blind and mute; and he healed him, so that the blind and mute man both spoke and saw. And all the crowds were amazed and said, 'Could this be the son of David?' But when the Pharisees heard it they said, 'This fellow does not cast out demons except by Baalzebub, the ruler of the demons.'

(25) But Jesus knew their thoughts, and said to them, 'Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand. And if Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand? And if by Baalzebub I cast out demons, by whom do your sons cast them out? By this they shall be your judges'."

How interesting! "You are acknowledging that I am casting demons out of those from whom *your* sons already have cast them out. What business do demons have being in Israel, your CHARGE, in the first place, regardless as to how I cast them out?" Jesus is being extremely clever and sarcastic in his rebuttal. By their own admission, the Pharisees and religious leaders are confessing FAILURE IN THEIR DUTY.

(28) " 'But if I cast out demons by divine spirit, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you. Or else how can one enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods unless he first ⁶binds the strong man? And then he will plunder his house. **HE WHO IS NOT WITH ME IS AGAINST ME, AND HE WHO DOES NOT GATHER WITH ME SCATTERS.** ⁷

Confronting The Cloudiness

(31) Therefore I say to you, every error and vilification will be forgiven men, but the vilification of the spirit will not be forgiven men. Anyone who speaks a word against the son of man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against holy spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come’.”

We can criticize and vilify the “son of man” all we want, it won’t matter in the end. But if we vilify, if we reject the holy spirit, or fail to recognize it for what it really is, we’ll not seek it, or respond to it when God manifests it. In other words, if I stubbornly hang onto my own mindset, I will not respond to God when he does show up, the real God through His appointed delegate. What was said just a few lines earlier? We saw the Pharisees outright reject and condemn the work of God in their presence. Therefore it was the Pharisees that kept themselves from going and seeking reconciliation with the real God who manifested Himself before them. I must equally keep this in mind for myself. I must not close my mind to God if it is indeed God with whom I am seeking to be at peace. Being at peace with God begins with acknowledging Him to be whoever He already is while not placing any prejudice or expectations on Him as to who He should be according to my preferences. God is completely and totally ready and willing to forget all of my wanderings and strayings away from Him. All that is required is my repentance. But if I will not repent, if I will not return to God on His terms, how can He forgive my strayings? In essence, I condemn myself. God doesn’t condemn me. He has already forgiven me. It is all up to me. All I need to do is “come home to Papa”.

(33) “ ‘Either declare the tree good and its fruit good, or else declare the tree bad and its fruit bad; for a tree is known by its fruit. Brood of vipers! How can you, being faulty, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. A good man out of the good treasure brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things. But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned’.”

This simply means that our words only express outwardly that which is inside, our frame of mind, our attitude and our identity. What we say reflects who and what we are. By our words we will be vindicated or we will be condemned. He does specify that everyone will give account in the day of judgment. In other words, unless we receive forgiveness, we are held accountable for everything we say and do in the day of judgment. If we wish to be absolved of this condition, forgiveness is available. This very principle will be covered extensively in the last section of this work, “Going Back To Basics”.

(38) “Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered, saying, ‘Teacher, we want to see a sign from you.’ But he answered and said to them, ‘A perverse and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah’.”

Why does he say here, “A perverse and adulterous generation”? “Perverse” means “corrupted, deviant, not according to the original intent of the maker”. And “adulterous” means “unfaithful to the husband, infidelity to the head, leader or master”.

What did they mean by a “sign”? In my understanding, they were looking for evidence of common cause, of “being on the same side” so-to-speak. They were “nationalists”, for the Jewish nation and cause, but they didn’t get that from Jesus. Jesus appeared to be indifferent to their cause.

(40) “ ‘For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh will rise in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; And indeed a greater than Jonah is here. The queen of the south will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon;

and indeed a greater than Solomon is here'."

I'm just wondering, looking at this, what does he mean by "the sign of Jonah"? We traditionally interpret this to be his foretelling his physical death and subsequent resurrection. Because he uses the term "son of man" as opposed to "I" or "myself", I can't help but think that he means something much bigger, broader in scope and in time. In spite of the fact that Jesus died and on the third day rose again, where have he and his gospel been for two thousand years? Have they not been "buried", hidden from public awareness? Has not the "son of man" concept been "hidden in plain sight"? Has not the "son of man" been buried by the earthly mindset all of this time to be subsequently revived at a later date? And has not mankind suffered in darkness all of this time, just as Jonah did? History already bears witness to this fact.

We could go more into details of this analogy. But in the mean time, reviewing the book of Jonah is a constructive and interesting exercise. Since he repeats this statement about the "sign of Jonah" twice, we must assume that it is extremely relevant. It is like underlining the statement or putting it in bold letters. Jesus gives us an important clue in this above passage. Jesus refers to the repentance of the Ninevites occurring as a result of Jonah's preaching even though they had not been given ANY SPECIAL SIGN FROM GOD. Therefore we could assume that the sign to which he is referring is the REPENTANCE itself. Jesus could be talking about the sign FOLLOWING the messenger as opposed to the sign PRECEDING the messenger. We could say that GOD was looking for a sign.

(43) " 'When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest and finds none. Then he says, "I will return to the house from which I came." And when he comes, he finds it empty, swept, and put in order. Then he goes and takes with him ⁸ seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first. So shall it also be with this perverse generation'."

What is he saying here? This perverse generation is the one he is addressing, not just those of his day, but also us today. We are all one perverse generation. He is not speaking in terms of time but rather in type or character. He is saying, "If the shoe fits, wear it." Christians talk about being born again or converted. It is like casting out an unclean spirit (attitude, opinion or mindset). But if you take a pail of water and empty it, it is now vacant, available to be used and to be refilled with anything else. But on the other hand, if you take this pail which is full of dirty water, and instead of completely emptying it, you pour into it clean water, over time, eventually the dirty water will be displaced by the clean water. The analogy is simply this: it is not enough to stop a previous condition. It is not enough to "empty the pail of dirty water". The vessel (a man) must be filled with clean water. He must be filled with the truth, the genuine, "that which satisfies". It is not only to satisfy the man, but it is to satisfy God. When we get to the place of satisfying God, God responds by satisfying us. That is the gospel in a nutshell.

We naturally see it the other way around. We want to be satisfied, whether it satisfies God or not. But, as we saw just a little earlier, if I delight in the Lord God, He will give me the desires of my heart.

A vessel has the purpose of containing something on behalf of the owner of the vessel. If the vessel does not see itself the possession of anyone else, then by definition it is unclean regardless of what it may contain. But if it truly sees and recognizes itself as being the possession of God, then it is already by definition clean REGARDLESS OF WHAT THE OWNER PUTS IN IT. So it is not the contents of a vessel as such that makes a vessel clean or unclean, it is the ownership label on this vessel that makes it clean or unclean. We have made it so complicated. In fact, that is what he means by "seven other spirits more wicked than itself". It is all of the complicated substitutions to the simple concept that I just described. Religion takes a man and teaches him to forsake his former mindset or frame of mind, but he is not taught to complete the transaction by replacing it with the genuine, the true message of the gospel which is to belong to God IN HIS PRESCRIBED FASHION, by becoming a branch of the vine of Christ.

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(46) “While he was still talking to the crowds, behold, his mother and brothers stood outside seeking to speak with him. Then one said to him, ‘Look, your mother and your brothers are standing outside, seeking to speak with you.’ But he answered and said to the one who told him, ‘Who is my mother and who are my brothers?’ And he stretched out his hand toward his disciples and said, ‘Here are my mother and my brothers! For whoever does the will of my father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother’.”

He takes the opportunity to highlight the distinction between the heavenly and the earthly. He is explaining that we are not to equate the earthly family with the heavenly family. The flesh family nevertheless is the pattern by which we learn about spirit or the heavenly concept of family. But even in that, the earthly family relationships have been corrupted by man from the pattern instructed by God through the prophets. It is not to say unequivocally that earthly family cannot be heavenly family as well. All Jesus is highlighting is that earthly family does not necessarily mean heavenly family. As he says, “Those who do the will of my heavenly Father are my brothers, sisters, and mother.” He is only saying that flesh family is not heavenly family. He is insisting that heavenly family is built on individuals deciding to adopt God as Father. It is not the act of God adopting us that makes us His children. It is in adopting Him as our Father that makes us His children. When it comes to God’s point of view, everything seems to reverse or “flip”.

Chapter 12 footnotes:

¹ 1Samuel 21(1) Then came David to Nob to Ahimelech the priest: and Ahimelech was afraid at the meeting of David, and said unto him, Why *art* thou alone, and no man with thee?

(2) And David said unto Ahimelech the priest, The king hath commanded me a business, and hath said unto me, Let no man know any thing of the business whereabout I send thee, and what I have commanded thee: and I have appointed *my* servants to such and such a place.

(3) Now therefore what is under thine hand? give *me* five *loaves of* bread in mine hand, or what there is present.

(4) And the priest answered David, and said, *There is* no common bread under mine hand, but there is hallowed bread; if the young men have kept themselves at least from women.

(5) And David answered the priest, and said unto him, Of a truth women *have been* kept from us about these three days, since I came out, and the vessels of the young men are holy, and *the bread is* in a manner common, yea, though it were sanctified this day in the vessel.

(6) So the priest gave him hallowed *bread*: for there was no bread there but the shewbread, that was taken from before the LORD, to put hot bread in the day when it was taken away.

² See footnote for Matthew 9(13).

³ John 5(17) But Jesus answered them, *My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.*

⁴ Isaiah 42(4) and Isaiah 11(10).

⁵ Psalm 40(1) I waited patiently for the LORD; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry.

(2) He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, *and* established my goings.

(3) And he hath put a new song in my mouth, *even* praise unto our God: many shall see *it*, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD.

(4) Blessed *is* that man that maketh the LORD his trust, and respecteth not the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies.

(5) Many, O LORD my God, *are* thy wonderful works *which* thou hast done, and thy thoughts *which are* to us: they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee: *if* I would declare and speak *of them*, they are more than can be numbered.

(6) Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened: burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required.

- (7) Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book *it is* written of me,
(8) I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law *is* within my heart.
(9) I have preached righteousness in the great congregation: lo, I have not refrained my lips, O LORD, thou knowest.
(10) I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart; I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation: I have not concealed thy lovingkindness and thy truth from the great congregation.
(11) Withhold not thou thy tender mercies from me, O LORD: let thy lovingkindness and thy truth continually preserve me.
(12) For innumerable evils have compassed me about: mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of mine head: therefore my heart faileth me.
(13) Be pleased, O LORD, to deliver me: O LORD, make haste to help me.
(14) Let them be ashamed and confounded together that seek after my soul to destroy it; let them be driven backward and put to shame that wish me evil.
(15) Let them be desolate for a reward of their shame that say unto me, Aha, aha.
(16) Let all those that seek thee rejoice and be glad in thee: let such as love thy salvation say continually, The LORD be magnified.
(17) But I *am* poor and needy; *yet* the Lord thinketh upon me: thou *art* my help and my deliverer; make no tarrying, O my God.

⁶ Matthew 16(19) And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whoever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whoever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”

Matthew 18(18) **Assuredly, I say to you, whoever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whoever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”**

⁷ Psalm 92(9) For, lo, thine enemies, O LORD, for, lo, thine enemies shall perish; all the workers of iniquity shall be scattered.

⁸ Proverbs 6(16) These six *things* doth the LORD hate: yea, seven *are* an abomination unto him:

- (17) A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed **innocent blood**,
(18) An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief,
(19) A false witness *that* speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren.
(20) My son, keep thy father's commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother:
(21) Bind them continually upon thine heart, *and* tie them about thy neck.

Chapter 13

(1) “On the same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the sea. And large crowds gathered around him, so that he got into a boat and sat; and the crowd stood on the shore. Then he spoke many things to them in parables, saying, ‘Behold, a sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seed fell by the wayside; and the birds came and ate them. Some seed fell on stony places, where they did not have much dirt; and they immediately sprouted because they had no depth of dirt. But when the sun was up they were scorched, and because they had no root they withered away. And some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew and choked them. But others fell on good ground and yielded a crop: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.’

(10) And the disciples came and said to him, ‘Why do you speak to them in parables?’ He answered and said to them, ‘Because it has been given to you to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given.

¹ For whoever has, it will have been given to him, and he will superabound; but whoever does not yet have, even what he has will be taken away from him. Because of this, I speak to them in parables, since looking they do not see, and

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listening they do not hear, nor do they understand. And in them the ² prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says, *"Hearing you will hear and shall not understand, and seeing you will see and not perceive; for the heart of this people has grown smug. Their ears are hard of hearing, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, lest they should understand with their heart and return, so that I would heal them."* But blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear; for assuredly, I say to you that many prophets and righteous men (throughout the ages) yearn to see what you see, and do not see, and to hear what you hear, and do not hear'."

Here we are told that God has created everything to be an enigma. In Proverbs 25:2, the writer says, "It is the glory of God to conceal a thing: but the honour of kings is to search out a matter." More importantly he is hinting at the reason for taking this approach: *"...for the heart of this people has grown smug."* In essence, God resists the proud and is open to the humble. Matthew 23:12 says, *"And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted."* So we can see the motivation behind speaking in parables. Because people are proud by nature, one cannot dictate truth or anything to a person. Jesus was "fishing" so-to-speak. He would speak in riddles to invite people to inquire for further explanation, and at the same time keep proud people away who do not seek for clarification. Jesus, on God's behalf, would be gentle and respond to meek and humble people, but would have nothing to do with proud and independent people who kept their distance. People needed to see themselves needy before coming to Jesus for anything. It was basically the same thing concerning physical healings. People had to "believe". In other words, they had to see themselves needy and see Jesus as being able to supply their need. Unfortunately, people generally limited their "faith" to things of the flesh, earthly matters. It was a beginning, but God was inviting man to ascend, to rise above the flesh, and enter God's realm, the realm that Jesus was manifesting to those around him. God wishes to be sought, to be pursued. He gives us only hints and clues. But it is up to us to respond to God. *"Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."* (Isaiah 55:6-7) And in several places in Deuteronomy, Moses instructs the people to ³"cleave unto the Lord God". The word used here in the Hebrew means "to pursue and to hold fast". God will not pursue after us. Contrary to our nature and our preference, He doesn't need us. We need Him. He will be pursued. And He responds to our pursuit. The more we genuinely pursue, the more He responds by granting us more and more, until we ask for total reconciliation and He responds by granting us reconciliation in due time and through due process.

And in response to only those who approach Jesus for explanation, he continues:

(18) " 'Therefore hear the parable of the sower: when anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not adopt it, then the faulty one comes and snatches away what is sown in his heart. This is he who receives seed by the wayside. But he who receives the seed on stony ground, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; yet he has not root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, he immediately stumbles'."

This reminds me of my personal experiences with God. On several occasions, I came to God and told Him that I wanted to get closer to Him. Inevitably, God would subsequently cause tribulation in my life. I would be compelled to experience a challenging and difficult condition or event. The temptation would always cause doubt in me. I could easily have said, "To heck with all of this. If this is God, who needs Him?" and then go on living my own life. But as I learned over time, these tribulations and difficulties were in fact part of the reply to my request. I wanted to get closer. But God's "reply" was, "I don't believe you. In fact, I don't think you really mean it. Do you know what you are asking?" Every time, he would initially place a challenge, a test to overcome before granting more. He wanted to test my sincerity and determination. Let's face it, it is God's pleasure. It is the very thing that pleases Him. Just like Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane prior to his trial and

execution, I am caused to face circumstances that test my faithfulness and devotion. I found it difficult. But He didn't abandon me to my own strength and devices. He would always help me through it. Most importantly He would have something for me to learn through the experience which would then cause me to "get closer" to Him.

(22) " 'Now he who receives seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the delusion of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful'."

We can hear the word, God's invitation. But if we cling to our own mindset, to earthly values, the condition in which those concerns take our energy and our attention, we cannot be fruitful. What is to be fruitful? As ⁴ John says, "My Father's desire is that you bear much fruit..." First of all, the very first step in fruit bearing is becoming a fruit yourself. Once we are in fact anointed disciples, we grow in this anointing. We grow in knowledge and understanding of God the Father. Along the way, if God sees that we have matured properly, He may decide to place disciples behind us to repeat the process of "bearing fruit". It is the spirit equivalent of bearing children. Jesus taught his disciples to continue him after he is gone to the Father. That was the thrust of his message. We just need to listen. But the inverse is perfectly understandable. If I hear the instructions of Christ and DO NOT HEED AND PUT THEM INTO PRACTICE, then the automatic result is being unfruitful IN GOD'S OPINION.

(23) " 'But he who receives seed on the good soil is he who hears the word and adopts it, who indeed bears fruit and reproduces: some hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty'."

It is exactly as was said a few lines earlier: reproduction IN LIKE KIND OF CHRIST.

(24) "Another parable he put forth to them, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field; but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way. But when the grain had sprouted and produced fruit, then the tares also appeared. So the servants of the owner came and said to him, "Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?" He said to them, "An enemy MAN has done this." The servants said to him, "Do you want us then to go and gather them up?" But he said, "No, lest while you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest, and at the time of harvest I will say to the reapers to gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my storehouse'."

I can't help but see that Jesus, through Matthew in particular, was foretelling of a great event. Matthew understood it because he spent a lot of energy quoting Jesus about this phenomenon throughout his gospel. In the later years, along with the other disciples, Matthew would have seen this phenomenon already having begun to take place.

(31) "Another parable he put forth to them, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field, which indeed is the least of all the seeds; but when it is grown it is greater than the herbs and becomes tree-like, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches'."

I have to admit that I am not sure what this means. I can't say for sure that the mustard represents the genuine gospel and the genuine church in which the counterfeit gospel "nests in its branches", or if Jesus is being sarcastic in which the mustard seed is in fact THE COUNTER GOSPEL posing as the genuine. I have to allow for the latter because of the very next parable:

(33) "Another parable he spoke to them: 'The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till it was all leavened'."

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⁵ In another place, Jesus warns his disciples to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees. And in Exodus, they were not allowed to leave Egypt with any leaven. Leaven represents corruption of an authentic, such as bread. All leaven does is cause bubbles to inflate the bread dough in order to make it lighter, fluffier, and more desirable to the eater. It modifies the bread in a substantial way. So Jesus is directly alluding to the same phenomenon to take place with the genuine gospel, the gospel being the “true bread from heaven”. Sadly, the gospel is leavened even unto this day, with the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees (religion). He means the gospel is corrupted by the human mindset, man’s obsession with substitution, with replacing the real with anything else THAT IS ACCEPTABLE to man, to suit his lusts. And as he says above, the gospel has been corrupted through and through wherein none of the “meal” has been spared. The whole loaf has been corrupted by this counter-gospel. He also refers to “a woman”. Eve in the garden?

(34) “All these things Jesus spoke to the crowds in parables; and without a parable he did not speak to them, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by ⁶ the prophet, saying, *‘I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world.’*”

(36) Then Jesus sent the crowds away and went into the house. And his disciples came to him, saying, ‘Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field.’ He answered and said to them, ‘He who sows the good seed is the son of man. The field is the world, the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the faulty one. The enemy who sowed them is the traducer, the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels (lead-herd). Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire so it will be at the end of this age. The son of man will send out his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all things that stumble, and those who practice lawlessness, and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.’”

Here he explains in clearer language the parable of the wheat and the tares. He explains that the sower is the son of man in the person of anointed Jesus. He sows the genuine gospel into the world. But while men were unaware, a counter-gospel was introduced into the world. This counter-gospel spreads and prospers within the realm or context of the genuine gospel. So God, rather than outright expose the counter-gospel early in the game, opts to let it prosper until a latter time in which the harvest is reaped. He is foretelling of a great global event which is to take place. He is foretelling of a time in which the false gospel is completely purged from His “harvest” and that the genuine gospel will be vindicated. His “harvest” is the proper establishment of His heavenly family once and for all. As we saw in John, God will vindicate the Vine of Christ. He will vindicate His genuine son, and His genuine gospel of surrender. He will finally bring all of the scattered people into one household, one family wherein there is no more division, conflict, and independence. Each branch will be attached to its parent branch in perfect order and harmony within the Vine. He will expose the truth to the world about the practice of eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. He will expose the truth to the world that everyone, including the church, was in error, faulty. He will finally let the world know that it is time to repent, and to put away ALL RELIGION and replace it with the GENUINE FAMILY OF GOD. There will be many upset people, people who were convinced of being right. But all is not lost. People will remain in their suffering FOR AS LONG AS THEY CLING TO THEIR OWN INDEPENDENCE AND CLING TO THE TREE OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL. But when people finally surrender to the transformation process as preached by the genuine gospel, and go through it, they come out of it, as Jesus says above, “The righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their father.”

(44) “ ‘Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in a field, which escapes notice, a man finds; and for the joy over it, going with purpose, he sells all that he has and buys that field’.”

This is what happens to a man who encounters the reality of the real God. This experience motivates him to get rid of everything that stands in the way of his reconciliation with God, and replace it with everything that is pleasing to God and conducive to this reconciliation. He subordinates all other priorities to this one.

(45) “ ‘Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls, who, when he has found one pearl of great price, as a result sells all that he has and buys it.

(47) Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet that was cast into the sea and gathered some of every kind, which, when it was full, they drew to shore; and they sat down and gathered the good into vessels, but threw the bad away. So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come forth, separate the faulty from the true, and cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Have you understood all these things?’ They said to him, ‘Yes.’ Then he said to them, ‘Therefore every scribe disciplined into the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who **throws out** (Greek: “ek-ballo”) of his treasure things new **and old**’.”

Here is a very interesting statement. Traditionally, biblical scholars have translated this phrase to be a variation of, “Then said he unto them, *Therefore every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which **bringeth forth** out of his treasure things new and old.*” In other words scholars decided that it meant that we pick and choose and mingle old and new things pertaining to the kingdom of God. Jesus spoke of the opposite. ⁷ He said, “You do not put new wine into an old wine skin, neither do you place a patch of new cloth on an old garment.” ⁸ Jesus also told us that unless we become as little children, we could not enter the kingdom of heaven. Throughout the gospels of John and Matthew, we see a consistent theme emerge. We see that, just as high is heaven above the earth, so are God’s ways above our ways, and His thought above our thoughts (Isaiah 55:9). God seeks for our willingness to be at peace and harmony with Him, but He will not give in to our selfish, independent desires and preferences. He is perfectly jealous, and perfectly strict. He will not settle for anything short of the real thing from us. He will have perfect surrender in order to effect reconciliation with Him and nothing else will do. He settles for nothing short of compliance. And He will not make concessions for anyone. We need to throw everything out and start over. We are to “throw out the baby with the bathwater”. We are to have, or become a “clean slate”.

That is precisely what had to happen to me. I was confused. I was suffering and laboring in my life with all of my inherited religious teachings. One day, I ended up turning to God and saying, “God, I don’t know what is “good” and what isn’t. I don’t know what is true and what isn’t. I don’t know what being at peace with You looks like. I don’t really know anything for certain. I have all of this information accumulated over my lifetime, old and new. But nothing seems to work. I am in internal conflict, and I am dissatisfied. Help! I am not qualified nor equipped to sort through all of this information that I have in my mind. I will throw everything out that I have learned over the years about You and about what You want me to do, and I ask You and trust You to henceforth teach me and guide me in everything about Yourself and about my reconciliation with You.”

(53) “Now it came to pass, when Jesus had finished these parables, that he departed from there. And when he had come to his own country, he taught them in their assembly, so that they were astonished and said, ‘Where did this man get his wisdom and these mighty works? Is this not the builder’s son? Is not his mother called Mary? And his brothers James (Jacob), Joseph, Simon, and Judas (Judah)? And his sisters, are they not all with us? Where then did this man get all these things?’ So they were offended at him. But Jesus said to them, ‘A prophet is not without honour except in his own country and in his own house.’ And he did not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief.”

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How natural it is for human beings to be jealous, and proud so as to not recognize and acknowledge someone close, either by kinship, or by familiarity, to be “better” or special, especially when it comes to God. We’ll accept some stranger who comes along and impresses us with all kinds of “bullshit” and “palatable lies”, with his speaking ability and charisma. We receive those who “stroke our fancy”, who flatter us in any way. Jesus said, (John 5:43) “*I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive.*” What if a close one, whether he be a son, a father, an uncle, a brother, a friend, a neighbor, a co-worker, were gifted with exceptional knowledge and understanding of God, how would we treat that person?

Chapter 13 footnotes:

¹ Matthew 25(29) (Direct translation from Greek:) For to the one having (some of the genuine), all (the balance) will be given, and he will be made to abound; but from him who does not have (the authentic), even that which he has (the faulty) will be taken away.

² Isaiah 6(9) And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not.

(10) Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.

John 12(39) Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again,

(40) He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with *their* eyes, nor understand with *their* heart, and be converted, and I should heal them.

³ Deuteronomy 4(4) But ye that did **cleave** unto the LORD your God are alive every one of you this day.

Deuteronomy 10(20) Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God; him shalt thou serve, and to him shalt thou **cleave**, and swear by his name.

Deuteronomy 11(22) For if ye shall diligently keep all these commandments which I command you, to do them, to love the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, and to **cleave** unto him;

Deuteronomy 13(4) Ye shall walk after the LORD your God, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and ye shall serve him, and **cleave** unto him.

⁴ John 15(8) (kjv) Herein is my Father glorified, that ye **bear much fruit**; so shall ye be my disciples.

(Direct translation from Greek) In this is **gratified** my Father so that you may bear much fruit and **generate to me** disciples.

⁵ Matthew 16(6) Then Jesus said unto them, *Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.*

(7) And they reasoned among themselves, saying, *It is because we have taken no bread.*

(8) *Which* when Jesus perceived, he said unto them, *O ye of little faith, why reason ye among yourselves, because ye have brought no bread ?*

(9) *Do ye not yet understand, neither remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets ye took up?*

(10) *Neither the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many baskets ye took up?*

(11) *How is it that ye do not understand that I spake it not to you concerning bread, that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees?*

(12) Then understood they how that he bade *them* not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the **doctrine** of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.

⁶ Psalm 78(2) I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter dark sayings of old:

⁷ Matthew 9(16) *No man putteth a piece of new cloth unto an old garment, for that which is put in to fill it up taketh from the garment, and the rent is made worse.*

(17) *Neither do men put new wine into old bottles: else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish: but they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved.*

⁸ Matthew 18(3) and 19(4).

Chapter 14

(1) “At that time Herod the tetrarch heard the report about Jesus and said to his servants, ‘This is John the Baptist; he is risen from the dead, and therefore these powers are at work in him.’ For Herod had laid hold of John and bound him, and put him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip’s wife. For John had said to him, ‘It is not lawful for you to have her.’ And although he wanted to put him to death, he feared the public, because they considered him a prophet.

(6) But when Herod’s birthday was celebrated, the daughter of Herodias danced before them and pleased Herod. Therefore he promised with an oath to give her whatever she might ask. So she, having been prompted by her mother, said, ‘Give me John the Baptist’s head here on a platter.’ And the king was sorry; nevertheless, because of the oaths and because of those who sat with him at the table, he commanded it to be given to her. So he sent and had John beheaded in prison. And his head was brought on a platter and given to the girl, and she brought it to her mother. Then his disciples came and took away the body and buried it, and went and told Jesus.

(13) When Jesus heard it, he departed from there by boat to a secluded place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the cities. And when Jesus went out he saw a large crowd, and he was moved with pity for them, and healed their sick.

(15) When it was evening, his disciples came to him saying, ‘This is a remote place, and the hour is already late. Send the multitudes away, that they may go into the villages and buy themselves food.’ But Jesus said to them, ‘They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat.’ And they said to him, ‘We have here only five loaves and two fish.’ He said, ‘Bring them here to me.’ Then he commanded the multitudes to sit down on the grass. And he took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, he blessed and broke and gave the loaves to the disciples; and the disciples gave to the multitudes. So they all ate and were filled, and they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments that remained. Now those who had eaten were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

(22) Afterwards, Jesus made his disciples to get into a boat and go before him to the other side, while he sent the multitudes away. And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up a mountain by himself to pray. And when evening had come, he was alone there.”

I only get one singularly important lesson in the above passage pertaining to the feeding of the multitudes. In the reconciled state with God, in particular, in the state of complete trust in God, man does not need to fend for himself. During the sermon on the mount, ¹ Jesus says, “Why concern yourself with what you will eat, drink, and wear?”

I am again reminded of the story of Exodus. God led Israel, over a million people, into the desolate wilderness yet provided for them faithfully for forty years. Of course, it was of God’s initiative. No one had put God to the test in this situation. It was His own leading which God backed and vindicated. He used Moses as His mouthpiece and the people of Israel were to treat Moses as God Himself. While the people remained in a state of trust and obedience, they had nothing to fear. The only time they had grief was when they grumbled and rebelled against God and His anointed, His angel Moses. God was using that situation to teach us a lesson for today.

Confronting The Cloudiness

We are invited to rise to that level of trust in relationship with God. It is up to us to respond to that invitation through Christ and ask to be led there. He vows to sustain us in our pursuit of reconciliation. Jesus showed us the example. The apostles corroborate him. And I have seen the same happen to me as well as to others around me. God vindicates His word.

(24) “But the boat was now many furlongs from shore, tossed by the waves, for the wind was against them. Now in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went to them, walking on the water. And when the disciples saw him walking on the water, they were troubled, saying, ‘It’s a ghost!’ And they cried out for fear. Consequently Jesus spoke to them, saying, ‘Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid.’ And Peter answered him and said, ‘Lord, if it be you, command me to come to you on the water.’ So he said, ‘Come.’ And when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus. But when he saw that the wind was strong, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried out, saying, ‘Lord, save me!’ Right away Jesus stretched out his hand and caught him, and said to him, ‘Oh you of little faith, why did you doubt?’ And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. Then those who were in the boat bowed to him, saying, ‘Truly you are a son of God’.”

Nothing is a concern. Nothing is too great a barrier or obstacle to one who genuinely pursues God. All natural threats and concerns evaporate before us in our walk of trust. All things are completely under the control of the Creator. And all things serve to teach and to test the sons of God in the one thing that matters: our relationship with God.

(34) “When they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret. And when the men of that place recognized him, they sent out into all that surrounding region, brought to him all who were sick, and begged him that they might only touch the hem of his garment. And as many as touched it were made perfectly well.”

Again, we can compare this scenario with the ²one expressed in John. They brought all who were sick and begged him for healing and such. As according to John, upon coming to shore after the “walking on water” incident, the crowds sought Jesus out. But in John, Jesus takes the opportunity to challenge the people to ascend to that higher plane. He challenges them by saying that the only reason they pursued after him was to obtain material benefit, “to fill their bellies”. He challenged them to seek out the spirit Source of all of these material benefits rather than the second-hand benefits themselves. He was inviting them to “eat his flesh and to drink his blood”. He was challenging them to pursue and obtain the same thing that Jesus was pursuing and obtaining. He was challenging them to be JUST LIKE HIM, rather than to see him as a superstar, a celebrity, a hero and place him on a pedestal. He was telling them to “fish or cut bait”, to “shit or get off the pot”. ³ “I’d rather you be hot or cold. I will spew out those who are lukewarm.” That was Jesus’ extended purpose: to be instrumental in coaxing others in the pursuit of reconciliation with God. ⁴ Miracles and signs from God have no intrinsic value. They are merely clues of invitation to reconciliation. And upon witnessing such a miracle, how do I respond?

Chapter 14 footnotes:

¹ Matthew 6 (25) (DfG) “Therefore I say to you, do not be preoccupied about your self, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body what you will wear. Is not your soul (identity) more than food, and the body more than clothing? (26) Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into store houses; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you rather different from them?

(27) Which of you by being preoccupied can add one cubit to his life-span? (28) So why are you preoccupied about clothing? Be taught in observing the flowers of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; (29) and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his splendour was not arrayed like one of these. (30) Now if God so clothes the vegetation of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, would you not rather as much, you of little faith?

(31) Therefore do not be preoccupied, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or

'What shall we wear?' (32) For after all these things the foreigners pursue. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. (33) But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. (34) Therefore do not be preoccupied about tomorrow, for tomorrow will take care of itself, the troubles of the day being sufficient."

² John 6(24-59).

³ Revelations 3(15) *I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot.*

(16) *So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.*

(17) *Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:*

(18) *I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.*

(19) *As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.*

(20) *Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.*

⁴ John 6(27) (kjb) *Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.*

(direct translation from the Greek:) John 6(27) Do not work at the feeding the perishing but the feeding the abiding into everlasting life which the Son of Man will give you for the Father: Amen! (God confirms this).

Chapter 15

(1) "Then the scribes and Pharisees who were from Jerusalem came to Jesus, saying, 'Why do your disciples sidestep the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread.' But he answered and said to them, 'Why do you also sidestep the instruction of God by your tradition? For God said, ¹ "*Honour your father and your mother*"; and, ² "*He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death*". But you say, "Whoever says to his father or mother, 'Whatever profit you might have received from me is a gift (without obligation)' is released from honouring his father." Thus you have made the word of God of no effect by your tradition. Phonies! Well did ³ Isaiah prophesy about you, saying, "*These people draw near to me with their mouth, and honour me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. And in vain they worship me, teaching as doctrine instructions of men*".' "

At what point does a son stop honoring a father? Is there any instruction in God's Law to answer this question? According to God's Law, ⁴ if a son dishonored father and mother, he was to be PUT TO DEATH by the whole congregation. This is serious business. God is making a very strong point in this regard. Did Jesus ever dishonor his earthly father? There is no indication of this. In any case, Jesus is rebuking the religious leaders of the day that they had watered down the instruction of God with their earthly, human mindset. God had instructed through Moses that a son in the congregation of God's people was to honor his father and mother WITHOUT LIMIT OR RESERVATION. According to God, this was an obligation, a condition of pleasing God, a prerequisite in the path of reconciliation and peace with God. Yet the Pharisees belittled this by teaching that honoring father and mother was not an obligation but only a FREE WILL OFFERING OR GIFT. They taught that a man had THE OPTION of honoring his parents or not. I have yet to find any instruction from God to suggest this. Yet religion teaches that at some point in time, a man MUST leave his father and mother, in particular in the case of a man marrying a woman. But God never instructs this anywhere in the Old Testament.

Confronting The Cloudiness

⁵ In Genesis, the statement is made, *“For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and CLEAVE to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.”* We have misunderstood this statement. If this statement were a commandment, then God will have utterly contradicted Himself to the point of absurdity and ruin of His own integrity. Later on, ⁶ Moses said in a number of places that the people were to love God with all of their being and unto HIM they were to CLEAVE, the very same word used in the passage in Genesis pertaining to the man CLEAVING unto his wife. If the passage in Genesis were a commandment or instruction, then God is utterly confused and to be derided. But if the statement in Genesis were only a COMMENT of how things were going to naturally be, and if it were only an acknowledgment of a fact that man was going to instinctively pursue after woman in spite of God or anything, then the statement does not contradict the instructions of God, and God’s integrity remains intact and honorable.

In honoring father and mother, a man need not forsake them in order to have a woman and children. On the contrary. God’s expressed desire is for the family to be a continuation, and extension of God’s family. Sadly, man has long ago forsaken God and any genuine attachment to Him here on earth. Jesus was instructed to bring back the family of God HERE ON EARTH where people were to BE THE FAMILY OF GOD ACCORDING TO HIS PRESCRIBED INSTRUCTIONS. A man is not to leave God’s family in order to start his own family. A man is to remain in God’s family forever. What we are being told is that we cannot be part of God’s family and have our own family AT THE SAME TIME. We are given the choice of one or the other. ⁷ “The servant does not remain in the house forever. But the son remains forever.”

When the ⁸ rich young ruler came to Jesus asking him “what good thing to do in order to have everlasting life”, Jesus replied by reminding him of the instructions of God INCLUDING THE ONE ABOUT HONOURING FATHER AND MOTHER. ⁹ Jesus also said that he was not come to change the law or the prophets, but to fulfill them. Jesus was unequivocal about the Old Testament instructions from God. There is more in the last section, “Going Back To Basics”.

(10) “Then he called the crowd and said to them, ‘Hear and understand: not what goes into the mouth defiles the man; but what comes out of the mouth, this defiles the man.’

(12) Then his disciples came to him and said, ‘Do you know that the Pharisees were trapped when they heard this saying?’ But he answered and said, ‘Every plant which my heavenly father has not planted will be uprooted. Leave them alone. They are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a pit.’

(15) Then Peter answered and said to him, ‘Explain this parable to us.’ So Jesus said, ‘Don’t you get the point? Do you not yet understand that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and is eliminated? But those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and they defile a man. For out of the heart proceed perversion, murder, adultery, fornication, theft, false witness, and slander. These are the things which defile a man, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile a man’.”

Here we are reminded of the two realms: the heavenly and the earthly. We tend to insist on seeing with our earthly eyes and from our earthly point of view. We generally fail to choose to see with heavenly eyes, from God’s point of view. When we preoccupy ourselves with the flesh, we are stuck in it. We are invited to ascend. We are invited to be brought to that higher plane, that heavenly point of view.

(21) “Then Jesus went out from there and departed to the region of Tyre and Sidon. And behold, a woman of Canaan came from that region and cried out to him, saying, ‘Have mercy on me, lord, son of David! My daughter is severely demonized.’ But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and urged him, saying, ‘Send her away, for she cries out after us.’ But he answered and said, ‘I was not sent

except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.' Then she came and bowed to him, saying, 'Lord, help me!' But he answered and said, 'It is not proper to take the children's bread and throw it to the little dogs.' And she said, 'True, lord, yet even the little dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their master's table.' Then Jesus answered, and said to her, 'Oh woman, great is your faith! Let it be to you as you desire.' And her daughter was healed from that very hour."

Jesus is showing reluctance in giving help to a gentile woman. So he starts off with the declaration of being sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. It ends up being a test. She ends up being tested for what? For humility. So Jesus has no reason to resist this woman. Whether she be Jewish or gentile, God responds to a broken heart, a ¹⁰ contrite spirit.

(29) "And Jesus departed from there, skirted the sea of Galilee, and went up on the mountain and sat down there. Then large crowds came to him, having with them the lame, the blind, the mute, the maimed, and many others; and they laid them down at Jesus' feet, and he healed them. So the multitude marvelled when they saw the mute speaking, the maimed made whole, the lame walking, and the blind seeing; and they glorified the God of Israel.

(32) Then Jesus called his disciples to him and said, 'I have pity for the multitude, because they have now continued with me three days and have had nothing to eat. And I do not want to send them away hungry, lest they collapse along the way.' Then his disciples said to him, 'Where could we get enough bread in this remote location to fill such a great multitude?' Jesus said to them, 'How many loaves do you have?' And they said, 'Seven, and few little fish.' And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground. And he took the seven loaves and the fish and gave thanks, broke them and gave them to his disciples; and the disciples gave to the multitude. So they all ate and were filled, and they took up seven large baskets full of the fragments that were left. Now those who ate were four thousand men, besides women and children. And he sent away the multitude, got into the boat, and came to the region of Magadon."

This is the second instance where ¹¹ Jesus feeds the multitudes. An interesting observation to make here is that Jesus fed the multitudes through the disciples, just as it was God feeding the multitudes through Jesus. God gave to Jesus. Jesus gave to his disciples, and the disciples passed the food on to the crowds. This seems to be a clue, a hint about the gospel message, about God's ultimate intent. It is very much like the analogy of the vine mentioned by John. In a kingdom, there is a "chain of command", or rather, a "chain of provision". God wants a family of indefinite size composed of faithful and trusting children, ordered in an indefinite number of generations, not broken up as in the world, but one, in harmony.

Chapter 15 footnotes:

¹ Exodus 20(12) Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.

² Exodus 21(17) And he that curseth his father, or his mother, shall surely be put to death.

Leviticus 20(9) For every one that curseth his father or his mother shall be surely put to death: he hath cursed his father or his mother; his blood *shall be* upon him.

Deuteronomy 21(18) If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son, which will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother, and *that*, when they have chastened him, will not hearken unto them:

(19) Then shall his father and his mother lay hold on him, and bring him out unto the elders of his city, and unto the gate of his place;

(20) And they shall say unto the elders of his city, This our son *is* stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey our voice; *he is* a glutton, and a drunkard.

Confronting The Cloudiness

(21) And all the men of his city shall stone him with stones, that he die: so shalt thou put evil away from among you; and all Israel shall hear, and fear.

Deuteronomy 27(16) Cursed *be* he that setteth light by his father or his mother. And all the people shall say, Amen.

³ Isaiah 29(13) Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near *me* with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men:

⁴ (Same as footnote ² above)

⁵ Genesis 2(24).

⁶ Deuteronomy 10(20) Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God; him shalt thou serve, and to him shalt thou **cleave**, and swear by his name.

Deuteronomy 11(22) For if ye shall diligently keep all these commandments which I command you, to do them, to love the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, and to **cleave** unto him;

Deuteronomy 13(4) Ye shall walk after the LORD your God, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and ye shall serve him, and **cleave** unto him.

⁷ John 8(35) *And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever.*

⁸ Matthew 19(16) And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?

(17) And he said unto him, *Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.*

(18) He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, *Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness,*

(19) **Honour thy father and thy mother:** and, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*

(20) The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?

(21) Jesus said unto him, *If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me.*

(22) But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions.

(23) Then said Jesus unto his disciples, *Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven.*

(24) *And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.*

⁹ Matthew 5(17) *Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.*

(18) *For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.*

(19) *Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.*

(20) *For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.*

¹⁰ Psalm 34(18) The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.

Psalm 51(17) The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

Isaiah 57(15) For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; *I dwell in*

the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.

Isaiah 66(2) *For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the LORD: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.*

¹¹ Matthew 14(16) But Jesus said unto them, *They need not depart; give ye them to eat.*

(17) And they say unto him, We have here but five loaves, and two fishes.

(18) He said, *Bring them hither to me.*

(19) And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the grass, and took the five loaves, and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he blessed, and brake, and gave the loaves to *his* disciples, and the disciples to the multitude.

(20) And they did all eat, and were filled: and they took up of the fragments that remained twelve baskets full.

(21) And they that had eaten were about five thousand men, beside women and children.

John 6(5) When Jesus then lifted up *his* eyes, and saw a great company come unto him, he saith unto Philip, *Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?*

(6) And this he said to prove him: for he himself knew what he would do.

(7) Philip answered him, Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little.

(8) One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, saith unto him,

(9) There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many?

(10) And Jesus said, *Make the men sit down.* Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand.

(11) And Jesus took the loaves; and when he had given thanks, he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down; and likewise of the fishes as much as they would.

(12) When they were filled, he said unto his disciples, *Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost.*

(13) Therefore they gathered *them* together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained over and above unto them that had eaten.

Chapter 16

(1) "Then the Pharisees and the Sadducees came, and testing him asked that he would show them a sign from heaven. And he answered and said to them, 'When it is evening you say, "It will be fair weather, for the sky is red"; And in the morning, "it will be foul weather today, for the sky is red and gloomy". You know how to discern the face of the sky, but you cannot discern the signs of the times. A perverse and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah.' And he left them and departed."

As I mentioned some time earlier, the religious leaders were not seeking the kind of sign as you and I might think. They were already given multiple signs, supernatural signs which proved that Jesus was not ordinary. What the leaders were looking for was a sign of "complicity", a sign to indicate to them, to their satisfaction, that Jesus was the one for whom they were waiting. They wanted to see that he was on "their side" since they could not nor would not consider for a moment that they were in error, that they were in fact at war with the God they claimed to "serve". They had to be reassured that Jesus was on their side or else they would not accept him. He had to fit their expectations.

Isn't that how we are? And isn't that how we are with God Himself? When ¹ God warned Israel to not make for themselves graven images of anything in heaven, or on earth, or anything under the earth, to serve them or to worship them, he was warning them to not be making false images of God Himself for themselves. To God, that is a most displeasing offense. God hates it when people come to Him and claim to be with Him, and proceed to worship a self-generated, counterfeit image of him. This is so normal and so natural. It is like having a ventriloquist's dummy

on my lap and calling it “God” or “Jesus” or “Holy Spirit”.

So the sign of Jonah, as mentioned before, is simply the resemblance to the prophet Jonah, and the story associated with him. Firstly, Jonah himself had to repent before God. Then, he was sent to bring a message of repentance to Nineveh. Nineveh subsequently repented and God relented of the doom He had pronounced upon it, at least for the time being. So the story of Jonah is a story of repentance. Therefore, Jesus is saying that the repentance itself is the sign of Jonah, or more exactly, the CONSEQUENCE of repentance is the sign. So Jesus, having repented, was now THE SIGN OF JONAH to them.

(5) “And when his disciples had come to the other side, they had forgotten to take bread. Then Jesus said to them, ‘Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees.’ And they reasoned among themselves, saying, ‘It is because we have taken no bread.’ But when Jesus perceived it, he said to them, ‘Oh you of little faith, why do you reason among yourselves because you have no bread? Do you yet not understand, or remember the five loaves of the five thousand and how many baskets you took up? Nor the seven loaves of the four thousand and how many large baskets you took up? How is it you do not understand that I did not speak to you concerning bread? But you should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees.’ Then they understood that he did not tell them to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and the Sadducees.”

² As we saw earlier, Jesus referred to leaven. So he warned his disciples of the corrupting influence of religion: earthly mindset posing as heavenly mindset.

(13) “When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, ‘Who do men say the son of man to be?’ So they said, ‘Some say John the Baptist, some say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.’ He said to them, ‘But who do you say that I am?’ And Simon Peter answered and said, ‘You are the Anointed, the son of the living God.’ Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed to you, but my Father who is in heaven. And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this foundation stone I will build my church (Greek word: “ecclesia” meaning “assembly-of-called-out”), and the gates of Hades (Greek word: “without awareness, ignorance”; a literal equivalent of the Hebrew “Sheol”) shall not prevail against it. And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whoever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whoever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.’ With this he prepared his disciples to avoid telling anyone that he was the Christ.”

Here is a crucial message, a crucial key of understanding. Many Christians have understood this passage to be the one where Peter is appointed the head of the church. But if we examine this passage more closely, we see that Peter has just uttered something extremely controversial and deep before Jesus and to his fellow disciples. Jesus’ response is, “...flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven (has).” Then he proceeds to say, “You are Petros (stone), and on this petra (foundation stone) I will build my church.” How is his church to be built? By the very thing that was made manifest a few seconds earlier. It is by the revelation from the heavenly Father that someone is anointed (christ). In Peter’s case, Jesus was HIS appointed anointed one. And by this very process, the church is to continue, be built, and be established. This explains why Matthew says that with this, Jesus prepares them to tell no one that he was the Christ. Otherwise, it makes absolutely no sense. In other words, Peter and his fellow disciples were not to go around telling people that JESUS WAS THE CHRIST. Peter and his fellow disciples, whom we call apostles, were instructed to FOLLOW CHRIST, to learn from him, and to live their life according to his teaching. So the assembly of Christ will be established based on the phenomenon of PERSONAL REVELATION, not RELIGIOUS PROSELYTIZING. God positively responds, as mentioned earlier, to a genuine seeker, to one who seeks for the genuine God, and

for the genuine way of reconciliation with Him.

Pertaining to the statement, “Simon BAR-JONAH...” Jesus is hinting again at the SIGN OF JONAH. We are told about this sign a few verses earlier, and Matthew seems to take this occasion to clarify the meaning to this enigmatic term. So firstly, having REPENTED of Adam’s original sin, and having received God’s invitation to reconciliation, Jesus, as Peter then knew him, was the PRODUCT OF REPENTANCE, therefore the embodiment of repentance. So to Peter, Jesus was the sign of Jonah. And Peter was granted to see and recognize this phenomenon by God Himself. And Jesus elaborates that his “church” (ecclesia) would be built with this process.

So referring to what comes next, the “keys to the kingdom”, Jesus was telling his disciples that if they were to withhold the message he was teaching them, or if they were to modify it in any way so as to corrupt it, and teach people this corrupted gospel, this is how they would in fact be “binding people”, keeping them in prison, not releasing them from “hell”, or “sheol”. This brings us to ³ another thing Jesus says later on to the Pharisees. “But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, phonies! For you shut up the kingdom of heaven from men; for you neither go in yourselves, nor do you allow to enter those who would enter.” And “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, phonies! For you travel land and sea to make one convert, and when he is converted, you make him a son of Gehennah a *duplicate* of yourselves.”

On the other hand, Jesus is telling them that if they were to faithfully pass on the gospel AS IT HAS BEEN GIVEN TO THEM BY JESUS, that people would then have the means of being loosed or set free from prison and ignorance. ⁴ “*And ye will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.*” There are multiple references and allusions in the Old Testament to God’s Word or Law being the “light”, the means of salvation, and so on.

(21) “From that time anointed Jesus began to show to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes and be killed and be raised again the third day. Then Peter took him aside and began to admonish him, saying, ‘Far be it from you, lord; this will not happen to you!’ But he turned and said to Peter, ‘Get behind me, a satanic stumbling stone you are to me, for you are not mindful of the things of God but of the things of men’.”

Here we have encountered translation discrepancies. I have learned in the past that this verse should read, “Get behind me, Satan...” calling Peter Satan. I’ve examined the Greek text, I come to the conclusion that Jesus did not address Peter as Satan, but rather addressed what Peter was doing. He did not address him as “The Satan”, but rather he was telling him that he was placing a satanic stumbling block before him. The word “satan” in Hebrew means “accuser or adversary (as in a court of law)”. And in this case, the word is not used as a noun, but rather as an adjective. He even explains what he means. He says, “You are not mindful of the things of God but of the things of men.” So Jesus was “putting Peter in his place”, so-to-speak. Jesus was correcting Peter by reminding him that his task was not to lead or instruct Jesus, but was to let God lead Jesus, and to follow if he so chose. Peter was still not completely enlightened about the whole thing that Jesus was teaching them. Sure Peter recognized Jesus as the Messiah prophesied in Scripture. But who he was and what he was doing was obviously not clear to him. As we will see later, Peter would deny Jesus three times at the time of Jesus’ trial. Peter was probably very honest when he told those individuals that he didn’t know Jesus. He genuinely didn’t know Jesus because the Jesus that he imagined in his mind would not be arrested and fall prey to the enemy. Jesus was supposed to be the conquering king, the “liberator of Israel”, the king of the Davidic line. Jesus, in the minds of the disciples, wasn’t so different from the image of the messiah that all of the Jews were expecting. It wasn’t until after Jesus’ death and resurrection that the true understanding of Jesus’ words would finally mature and “come to light”. In fact, in John, ⁵ Jesus tells them that the “paraclete” would come and remind them of everything that he taught them.

(24) “Then Jesus said to his disciples, ‘If anyone desires to come after me, let him renounce himself, and take up his banner, and follow me’.”

We traditionally translate the word “stauros” (post or pole) to mean “cross”. But the meaning

of this word in this context is that of “banner”, as in “lift up your colors” and identify yourself openly. For ages, armies have marched into battle bearing banners of identification which were borne by cross-shaped poles. In order to stay in context, Jesus is inviting his disciples to identify with him and to follow him as faithful subjects follow their king, as honorable soldiers follow their military leader.

(25) “ ‘For whoever desires to preserve his identity will relinquish it; and whoever relinquishes his identity for my cause will obtain it. For what profits a man if he were to gain the whole world but at the detriment of his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? For the son of man is about to be coming in the esteem of his father with his angels (herd-leaders), and then he will reward each according to his works. Assuredly, I am saying to ye that there are some of those standing here who will not experience dying until such time as they may understand the son of man made manifest in his kingdom’.”

Again there is the contrast between the heavenly and the earthly. So here he is describing the kind of dying to which he is referring. He is referring to the dying to self, the giving up of one's own separate, independent identity. The statement made by Jesus, rather than hear “experience physically dying”, we can hear him say, “dying to self”. “There are some here standing who will not be “dying to themselves” until they finally grasp who the son of man is and see him made manifest before them in his kingdom.” When I come to understand the meaning and the process of transformation from the earthly to the heavenly, then I can “die to myself” in order to receive my new life, my new identity, my heavenly identity. I can't give up my earthly identity for nothing, in a vacuum. This whole principle of giving up a former identity and receiving a new one is demonstrated and expressed in the institution of marriage.

According to the Old Testament instructions, the woman was to leave her father's house to become a new member of her husband's house, whether she be his first wife, or whether she be a second or third wife. The expressed intent in the Scriptures was that she was to “die to herself” so-to-speak. She was to forsake her old life and her old identity and receive her new one from her husband. She was expected to leave her old one behind and not bring it with her.

This model is to illustrate and teach us of God's intent for man as well. It is not only for woman. It is the basis for the gospel that Jesus lived and taught. Jesus was being given “brides” when he was given disciples. In like manner, his disciples were to forsake their old identities, and receive their new one from their “husband”, their apostle.

Spiritually speaking, in God's eyes, all men are “girls” born in the house of their father, the “devil”, the fleshly, earthly mindset. So using the flesh as the mechanism of teaching, the tool of analogy, we are invited to “leave the house of our father”, the fleshly, earthly condition, and “marry” into the household of God so-to-speak. We need to transcend our earthly origin, and become “heavenly”, “spirit minded”, “spirit-kind”. It is not enough to just think about it. We are invited to follow Christ to go to the Father. It is an active role, not a passive one. Just as a woman leaves her earthly parents' household and becomes part of her husband's household, so do we leave this earthly identity and become part of our husband's household. The wedding analogy is used in the book of Revelations and it is a predominant picture throughout Scripture. That is why Jesus uses the analogy of going to prepare a place for his disciples as recounted in ⁶ John chapter 14.

In the days of Jesus, it was the practice for a man to build an extension to his father's house upon betrothing a woman. After completion of his “room” in his father's house, he would go and “collect” his bride and bring her home to be with him IN HIS FATHER'S HOUSE, not in his own house. Jesus was very deliberately using the analogy of the marriage process to teach his disciples.

This same message is subtly highlighted at the last supper when Jesus washes the feet of his disciples. We visited this in John chapter 13. They didn't quite understand it. But according to ancient tradition, even to this day among middle eastern desert dwelling people, the practice of “washing of feet” is the practice of a host welcoming a guest into his house. The guest would not wash the feet of the host or master of the house. It was the host or master of the house, or tent in the case of Bedouins, who washed the feet of the guest. In fact, included within this ancient

tradition is something very striking. Among the desert dwellers, when a stranger comes to one of them and says, "I want to be your guest," he is obliged to take him in provided he agrees to the other side of the bargain. It is provided he subjugate himself to the host or master of the house. This is the condition, and it is still the tradition to this day.

God "plays" by similar rules. He is prepared to receive us at any time we agree to the one condition: total subjection to the host or master of the house. It sounds very simplistic, but it is true. We are required to agree and abide by the one condition: willing surrender. It is His house, not mine. I must continually acknowledge this. If I insist on having my own house and my own life, and my own religion, I have no alternative but to leave His house and go on my own, just like Adam.

Chapter 16 footnotes:

¹ Exodus 20(3) Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

(4) Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness *of any thing* that *is* in heaven above, or that *is* in the earth beneath, or that *is* in the water under the earth.

(5) Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God *am* a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth *generation* of them that hate me;

(6) And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

(D from H: and doing kindness unto FAMILIES, those loving Me and keeping My instructions.)

² Matthew 13(33) Another parable spake he unto them; *The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.*

³ Matthew 23(13) *But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.*

Matthew 23(15) *Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.*

⁴ John 8(32) *And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.*

⁵ John 14(26) *But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.*

John 16(12) *I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.*

(13) *Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.*

(14) *He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.*

(15) *All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you.*

⁶ John 14(1) (Direct translation from Greek:) "Let not your hearts be troubled; be believing into God, and also into me. (2) In my Father's house there is room for many to abide; otherwise would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? (3) And if I go and prepare a place for you, again I am coming and I shall receive you toward myself so that where I am you may be also."

Chapter 17

(1) "Now for six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, and brought them up a high mountain privately, and was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light. And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with him. Then Peter answered and said to Jesus, 'Lord, it is good for us to be here; if you wish, I will make here three tents: one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.' While he was still speaking, behold,

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a bright fog overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the fog, saying, 'This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear him!' And when the disciples heard it they fell on their faces and were greatly afraid. But Jesus came and touched them and said, 'Arise, and do not be afraid.' And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only."

This passage is saying so much to me.

We, as human beings, come from the earthly point of view and have a difficult time perceiving the heavenly. Unless we are led and taught properly, we can only see with an earthly mindset. From the earthly point of view, we see an impressive miraculous manifestation pertaining to Jesus. But if we decide to let go of our earthly mindset and allow ourselves to be brought into the heavenly mindset, we can allow God to speak and let Him give to this scene its spirit meaning. Let us review it with that in mind.

The word "meta" in Greek is used for both "with" and for "after". Since there was no physical point of reference in the previous scripture, we must assume that the word, "meta", means "with, in the company of". With this in mind, I can easily understand that Jesus took his three disciples on a "retreat". For a period of six days, Jesus spent time revealing himself to them, expounding on the Old Scriptures, on Moses, Elijah, and all of the prophets of old, what they said and what they meant. During this time, I can see that the disciples' spirit eyes and ears were being opened, and they were given a glimpse into the heavenly realm. It could have culminated in them being "caught up" and seeing a vision, to the point of hearing, "This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased. Listen to him." They were so caught up in the moment that they blurted out, "Let's stay here, Jesus. Let's not go anywhere. Let's build 'three tents' to capture this moment. Let's hang onto this experience and remain here, right where we are." But Jesus helps them come back to reality. He tells them, "It's me. I'm here. Did you get a glimpse of who I am? And what I am all about?" They had started by seeing Jesus as a man. And then they saw him transfigure before their eyes. Their perception of who he was changed. Jesus didn't change. But their perception of who he was changed. They got a new appreciation of who he was. It wasn't yet perfect or complete. But there was a new dimension to their perception of who he was.

This is our natural human reaction. When we experience God for a moment, when we get a glimpse into the heavenly, we tend to want to stop and "build a tent" so-to-speak. We want to capture the moment and "keep it in a bottle". It is the sense of elation, of exhilaration that we want to continue. So instead of heeding God's voice who says, "This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased; listen to him", we tend to set up churches, denominations, institutions commemorating the experience. Why is it so difficult to heed God's voice when He speaks to us? For example, when the ¹ two blind men were healed through Jesus, he instructed them to tell no one of it. Yet they couldn't help themselves and outright disregarded his words, even though God had just "told" them, "This is indeed my beloved son in whom I am well pleased. Listen to him."

This statement has played a crucial role in my life. I came to it and said to myself, "Alright, I will listen to him, to what he has to say. I will ignore what people have said ABOUT him, and I will listen TO him and learn." To me, there is no intrinsic value in being impressed by the miraculous. What is valuable to me is my relationship with God, and my transformation into the person that pleases Him, to fulfill His conditions of reconciliation. It is all about my passing over from this earthly realm into God's heavenly realm, to become a member of His household, His family. Religious substitutions will never do. Sprinkling His son's blood on me will not do it.

(9) "Now as they came down from the mountain, Jesus forbade them, saying, 'Tell the vision to no one until the son of man is raised from the dead.' And his disciples asked him, saying, 'Why then do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?' Then Jesus answered and said to them, 'Elijah truly is coming and will restore all things. But I say to you that Elijah is come already, and they do not recognize him but make him to be whatever they will. Likewise (in same manner) the son of man is about to suffer at their hands.' Then the disciples understand that he speaks to them of John the Baptist."

Jesus took along three of his disciples privately on a “retreat”, shared with them intimately concerning his person, his purpose, and His Father. Then he instructs them to not share this experience with anyone UNTIL THE SON OF MAN IS RAISED FROM THE DEAD. That means Matthew, the writer of this gospel, should not have heard of this event until AFTER Jesus the man was executed and then raised from the dead.

In addition to this, Jesus again used the impersonal term, “SON OF MAN”, not himself in this situation. So is it possible that Jesus was subtly giving us a clue about the event where the ² Son of Man is raised from the dead COLLECTIVELY? We saw earlier that God took six days to create all things, and kept man for last. And after man was created in His own image at the end of the sixth day, God said, “It is now very good.” And then He rested. Is Jesus again alluding to the end of the “sixth day” and the beginning of the “seventh day”, the “Day of Rest”?

According to biblical historical chronology, ³ we today are roughly six thousand years (six God days) from the time of Creation. We are roughly two thousand years since Jesus’ coming and subsequent leaving. It has been almost two thousand years (two God days) since the genuine gospel has been subverted, “hijacked” by the false gospel. Two thousand years later, before my very eyes, the “Son of Man” is being “raised from the dead”. In other words, on the “third day” as Jesus put it, the “Son of Man”, the gospel of the kingdom which Jesus lived and preached, is now being revived in our modern time. And Jesus, along with his disciples, knew that this would take place. ⁴ Jesus said that the son of man is to be given over to be mocked and killed, and on the THIRD DAY RISE AGAIN. To my understanding, I am witnessing the fulfillment of this prophesy of Christ.

This can only beg the question, “Why did God want to allow the false gospel to run rampant for two thousand years? Why did God want the genuine gospel to remain dormant for that period of time? Is it not simply “You don’t know what you’ve got ‘til it’s gone”, and “How can one appreciate good until he has experienced evil?” Isaiah alludes to this very concept in ⁵ Isaiah 7:15. He is explaining, as far as I can understand, that the one called Immanuel goes through the process of Ecclesiastes so-to-speak. He is shown the difference between doing what is beneficial, and doing that which is harmful to himself. He is taught to appreciate the reconciliation with God after experiencing the alternative, being separate and independent of God. Adam, mankind, has been going through this Ecclesiastes (process of elimination) for roughly six thousand years. Man has tried everything. He has tried every conceivable way to live with himself and rule himself on this Earth, only to discover that he is nothing but a destroyer, a desperate, poor, and wretched being needing to finally come to terms with his Creator. And just as Adam has been going through this collectively, so do individuals experience this privately. Jesus, as is suggested in Isaiah, went through the same process. And it is the same process that any “Son of Man” undergoes. We experience our living in independence and suffer. Then when God comes and offers His peace to us, we have our painful past from which to draw. As Isaiah says it (7:15), “we learn to choose the good and refuse the evil”. It is the same message as is alluded to in the parable of the Prodigal Son as mentioned in Luke chapter 15. I begin to conclude that the term “Immanuel” (God with us) is not reserved exclusively for Jesus, but it applies to anyone who goes through the same process as Jesus underwent.

Coming back to the above passage in Matthew, the disciples ask Jesus about Elijah. Jesus takes opportunity here to “add fuel to the fire” so-to-speak. He tells them that Elijah is already come and that they did with him as they willed.

In the Old Testament days, people of Israel in general would not receive a prophet. He would come and relay a message from God, but they would not receive it. And years after the prophet had come and gone, especially during the days of Jesus, religious leaders and scholars would “do whatever they willed” to the prophets. In other words, they imposed their own ideas, their own earthly mindset on what the prophets said in order to make their words suit their own agenda. And when John the Baptist came along and preached the message of repentance on behalf of all the former prophets, the people of the day still did not receive him or his message. In fact, I dare say that Jesus, and even more specifically Matthew, was stating a fact, describing a condition to which humans in general cling. To this day, do we not interpret (distort) the Old Testament prophets and their message? To this day, do we not distort the message that Jesus taught? And to this day,

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do we not distort and outright refuse to listen to what the gospel witnesses have handed down to us?

What is the message of Elijah to which is referred in Malachi 4:5-6? Again, it is:

“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.”

The message of Malachi is a somewhat shrouded reference to the gospel that Jesus was living and preaching. It is the message of “father and son” reconciliation. It is the reconciliation according to the heavenly model of Family in God for men on earth. It is the “marriage” of heaven and earth so-to-speak. It is God’s original intent for mankind which has long since been rejected and “killed”, but is to be revived and adopted in the latter days by ⁶ willing volunteers. The reconciliation of earthly fathers and sons is not valid until it is done and fulfilled with God. In fact, it is not possible without God anyway. Man is not capable, unable to surrender to an earthly man for its own sake. If a man insists on a son’s submission, then he himself must be submitted to his own father before him, and so on. In other words, when Adam forsook his father, God, Adam “paved the way” for every subsequent generation to do EXACTLY THE SAME THING. Every generation forsakes its parent generation in like manner. It is the normal human thing to do. Perfect oneness through surrender is not available to mankind in independence from God. Man will not surrender while remaining in the flesh mindset.

That is why God says in Genesis 3:22-24:

“And the LORD God said, *Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever*: Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.”

The Hebrew words which are translated as “tree of life” here in fact properly translate as, “LIVING TREE”, not “tree of life”. ⁷ Interesting...

(14) “And when they had approached the crowd, a man came to him, kneeling down to him and saying, ‘Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is moonstruck and suffers severely; for he often falls into the fire and often into the water. So I brought him to your disciples, but they could not cure him.’ Then Jesus answered and said, ‘Oh faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him here to me.’ And Jesus took charge himself and the demon came out of him; and the boy was cured from that very hour. Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, ‘Why could we not cast it out ourselves?’ So Jesus said to them, ‘Because of your lack of assurance, for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faithfulness as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, “Move from here to there”, and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you’.” (21) (Not found in older texts).

All I can see here is the contrast between the heavenly mindset and the earthly mindset. Yet the disciples, still of an earthly mindset, still do not fully grasp who Jesus is and what motivates him. The disciples seem to be “moonstruck” themselves, totally lost in the healings and the miracles surrounding Jesus. In imitation, they attempt to “cast out a demon”, but cannot. Jesus simply tells them that from the earthly mindset it is irrelevant and impossible. He brings them back to the focal message of FAITHFULNESS. The disciples’ responsibility and task is not to “cast out demons” and “do miracles”. Those are the things which only God does. What the disciples are to do is remain FAITHFUL to God in whatever God has charged them. In this case, God has charged them with listening to Jesus their anointed teacher and apostle and to learn from Him, and to put into practice all that he instructs. ⁸ God will take care of the rest. Why? Because the miraculous signs are meant to vindicate God’s message and anointed one. The disciples were not yet ready. God was not yet ready to vindicate them until they had completed the proper transformation into Christ themselves.

Then when God is satisfied that the disciple is ready to be entrusted with a disciple of his own, He proceeds to give a sign of vindication TO THE PROSPECTIVE disciple, or “called”. In other words, when God dispenses a supernatural sign, it is with the express purpose of inviting someone to pursue God, and to learn from the one through whom the sign was dispensed. And in the case of Jesus, God was vindicating him to everyone WITHOUT FAIL. Whenever any asked a favor from God through Jesus, God would grant it without fail, not because the favor being asked was valid or justified for its own sake, but rather because God was favoring Jesus and his message without reservation. God was vindicating His OWN message and the one through whom this message was being promoted.

And about “miracles”, what is so great about miracles in the flesh? God created the whole universe and has maintained it since. Is that not A MIRACLE? Nothing exists without God ACTIVELY keeping it in existence. We are ALL a miracle of God. We ARE the work of God. So for a man to be lame, sick, or tormented in some way, what is that to God? ⁹ God Himself afflicts us. God Himself perpetuates our existence, and the existence of the whole universe. And for God to modify any part of that universe is nothing more than modifying His thought, for we are nothing more than a ¹⁰ product of His imagination, not the other way around. And when he vindicates His Anointed One before strangers by the use of “miraculous” signs, it is only to allow active participation in His Creation process, the creation of Sons of God.

When Jesus refers to a “mountain” in this case, he is not necessarily meaning a physical mountain specifically. He means “any obstacle or hindrance to my return and reconciliation with the Father”. So if there is an insurmountable obstacle before me in my path to reconciliation, and a faithful disciple asks the Father to remove it, He removes it. Simple. In fact, is not the greatest obstacle to my reconciliation simply nothing more than my ego, my pride, my human, independent, earthly mindset?

(22) “Now when they returned to Galilee, Jesus said to them, ‘The son of man is about to be delivered into the hands of men, and they shall be killing him unto the third day wherein he will be raised up.’ And they were extremely sad.”

This was discussed just earlier in this chapter. Jesus saw himself as only playing a part in God’s ultimate plan of the Creation of Man.

God allows the earthly mindset to dominate for an allotted period of time according to His perfect purpose. And then, toward the end of the sixth day, God completes the process of establishing His heavenly mindset HERE ON EARTH. Then God rests on the seventh day.

(24) “And when they had come to Capernaum, those who collected the temple tax came to Peter and said, ‘Does your teacher not pay the temple tax?’ He said, ‘Yes.’ And when he had come into the house, Jesus anticipating him said, ‘What do you think, Simon? From whom do the kings of the earth collect customs or taxes, from their own sons or from strangers?’ Peter said to him, ‘From strangers.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Then the sons are free. Nevertheless, lest we offend them, go to the sea, cast in a hook, and take the fish that first comes up. And when you have opened its mouth, you will find a stater; take that and give it to them for me and for you’.”

This is quite straightforward. Jesus is simply saying to Peter, “Those who are of the household of God are not required to pay taxes to the master of the household.” It is the father who provides for his children, not the other way. The temple-tax collectors were theoretically collecting on behalf of God and His house. That is why Jesus had to use this situation to teach Peter, and us today, this little lesson. They were not collecting taxes for Caesar. It was the temple-tax. It is funny how we are not told that Peter actually went and did as Jesus instructed, go and fish out the fish and take the stater out of its mouth. But the point is made nevertheless.

Jesus was also highlighting how he himself and his message are complete “strangers” to the custodians of God’s temple. Virtually everyone at that time refused Jesus and his message, particularly the religious leaders of the day. Just a handful remained to continue him after his leaving. And even then, that handful of disciples were not allowed to prosper and “fill the earth”

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with the genuine gospel at that time. Their gospel had to be subverted by the false gospel for a time. God is sovereign.

Chapter 17 footnotes:

¹ Matthew 9(27) And when Jesus departed thence, two blind men followed him, crying, and saying, *Thou son of David, have mercy on us.*

(28) And when he was come into the house, the blind men came to him: and Jesus saith unto them, *Believe ye that I am able to do this?* They said unto him, Yea, Lord.

(29) Then touched he their eyes, saying, *According to your faith be it unto you.*

(30) And their eyes were opened; and Jesus straitly charged them, saying, *See that no man know it.*

(31) But they, when they were departed, spread abroad his fame in all that country.

² Hosea 6(1) Come, and let us return unto the LORD: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up.

(2) After two days will he revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight.

³ <http://nwcreation.net/biblechrono.html>: This is a source example for biblical chronology. Doing one's own search, one can find other similar sources, either on the Web, at the library or other informational sources.

⁴ Matthew 17(22) And while they abode in Galilee, Jesus said unto them, *The Son of man shall be betrayed (paradidomi) into the hands of men:*

(23) *And they shall kill him, and the third day he shall be raised again.* And they were exceeding sorry.

Matthew 20(18) *Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death,*

(19) *And shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him: and the third day he shall rise again.*

⁵ Isaiah 7(13) And he said, Hear ye now, O house of David; *Is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will ye weary my God also?*

(14) Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

(15) Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good.

(16) For before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings.

(17) The LORD shall bring upon thee, and upon thy people, and upon thy father's house, days that have not come, from the day that Ephraim departed from Judah; **even the king of Assyria.**

⁶ Psalm 110(1) The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.

(2) The LORD shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.

(3) Thy people *shall be* WILLING (volunteer) in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth.

(4) The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou *art* a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.

(5) The Lord at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath.

(6) He shall judge among the heathen, he shall fill *the places* with the dead bodies; he shall wound the heads over many countries.

(7) He shall drink of the brook in the way: therefore shall he lift up the head.

⁷ John 15(1) (DfG) I am the vine, the genuine one, and my Father is the vinedresser. (2) Every branch attached to me and not bearing fruit he takes away. Every branch bearing fruit he prunes so that it may bear more fruit. (3) You already are clean through the word which I have spoken to you. (4) Remain in me and I in you. Just as the branch is not able to bear fruit by itself unless

it remains on the vine, likewise neither you, unless you remain in me. (5) I am the vine, you are the branches. The one remaining in me and I in him is the one bearing much fruit. Apart from me you are not able to do anything. (6) Unless one remains in me, he is thrown out as a branch and dries up. They gather them and throw them into the fire to be burned. (7) If you remain in me and my sayings remain in you, ask for that which you want and it will be granted to you. (8) In this is gratified my Father so that you may bear much fruit and generate to me disciples. (9) Just as the Father loved me, also I loved you. Remain in my love. (10) If you put into practice my instructions you will remain in my love just as I have put into practice my Father's instructions and am remaining in his love.

(11) These things I have spoken to you so that my joy may be in you and your joy might be made full. (12) This is my instruction, so that you may be loving one another as I loved you. (13) Greater love than this no one has in order that one might establish his soul (identity) over his friends. (14) You are my friends if you do what I am instructing you. (15) I no longer consider you slaves, since the slave does not know what his master is doing. I consider you friends because all that I hear from my Father I make known to you. (16) You do not instruct me, but I instruct you, and produce you that you may be going with purpose and may be bearing fruit and your fruit may remain. This is so that whatever you might ask the Father in regards to my name, he might give you.

⁸ Matthew 6(33) *But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*

⁹ Deuteronomy 32(39) See now that I, *even I, am* he, and *there is* no god with me: I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal: neither *is there any* that can deliver out of my hand.

Hosea 6(1) Come, and let us return unto the LORD: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up.

(2) After two days will he revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight.

Jeremiah 31(28) And it shall come to pass, *that* like as I have watched over them, to pluck up, and to break down, and to throw down, and to destroy, and to afflict; so will I watch over them, to build, and to plant, saith the LORD.

Nahum 1(12) Thus saith the LORD; Though *they be* quiet, and likewise many, yet thus shall they be cut down, when he shall pass through. Though I have afflicted thee, I will afflict thee no more.

¹⁰ John 1(1) (DfG) First and foremost was the Mind, and the Mind was God thinking to Himself, and divine was the Mind. (2) This was originally God reflecting. (3) All through It were created, and apart from It none were created which were created.

Chapter 18

(1) "At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, 'Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?' And Jesus called a child to him, set him in their midst, and said, 'Assuredly, I say to you, unless you repent and become as children you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore whoever humbles himself as this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoever receives one of these children on my behalf, receives me. But whoever causes one of these little ones WHO BELIEVE INTO ME to stumble, it will result in having a millstone hung around his neck and to be cast into the depth of the sea. Woe to the world because of stumblings, for stumblings must come; but woe to that **MAN** by whom stumbling is coming!'"

In the world, in the earthly mindset, the parents, along with society as a whole, teach, nurture and encourage independence in their children. We are taught and prepared for a life of independence, of fending for ourselves, of pursuing our own way in life, and earning and providing for ourselves. We are taught to place great value in competition. We are encouraged to discover and

to make for ourselves a NAME, an IDENTITY in this world, particularly for the purpose of securing a place of fleshly security through trade. On one hand, when a son is successful in life and makes an independent life for himself, that pleases the parents. But on the other hand, the parents see their child leave them, and that brings feelings of loss and grief. But because the parents accept this as being the way things should be (according to the normal human mindset), and knowing that this is the way that they were raised by their own parents, then they console themselves in their children being successful in this world. It is a sad quandary. The parents want to keep their children dependent, but “must” promote independence in them. They settle for a distant form of relationship.

Jesus comes along and teaches the opposite. The theme continues. Jesus relentlessly returns to the contrast between the heavenly and the earthly. Why does Jesus say that we must repent and become as children in order to enter the kingdom of heaven? What is it about children that God desires that we become? Is it the sniffing crybaby? Is it their total lack of knowledge and experience? I don't think so. I conclude that it is the **condition** of a child that he desires for us. What is the child-like condition? From birth, a child is completely dependent upon others, particularly his parents. His condition is of need, and of necessary trust in his parents. He is also expected to learn from his parents and to be subject to them. His condition is that of total **dependence**, not independence. So based on all that Jesus has said, this is what he means by us becoming children. As Jesus instructs, we as adults must willingly choose to become like little children before God. What does that look like?

As a child, I need not concern myself about what I will eat, drink, wear, where I will sleep, all the usual things with which children need not preoccupy themselves. In other words, children DO NOT FEND FOR THEMSELVES. They do not engage in trade and commerce with fellows in order to keep a place of relative security.

As a child, I am in a condition of trust toward the one or ones who are committed to caring for me.

As a child, all of my morality revolves around my relationship with my parents/guardians. We have distorted this through our earthly mindset, but that is the extent of a child's morality. When a child wants to do something, but the parent forbids that child from doing it, it is enough for the child to obey and learn, not to question and doubt.

Rather than continue to list all of the commonly known outside appearances and behaviors of children, in the last section called “Going Back To Basics”, I will examine the theme itself, the motivating principle BEHIND the gospel, and reason behind the principle. You could say we will look at the gospel from God's point of view.

Then he goes on to say, “Stumblings must come. But woe to that **man** through whom stumblings must come!” He was foreshadowing an event, a phenomenon which was to come. Just as I mentioned in several places, the genuine gospel has since been subverted and replaced by a gospel of substitution. And Jesus goes on to warn that whoever through whom the false gospel is brought and promoted, it will be “bad” for him and for all those who have been stumbled because of him. This is not to necessarily single out a specific individual, but he does describe the phenomenon itself regardless of who perpetrates the stumbling. Jesus is expressing God's point of view, God's perspective on things. **WHOEVER TEACHES AND PROMOTES THE OPPOSITE OF BECOMING AS CHILDREN KEEP THEMSELVES AND THOSE WHO ADOPT HIS TEACHING FROM ENTERING THE KINGDOM OF GOD.** In other words, whoever teaches INDEPENDENCE is not teaching the gospel that Jesus was teaching. Jesus was living and promoting the message of DEPENDENCE, of subordination, of the son being forever one with his heavenly father. Jesus said, and I repeat, (John 8:35) *“And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever.”* (Isaiah 55:8-9) ***“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.”*** That is probably what Jesus meant when he said in John 6:62, *“What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?”* You could say that Jesus was talking about us adopting God's point of view rather than clinging to our own. He is talking about adopting God's template, His pattern of the Son of Man. It is always about the contrast between the heavenly and the earthly, the contrast between light and darkness, the contrast between God's

mindset and man's.

(8) “ ‘And if your hand or foot causes you to stumble, cut it off and cast it from you. It is better for you to enter into life lame or maimed, than having two hands or two feet, to be cast into the everlasting fire. And if your eye causes you to stumble, pluck it out and cast it from you. It is better for you to enter into life with one eye, than having two eyes, to be cast into the burning Gehenna’.”

Is Jesus suggesting that I literally cut off and dispose of a physical member of my body? If it is genuinely so, then I should consider it seriously. If my leg or arm is contaminated with a serious disease like gangrene, do not the doctors remove it? And if a woman's breast is contaminated with cancer, do not the doctors remove it? These are things that people in fact do already. For the sake of the whole body's survival, we are more than willing to sacrifice a “lost” member.

But seeing that Jesus always speaks in parables and relays spirit messages through analogies and figures of speech, what is he saying here? In ¹ John chapter 3, he says, “That which is from flesh is flesh. And that which is from spirit is spirit.” Jesus was not concerned about the flesh. He was always talking about spirit and reconciliation with the Father. So what is the spirit “body”? Just as he said in ² John chapter 6, “My body is the true bread, and my blood is the true drink...” You could say that it is similar to the expression, “the body of the book, the body of a work”. In other words, it is the substance which makes up a person's SOUL, identity, mindset, everything that makes a person be who he is. So if there is something in my person, character, mind which is improper or detrimental to my reconciliation with the Father, then BY ALL MEANS, HAVE IT REMOVED! “The flesh profits nothing,” ³ as Jesus says, “my words are spirit.” If I cling to anything down here on earth in the flesh which holds me back from going to the Father, it is perfectly wise to detach myself from it. Otherwise, I, along with all to which I cling here on earth, am doomed anyway. It is all a matter of PRIORITIES. What do I CHOOSE? Do I prefer effecting peace and harmony with the Father, or do I prefer clinging to my own independent life, person, identity? This is the summary of the entire Bible. We make it so complicated. It doesn't matter what I do here on earth. If I am not dedicated to effecting reconciliation with the Father, it is all to perish. Every independent earthly value and priority I have accumulated in my lifetime will pass away. All I need is to choose to see it from God's point of view. “Ask, seek, knock...”

He uses the name “Gehenna” to represent the place where we are cast if we cling to our earthly priorities. The word “Gehenna” comes from the Hebrew, “Ga Hinnom” which means “Valley of Hinnom”. It was the name given to the tip, the garbage dump for the city of Jerusalem in the days of Jesus. So from God's point of view, God will eventually dispose of everything that, in His opinion, is not worth keeping. Just like people, He will throw out the garbage. He will only keep that which He deems worth keeping. Do I want to be thrown into the garbage dump for the sake of clinging to vanity? God will dispose of the garbage. Am I clinging to the garbage that will be incinerated?

(10) “ ‘Take heed that you do not belittle one of these little ones, for I say to you that in heaven their angels always behold the face of my Father who is in heaven. (11) (Omitted in older texts.)

(12) What do you think? If a man gets to have a hundred sheep, and one of them goes astray, does he not leave the ninety nine on the mountains to seek the one that is straying? And if he should find it, assuredly, I say to you, he rejoices more over that one than over the ninety nine that did not stray. Even so it is not desirable to my Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish’.”

This again shows the distinction between the heavenly and the earthly. Using the above analogy, Jesus is expressing how God has the desire to have all of the lost sheep come back to Him, to be reconciled with Him. But God has given to the son all power to evaluate, and to choose for himself. God doesn't need our reconciliation. He would like it, but he leaves it up to us to choose it or not.

But as the above shepherd goes out of his way to seek out a single sheep, so has God actively sent forth invitations to man to come home to Him. He has invited man and has instructed him in regards to the way of reconciliation. God will not take man to Himself on man's terms. Not at all. But God is willing to take man if man is willing to come home on God's terms. God has provided the "ways and means" to this endeavor. TO MY KNOWLEDGE, Jesus was the first man to fully accept the invitation and conditions of reconciliation. And after this, God responded by saying, "This is indeed my beloved son in whom I am well pleased; listen to him." God rejoiced and has expressed His pleasure in a multitude of ways ever since. God has given signs and tokens to people throughout the Christian Age in regards to Jesus as tokens of invitation. But what do we do with these hints and clues? Do we respond by going all the way, as Jesus did, and effect reconciliation? Why do we insist on clinging to our independence? That is a seriously good question.

(15) " 'Moreover if your brother should stray, reprove him privately. If he listens to you, you have regained your brother. But if he will not listen to you, take with you one or two others, that ⁴ ***"By the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established."*** And if he refuses to listen to them, inform the congregation. But if he refuses even to listen to the congregation, let him be to you like a foreigner and a tax collector.

Jesus is instructing his disciples, not strangers. So if he is addressing his disciples, what does he mean by a "brother"? We automatically assume that it means "biologically from the same father". But he certainly doesn't mean this. Everything Jesus says is of spirit nature, of heavenly mindset. ⁵ Earlier he did say, "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers? It is those who do the will of MY Father who is in heaven." But traditionally, we cling to the idea that a brother is exclusively a horizontal fellow member of a household. Yet, Jesus, ⁶ after his resurrection, being the lord and teacher of his eleven surviving disciples, addressed them as his BROTHERS. So Jesus gave us clues to his coded language. When he said "brother", he usually meant "a vertical brother". My apostle is my brother. My disciple is my brother. This is the way Jesus saw it, and it is the way he taught it. I have nothing to do with those outside of this vertical relationship. What I simply mean is that I am not RESPONSIBLE for anyone who is not my disciple. And I am not BEHOLDEN to anyone who is NOT MY APOSTLE, the one whom God delegated as my ⁷ HEAVENLY FATHER FIGURE. So when Jesus talks about straying in the above passage, the only one who can stray is one who is my sheep, one over whom I am responsible and given stewardship: my disciple. If my disciple is straying from me and my instruction, I must initially address him privately. If he refuses to listen, I bring forth one or two other fellow disciples as corroborating witnesses. If he still refuses to listen, I bring him before the entire assembly of the brotherhood of my family. If he yet remains obstinate and rebellious, he is to be allowed to go. But I am to treat him as a stranger, an outsider. He is not my brother and is not of my family. He has made his decision and we must respect his decision. God will do what He wants with him. I am not instructed to go out of my way to treat him with contempt or malice. That is not what is being said. No, I just treat him as I would anyone else who is not of the household of Christ.

(18) ⁸ " **'Assuredly, I say to you, whoever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whoever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.** Again assuredly I say to you that if two of you on earth are in agreement and inquire concerning this whole matter, it will be confirmed for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are joined together into my name, I am there in their midst'."

We examined this extensively in chapter 16 of Matthew. But proceeding beyond that, he says something somewhat enigmatic after binding and loosing. Traditionally, this passage has been translated as, (Matthew 18:19-20) *"Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."* This passage has been used by many as license to get together with fellow Christians in order to ask for specific favors from God. Interestingly enough, occasionally God has actually granted favors in this way. But by re-examining

the Greek text with the Johannine theme in mind, I am compelled to conclude that the above text is not referring to individual requests and favors. No, I am convinced that Jesus was giving an extremely important instruction to his disciples pertaining to the context within which this statement is being made. He is talking about the all encompassing covenant between apostle and disciple in Christ, similar to the father/son relationship foretold by Malachi.

This agreement between apostle and disciple is “binding” in heaven and permanent because it is God’s intent for us. The disciple commits to agree with his apostle in regards to ALL THINGS, not just individual items or issues.

We are instinctively NOT inclined to subject ourselves to another man, even if God Himself were to appear to us in the flesh and tell us. That is our human nature. But it is this sinful human nature that Jesus and his gospel were directly confronting. It is further reinforced when we hear Jesus say, “...gathered together INTO my name.” It is not “in my name”, but rather “INTO my name”. The use of the word “name” simply means “the family name, the family IDENTITY”. ⁹ God is seeking divine offspring.

This clarifies what Jesus meant when he said in John 14:27, “*Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.*” And also in Matthew 10:13, “*And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it: but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you.*”

In reality, how is peace achieved? How does peace come to be between two people? There is only one way: one must yield to the other. As long as two individuals retain sovereignty and supremacy, there will be conflict and discord. In the world, the only way to true peace between two individuals is when one of those two submits to the other. That is the law of nature. As long as wills clash down here on earth, there can be no genuine peace.

When I seek peace with God, He will settle for nothing less than surrender. And if I surrender to Him, I must be prepared to accept His will for me WHATEVER IT MAY BE. And if God has expressed that I place my authority, my life, my person in the hands of another man, then it is up to me to accept the terms of peace or not. That is why the religious leaders in Jesus’ day could not accept Jesus. Jesus was preaching a gospel of surrender TO A MAN as unto God. Yet God was perpetually vindicating this message that Jesus was living and preaching. The religious of Jesus’ day found all kinds of excuses. But ultimately there was only one reason why they refused Jesus. They could not entertain the possibility of being under an other man’s total authority. That is no less true today.

Then Jesus adds more instruction in regards to discipleship:

(21) “Then Peter came to him and said, ‘Lord, how often shall my brother stray from me, and I should forgive him? Up to seven times?’ Jesus said to him, ‘I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.’”

If we take away our human mindset and see it from Jesus’ mindset, we can see that he is talking about the straying of a follower. A disciple of Christ who is at the same time an apostle will inevitably face “problems” regarding his disciples. Everyone will have great difficulty in regards to discipleship. So Jesus is warning Peter (and us today), “If God sees fit to place a disciple under your authority, be merciful and long suffering. Keep your eyes ahead. Be first and foremost a follower yourself, and let the disciple follow as God permits. And when you need to discuss things with your “offshoot”, do so with understanding and freedom of choice in mind. Just as you need mercy from above, so you must extend mercy on to those below.” The attitude that Jesus had was simple. He saw himself a disciple first and foremost. And in regards to those who would follow him, he would only pass onto them what the Father was teaching him. Jesus was not placing himself above anyone. On the contrary. He was under his Father, and he was relaying or repeating what was given to him from above to those who would follow him. And Jesus would let God do His thing with the disciples behind him. This theme continues in the following passage:

(23) “ ‘Therefore the kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who wanted to settle accounts with his slaves. And when he had begun to settle accounts, one (i.e. tax collector) was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. But as

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he was not able to pay, his master gave order that he be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and that payment be made. The slave therefore fell down before him saying, "Master, have patience with me, and I will repay you in full." Then the master of that slave was moved with pity, released him, and forgave him the debt'."

Within the context of God's house, what brother owes a debt to a horizontal brother? It doesn't exist. The only debt, as in this case, is vertical, the slave to the master. Within the confines of the kingdom of God, the underling owes the debt of submission and accountability to the one above, not to a horizontal fellow member of God's house. That would be considered a neighbor. The branch owes its life to the branch to which it is attached within the vine, not to a neighboring branch.

Jesus says in Matthew 20:25-28, "*You know that the rulers of the nations lord it over them, and those who are great impose authority over them. Yet it shall not be so with you; but whoever desires to be great among you, he will himself be a servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, he will himself be a slave; just as the son of man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to provide his identity as the means of deliverance instead of many.*" God does not wish to force anyone to be His children. God is searching for volunteers, volunteers who are willing to forgo their own life in exchange for His. Our deliverance is in receiving the identity of the son of man. God doesn't need us. We need Him. We are needy. We only have to realize this and respond to our perceived condition. So when we agree to surrender to God, it comes with no conditions, no strings attached. I give myself over to His will and to whatever He decides I should be, what I should have, what I should do, everything. Is that the price that I am willing to pay to obtain reconciliation with God? It is a huge leap. It is a good thing that God is merciful and understanding. But He is also strict and fair, resisting the proud, but gentle to the lowly.

If there is a king with only one faithful, submitted subject, there is a kingdom. If there is a father who has a faithful, submitted son, there is a family. If there is a husband with a faithful, submitted wife, there is a marriage. If there is a master with a faithful, submitted servant, there is peace and prosperity. If there is an apostle followed by a faithful, submitted disciple, there is Christ. "For where two or three are joined together into my name, I am there in their midst."

(28) " 'But that slave went out and found one of his fellow slaves (sub-tax collector) who owed him a hundred denarii; and he laid hands on him and took him by the throat, saying, "Pay me what you owe!" So his fellow slave fell down and begged him, saying, "Have patience with me, and I will pay you." And he would not, but went and threw him into prison till he should pay what he owed'."

Within this context, there appears to be a hierarchy of slaves, probably tax collectors, where slaves were given sub-slaves, and so on. It is very similar to an army where there is a hierarchy of authority. In this case, there is a main slave who owes a HUGE debt to the master/owner. This slave has a subordinate slave of his own who owed him a very small debt relatively speaking.

(31) " 'So when his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were very grieved, and came and told their master all that had been done. Then his master, after he had summoned him, said to him, "You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me. Should you not also have had mercy on your fellow slaves, just as I had mercy on you?" And his master was angry, and delivered him to the taskmasters until he should pay all that he owed. So my heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from the heart, does not forgive his brother'."

Jesus is presenting a test situation for self examination. If I have received the gospel and the intent behind the gospel, certain signs will follow, certain behavior and attitude changes will take place. Included in this set of changes is the removal of the attitude of entitlement over others, whether horizontal (with my neighbors) or whether vertical (with my subordinates or even my superiors). It doesn't change overnight. This is something that is revealed and learned over time. The transformation from earthly to heavenly is truly a journey, a journey that is fresh and new

to each and every one of us. God is a nurturing father. But because He is a father, those whom He loves, ¹⁰ He chastens. He teaches, and corrects us, those who are committed to reconciling with Him.

Chapter 18 footnotes:

¹ John 3(6) *That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.*

² John 6(51) *I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.*

(52) The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us *his* flesh to eat?

(53) Then Jesus said unto them, *Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.*

(54) *Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.*

(55) *For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.*

(56) *He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.*

(57) *As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.*

(58) *This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever.*

³ John 6(63) *It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.*

⁴ Deuteronomy 19(15) One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity, or for any sin, in any sin that he sinneth: at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established.

⁵ Matthew 12(48) But he answered and said unto him that told him, *Who is my mother? and who are my brethren?*

(49) And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, *Behold my mother and my brethren!*

(50) *For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.*

⁶ John 20(17) Jesus saith unto her, *Touch (cling) me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my **brethren**, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.*

⁷ Matthew 23(8) (DfG) “But you, do not be called ‘Rabbi’, for one is your teacher, and you are all brethren. (9) Do not choose for yourself as father anyone on earth, for one is your father the heavenly one. (10) Neither should you be called leaders, because one is your leader, the Christ.”

⁸ Matthew 16(19) (DfG) “And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whoever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whoever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”

⁹ Malachi 2(15) (Direct translation from Hebrew:) “And did not he make one? Yet he had the residue of the spirit. And why one? He was seeking **Elohim seed** (God offspring). Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal unfaithfully concerning the wife of his youth.”

¹⁰ Deuteronomy 8(5) Thou shalt also consider in thine heart, that, as a man chasteneth his son, *so* the LORD thy God chasteneth thee.

Chapter 19

(1) “Now it came to pass, when Jesus had finished these sayings, that he departed from Galilee and came to the region of Judea beyond the Jordan. And large crowds followed him around, and he healed them there. The Pharisees also came to him, testing him, and saying to him, ‘Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any reason?’ And he answered and said to them, ‘Have you not read that he who created them at the beginning *“Made them male and female”*, and said, *“For this reason a man shall forsake his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh”*? So then they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate.’

(7) They said to him, ‘Why then did Moses prescribe to give a certificate of divorce, and to put her away?’ He said to them, ‘Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you to divorce your wives, but originally it was not intended. And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another (who is divorced), commits adultery.’ His disciples said to him, ‘If such is the case, of the man with his wife, he should not marry.’

(11) But he said to them, ‘Not all are making room for the word, but only those to whom it has been given: for there are eunuchs who were born thus from their mother’s womb, and there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. Let he who is able to make room do so.’”

What is one to make of this passage? I simply see Jesus pointing back to the garden in the beginning and to the original purposes of God. God intended things to be such a way. But man, in his rebellion forsook God’s intent and went his own way. And in his corrupt state, many allowances have been conceded. God has shown much tolerance, much mercy toward man. It is not because man deserves tolerance and mercy. No, it is because God is who He is, and He has enough patience and dedication to endure all of the obstacles to His original purpose. As a father is patient and loving toward his child, so is God even more so patient and loving toward man. God is slowly but deliberately bringing man from the fleshly self-centered mindset to the heavenly God-centered mindset. God is not forcing man against his will. God is leading him and teaching him. Gradually, man will eventually come to his senses and “come back home to papa” for the first time.

In the case of the man/woman relationship discussed here, God had intended for man to have as priority his harmonious relationship with God. And the woman was entrusted to man by God, not to hoard her to himself, but rather in stewardship over her on God’s behalf. If man genuinely loved the woman on God’s behalf, then he would lead the way for her and for the subsequent progeny resulting from their union in harmonious living with God the Father above.

But man, in his ignorant pride, chose to forsake his Father and take the woman along with him on his rebellious straying. His straying carried her along with him in torment and hell. Where is the love in that? Man, in his selfish, fleshly mindset, has seen her as nothing more than a tool of selfish pleasure and satisfaction, to be used, abused, and discarded when she no longer pleases him; hence the lust for “divorce”.

Divorce is society’s “solution” for married people to make a new start and go their own separate ways. Unfortunately, when children are involved, much pain and confusion ensues. But God allows for these consequences to take place. He doesn’t absolve man of accountability in his rebellious independence. Man suffers the consequence of his choice.

God was extremely crafty in creating woman for man. God created the perfect “mirror” for Adam. This selfish earthly mindset was in the man, and was also in the woman. She has, especially in modern times, been man’s “foil”, man’s “satan” or “adversary” down here on earth; hence the expression “The battle of the sexes”. Adam has always coveted sovereignty over her, but she has perpetually challenged him for this position. In Genesis 3:16, after the eating

from the forbidden fruit, God said unto the woman, *"I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and **thy desire shall be to thy husband**, and he shall rule over thee."* God created the perfect tool for Adam's learning in regards to his own relationship with God the Father. It was and is perfect.

So Adam has now with him God's "Trojan horse" so-to-speak. What Adam desires of Eve, God desires of Adam. Just as Adam does not yield to God and give Him what He wants, so does Woman do to Man. Her desire is to monopolize him all to herself. She wants Adam all to herself. She will not share him with God or anything else. She was created by God as the ultimate ALTERNATIVE to God for Adam. And when Adam is faced with the prospect of choosing harmony with God today, he must be prepared that she may not go along with him. In order to effect reconciliation with God, Adam must be prepared to let her go and the world as a whole. It is the choice that Man ultimately faces. Does Adam choose the flesh, or God? Difficult choice it seems... For six thousand years, man has persisted in his independent way, resisting returning to God on His terms.

Ideally speaking, from God's point of view, ¹ woman is to be subject to her husband as unto God the Father. That is her expression of humility and faith toward God. But Adam is also called to do exactly the same thing. He is to give himself over to his "HUSBAND", the Son of Man. This is the gospel message as Jesus taught his disciples. As God was Jesus' "husband", so was Jesus the apostles' "husband" or "bridegroom" as he put it in ² Matthew chapters 9 and 25. And this process is passed on when one of those apostles becomes the "husband" to another generation of disciple. No one is spared this process. All those who seek to enter the kingdom of heaven must be under the authority of someone else in the kingdom; hence the use of the term "kingdom" of God.

What does he mean when he mentions eunuchs? A eunuch by definition is one who physically cannot have sex with a woman. But Jesus takes it further, by implication, to mean "one who does not have sex" or more exactly "one who is not driven by the sexual impulse". When a man is made a eunuch, essentially the sexual drive is taken out of him. That is why kings of old had eunuchs steward over their women seeing that they usually had many. Solomon had 700 wives and 300 concubines for example. So when Jesus says that some choose to be eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of God, he is only stating that for that man, the natural sexual impulse does not detract him from his primary goal which is the reconciliation with God the Father. This is by decision and not necessarily because he has physically emasculated himself. In fact, it doesn't even mean that he abstains completely from sexual relations with his wife. It simply means that the normal flesh impulses and allures do not detract him from his primary goal: becoming and remaining God's son. Essentially, that man is undoing the original sin of Adam if he is doing it as a result of following Christ.

(13) "Then children were brought to him that he might put his hands on them and pray, but the disciples forbade them. But Jesus said, 'Allow the children to come to me, and do not prevent them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven.' And he laid his hands on them and departed from there."

We saw Jesus talk about ³ becoming as children earlier. We're just being reminded by Matthew of its importance when he repeats it a second time.

(16) "Now behold, one came and said to him, 'Teacher, what good shall I do that I may have everlasting life?' So he said to him, 'Why do you ask me about good? There is only one good. So if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments.' He said to him, 'Which ones?' ⁴ Jesus said, *"You shall not murder; you shall not commit adultery; you shall not steal; you shall not bear false witness; honour your father and your mother";* and, *"you shall love your neighbour as yourself".*

(20) The young man said to him, 'All these I have kept. What do I still lack?' Jesus said to him, 'If you want to be perfect (according to me), sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.' But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had

many goods.”

Here again, Jesus brings us back to the perpetual contrast and conflict between the heavenly and the earthly. When the young man asks about what “good” thing to do IN ORDER to obtain everlasting life, Jesus corrects him by replying, “Why do you ask me about “good”? There is only one good.” To me, based on everything else taught throughout the gospel, Jesus is referring to the one and only “good” MOTIVATION or REASON to live: reconciliation and peace with God. That is the ONLY good, or rather beneficial thing to do.

From there, Jesus instructs him in observing and practicing the commandments of God. He asks “Which ones?” as though to list them in order to dispense with them so as to obtain “everlasting life”. Jesus does enumerate the more significant ones. The young man professes that he has been keeping them since his youth. So Jesus challenges him to go all the way, to forget himself, and to adopt someone else’s life, someone else’s point of view on life. Jesus challenges him to trade ALL of his possessions, financial, material, and most importantly, SPIRITUAL, MENTAL. The young man was invited to trade everything he held dear for that which Jesus was offering: reconciliation with the Father.

The young man was being shown that he had been practicing RELIGION his whole life, just like Job. He was being challenged to go beyond religion (the practice of substitution), and to receive the real undistorted God. He was being challenged to “be perfect”. In fact, we are told here that the young man didn’t ask what being perfect meant. I guess, what Jesus said after that drove him away. He couldn’t see himself abandon his own life in exchange for a subordinate life. He couldn’t see himself be a “tool”, a “puppet”. That is our normal reaction to Jesus’ gospel of surrender. And yet, this man was wealthy in this world. In other words, this man had no reservation as to being the master, the “puppeteer”, the father, the husband. But he could not see himself be a subordinate to anyone else. Jesus was informing this young man that in order to inherit “everlasting life”, it could not be an independent one. So why covet “everlasting life” if I must abandon my individuality, my sovereignty? He wanted “immortality”, not “everlasting life”. There is a fundamental difference. He wanted eternal “license” to exercise his individuality. He wanted license to the tree of the knowledge of good and evil WITHOUT DYING. Whereas Jesus was telling him that God will not grant this to anyone.

So what did “being perfect” mean to Jesus? Does it mean to be able to do things perfectly? To me, Jesus meant, “Have the perfect objective in life. We will always make errors in life. But as long as we have one single objective of going to the Father, we are already perfect in God’s eyes.”

(23) “Then Jesus said to his disciples, ‘Assuredly, I say to you that it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. And again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of the needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God’.”

The more vested interest we have in this life and in this world, the more difficult it is to exchange it all for reconciliation with God. Isn’t it interesting to note that many countries, including the USA, have a constitution which is based on independence? In fact, the US Declaration of Independence assures every American the **right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness**. And they flagrantly use the phrase, “In God We Trust”, and “Under God”. To which God are they referring? It certainly isn’t the God and Father of Anointed Jesus. I will not needlessly press this any further.

(25) “When his disciples heard it, they were greatly amazed, saying, ‘Who then can be **SAVED?**’ But Jesus looked at them and said to them, **‘For mankind this is impossible, but for godkind all things are possible’.**”

Traditionally, I am accustomed to reading, “For men this is impossible, but for God all things are possible.” This is in essence true, but the Greek text reads more accurately not “God”, but rather “those of God”, or “Godkind”. The Hebrew equivalent would in fact be “Elohim”, “God people”. Jesus was taking our eyes off of tradition, religion, and the flesh. He wanted us to focus on the relationship with God. He was pointing us to the ONLY relevant issue at hand: **MY RECONCILIATION WITH**

GOD IS MY SALVATION. Nothing else matters! When I become of Godkind, I AUTOMATICALLY live forever WITH God, the Eternal One.

(27) "Then Peter answered and said to him, 'See, we are leaving all and following you. Therefore, what's in it for us?' So Jesus said to them, 'Assuredly, I say to ye that ye, who have followed me in the re-creation (regeneration), when the son of man sits on the throne of his glory, will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone who leaves houses, or brothers, or sisters, or father, or mother or children or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive much more and inherit everlasting life. But many who are first will be last, and the last first'."

Here, Jesus is reinforcing everything that was said earlier. He is highlighting the change from earthly to heavenly, the earthly mindset to the heavenly mindset, the earthly IDENTITY to the heavenly IDENTITY. Here is where the analogy of the marriage relationship works best. The bride is to leave her former house, family, and life behind and enter into her new husband's house, family, and life. Ideally, in the model given to us by God, she is not meant to bring anything of her own from her past life into her new one. She moves into her new home, her new family, her new identity.

Just as the bride enters her new life, Jesus is letting his disciples know that it is the same for them. By exchanging their former life and identity for the new heavenly life and identity, all will be well with them. They inherit their PLACE in God's household which has NO LIMIT in size. There can be as many places in God's household as there are willing participants. We can all be given God's family name if we so choose. It requires decisiveness and determination.

But it also requires humility, because Jesus ends this statement by saying, "Many who are first will be last, and the last first." It requires that I be willing to "take the last place", to accept the will of another over my own. It requires that I go against my raw basic human nature of "seeking the first place". For example, when I come to a "queue" or line-up, I must take the last place. And I must patiently proceed along the way until my turn comes to face the "wicket" or person in charge of processing this line-up. There you go. I started at the last place, and ultimately reached the first place. This is an analogy, but it serves well to illustrate God's intent. We cannot "jump the queue". Jesus says in John 10:1, "*Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.*"

There is another analogy to use in illustrating the kingdom of God. It is found in Multi Level Marketing. MLM, as is commonly known, is a system of marketing anything wherein the members of this system join this system to both sell and buy whatever this system is being used to distribute. A very interesting aspect of this system is the sponsorship aspect. An established member of an MLM can sponsor more members into the system. Just as this member was sponsored by someone "above" him, so is he capable of sponsoring those "below" him, creating a new generation of members under him. He will somehow benefit from sponsoring new members into the MLM system. But on the other hand, the newly sponsored are also his RESPONSIBILITY. He has agreed to initiate, train, and encourage this new recruit. It is very similar in any MLM system. It follows the "Vine" model in the gospel of John very closely in a worldly setting.

God is very strict about the process and procedure of entrance into His family. We must not confuse this with religion and religious ceremony. We are talking about the most important decision God could ever face regarding me: "Will I declare this one to be my son or not?" And on the other hand, I am faced with the most difficult choice I could ever face: "Do I really want to be with this God? Am I willing to do and be that which is required of me for God to acknowledge me as His son?"

Chapter 19 footnotes:

¹ Numbers 30 (1) And Moses spake unto the heads of the tribes concerning the children of Israel, saying, This *is* the thing which the LORD hath commanded.

(2) If a man vow a vow unto the LORD, or swear an oath to bind his soul with a bond; he shall not break his word, he shall do according to all that proceedeth out of his mouth.

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- (3) If a woman also vow a vow unto the LORD, and bind herself by a bond, *being* in her father's house in her youth;
- (4) And her father hear her vow, and her bond wherewith she hath bound her soul, and her father shall hold his peace at her; then all her vows shall stand, and every bond wherewith she hath bound her soul shall stand.
- (5) But if her father disallow her in the day that he heareth; not any of her vows, or of her bonds wherewith she hath bound her soul, shall stand: and the LORD shall forgive her, because her father disallowed her.
- (6) And if she had at all an husband, when she vowed, or uttered ought out of her lips, wherewith she bound her soul;
- (7) And her husband heard *it*, and held his peace at her in the day that he heard *it*: then her vows shall stand, and her bonds wherewith she bound her soul shall stand.
- (8) But if her husband disallowed her on the day that he heard *it*; then he shall make her vow which she vowed, and that which she uttered with her lips, wherewith she bound her soul, of none effect: and the LORD shall forgive her.
- (9) But every vow of a widow, and of her that is divorced, wherewith they have bound their souls, shall stand against her.
- (10) And if she vowed in her husband's house, or bound her soul by a bond with an oath;
- (11) And her husband heard *it*, and held his peace at her, *and* disallowed her not: then all her vows shall stand, and every bond wherewith she bound her soul shall stand.
- (12) But if her husband hath utterly made them void on the day he heard *them*; *then* whatsoever proceeded out of her lips concerning her vows, or concerning the bond of her soul, shall not stand: her husband hath made them void; and the LORD shall forgive her.
- (13) Every vow, and every binding oath to afflict the soul, her husband may establish it, or her husband may make it void.
- (14) But if her husband altogether hold his peace at her from day to day; then he establisheth all her vows, or all her bonds, which *are* upon her: he confirmeth them, because he held his peace at her in the day that he heard *them*.
- (15) But if he shall any ways make them void after that he hath heard *them*; then he shall bear her iniquity.
- (16) These *are* the statutes, which the LORD commanded Moses, between a man and his wife, between the father and his daughter, *being yet* in her youth in her father's house.

² Matthew 9(15) And Jesus said unto them, *Can the children of the bridechamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? but the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast.*

Matthew 25(1) *Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom.*

- (2) *And five of them were wise, and five were foolish.*
- (3) *They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them:*
- (4) *But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.*
- (5) *While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.*
- (6) *And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.*
- (7) *Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps.*
- (8) *And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out.*
- (9) *But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.*
- (10) *And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut.*
- (11) *Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us.*
- (12) *But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not.*

³ Matthew 18(1-6)

⁴ Exodus chapter 20 (The ten commandments)

Leviticus 19(18) Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I *am* the LORD.

Chapter 20

(1) “ ‘For the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who went out early in the morning to hire workers for his vineyard. Now when he had agreed with the workers for a denarius a day, he sent them into his vineyard. And he went out about the third hour and saw others standing idle in the market place, and said to them, “You also go into the vineyard, and whatever is fair I will give you.” And they went. Again he went out about the sixth and the ninth hour and did likewise. And about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing idle, and said to them, “Why have you been standing here idle all day?” They said to him, “Because no one hired us.” He said to them, “You also go into the vineyard.”

(8) So when evening had come, the lord of the vineyard said to his steward, “Call the workers and give them their wages, beginning with the last to the first.” And when those came who were hired about the eleventh hour, they each received a denarius. But when the first came, they assumed that they would receive more; and they likewise received each a denarius. And when they had received it, they complained to the householder, saying, “These last men have worked only one hour, and you made them equal to us who have borne the burden and the heat of the day.” But he answered one of them and said, “Fellow, am I doing you wrong? Did you not agree with me for a denarius? Take what is yours and go. I wish to give to this last man the same as to you. Am I not allowed to do what I wish with my own things? Or is your eye faulty since I am good?” So the last will be first, and the first last’.”

This parable from Jesus is about several things. First and foremost, it is about God and His sovereignty. He is the owner, and the owner is answerable to no one in regards to His own domain. “Am I not allowed to do what I wish with my own things?” But what in fact are God’s things? Is it not EVERYTHING? Did God relinquish His ownership over His Creation? Not really. The only thing that God has willingly granted to man is the authority to choose, to choose to recognize God’s sovereignty and ownership or not. Other than that, God owns everything. He is entitled. We are not entitled. In our own minds, we are entitled. But who can contest God’s ownership and enforce it? Who is there like God? There is only God. There is no other real God. All other “gods” are products of man’s imagination. As ¹ Nebuchadnezzar said in Daniel 4:35, “And all the inhabitants of the earth *are* reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and *among* the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?”

The second aspect of the above parable is the apparent inequality of effort and toil from one man to the next but with the same “pay” at the end of the day. What could this be illustrating? Over the ages, there are men who have worked their entire lifetimes in great toil and sorrow when it came to God and His business. For example, Samuel the prophet, in being dedicated to God by his parents before he was born, was born and raised into God’s business. He was seven when God spoke to him for the first time. And then there are varying ages where men have entered into God’s business. Today, one could be “touched” by God at any age. It is entirely at God’s discretion. He is sovereign and can do what He wants with His belongings. But regardless of how long or how much effort men work in God’s business over a natural lifetime, the “pay” at the end of the day is exactly the same for all.

So what is this “pay”? What is this reward to which Jesus is alluding? What is the only worthwhile reward that anyone could receive? And what is it that Jesus teaches throughout the rest of the gospel? Is it not simply RECONCILIATION with God the Father? Is it nothing more and nothing less than admittance into His household, His family? Either we are allowed in, or we are not. What more should we want? It is the only reward God intends to give to those who labor faithfully in His vineyard.

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(17) “Then Jesus, ascending up to Jerusalem, took aside the twelve disciples privately, on the way said to them, ‘Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the son of man will be given over to the chief priests and scribes; and they will condemn him to death, and hand him over to the foreigners to mock and to scourge and to put on stake until the ² third day when he will be raised up.’

(20) Then the mother of Zebedee’s sons came to him with her sons, bowing and requesting something of him. And he said to her, ‘What do you wish?’ She said to him, ‘Grant that these two sons of mine may sit, one on your right, and the other on your left, in your kingdom’.”

Isn’t this interesting? Jesus just mentioned in private to his disciples that the son of man was about to be handed over to the religious leaders and be condemned to death, and be handed over to the gentiles to be mocked and scourged and then to be put on stake until the third day at which time he will be raised up. The disciples didn’t seem to get what he was talking about. They are stuck in their own fantasy about who Jesus is and what he should be and do. They still think that he is going to take Jerusalem as a conquering king and lead them into victory over the Romans and beyond, still in the flesh. They harbor the Old Testament picture of Israel being led by God along with the ark of the covenant and defeating all of the “enemies”. This is vividly residing within their minds. There were no exceptions. They were all laboring under this preconception. Jesus’ message had not yet sunk into them. And Jesus knew this. Regardless, Jesus continued on with “the plan” as God had revealed it to him. His priority was not what people thought of him. His priority was only what God thought of Him.

And when the mother of John and James (Jacob) came to Jesus requesting that they be given places of privilege, they were still thinking of the worldly view of a kingdom.

(22) “But Jesus answered and said, ‘You do not know what you ask. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink?’ They said to him, ‘We are able.’ So he said to them, ‘You will indeed drink my cup; but to sit on my right and on my left is not mine to give, but it is for those for whom it is prepared by my father’.”

Here is another example of the clash of two realms, the heavenly and the earthly. Jesus clearly understands that they do not yet see from his point of view. He is speaking from his mindset to these in their mindset. They are using words which have different meanings to the participants of the conversation. This was a perpetual condition between Jesus and those to whom he spoke.

Sadly, when Jesus asked them if they were ready to “drink the cup” which he was about to drink, they gladly responded with a “yes”. In their mind, what was the big deal? In their minds, Jesus was about to “kick ass” and take over Jerusalem to rule it with God’s power. They were certainly with Jesus in this regard. If they knew for real what he was about to undergo, they would not have been so quick to respond in the affirmative. But Jesus does foretell that some day, they would “drink the cup” that he is about to drink.

(24) “And when the ten heard it, they were indignant against the two brothers.”

They were all on the same “wavelength”. They all understood that Jesus was about to take Jerusalem “by force” to rule it as king under God. They didn’t like hearing the Zebedee boys’ request for privileged status.

It is a safe assumption to think that they would have reacted similarly to the so-called “betrayal” by Judas. Yet the gospel writers, both of them, indicate the contrary. The preceding passage is further evidence of this.

But Jesus takes the opportunity to share a very important aspect of being in God’s kingdom.

(25) “But Jesus called them to himself and said, ‘You know that the rulers of the nations lord it over them, and those who are great impose authority over them. Yet it shall not be so with you; but whoever desires to be great among you, he will himself be a servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, he will himself be a slave, just as the son of man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to provide his identity as the means of deliverance instead of many.’”

This is so powerful. Jesus is teaching his disciples to TURN AROUND. “Stop looking back. Stop seeing yourselves as leaders, as masters, as fathers, and as husbands. Start looking at yourselves as servants, children, dependents, slaves, wives, followers.” Jesus was sharing with them that in God’s household, no one dictates to others what to do. No one forces anyone to do anything. The “rule of thumb” is “set everyone free”. We are not to place demands or expectations on others. We are to give the example to others for them to follow OF THEIR OWN ACCORD. True authority comes from below. The subordinate empowers the leader by placing his will at his disposal. The wife empowers the husband by placing herself under his authority. And so on. God is inviting us all to see it from His point of view. If anyone has the ability to impose one’s will on others, it is God. Yet God still desires willing participation from us. (See Psalm 110:3)

And when Jesus declares that the son of man did not come to be served, but to serve, he is declaring the attitude and mindset that the “son of man” (the theoretical ideal that God has for man) is to have. The son of man is to be behind and under another’s authority. In Jesus’ case, he was directly behind and under God his Father seeing that he was the first. But subsequent to that, the disciples were intended and invited to be under Jesus’ authority AS UNTO GOD HIS FATHER. Jesus repeats this many times and in many ways over the course of the gospels.

At the end, Jesus says, “...and to provide his identity as the means of deliverance instead of many.” Again, Jesus is instructing them that their means of deliverance from the earthly prison, the fleshly mindset and condition, is by being provided his identity, the identity of son of man in the place of all of our own separate individual identities.³ There is only one name by which we can be saved: Jehovah’s FAMILY NAME, Elohim. It is the very same name that Jesus (the son of David) was given by his Father. Jehovah is the head of the household of Elohim. And we can receive the VERY SAME NAME if we go through the proper initiation and transformation process. And all those who have been genuinely given God’s name are given everlasting life.

(29) “Now as they departed from Jericho, a large crowd followed him. And behold, two blind men sitting by the road, when they heard that Jesus was passing by, cried out, saying, ‘Have mercy on us, lord, son of David!’ Then the crowd admonished them that they should be quiet; but they cried out all the more, saying, ‘Have mercy on us, lord, son of David!’ So Jesus stood still and called them, and said, ‘What do you want me to do for you?’ They said to him, ‘Lord, that our eyes may be opened.’ So Jesus had pity and touched their eyes. And immediately they saw, and they followed him.”

This is a situation where two blind men must have heard, by reputation, that Jesus can provide miraculous healings. So, because of these reports, they take the chance and ask Jesus for physical sight. It is granted, and they follow him. This is an illustration of faith from different angles. Firstly, because of Jesus’ faith in God, Jesus made God his priority. And Jesus’ faith grew through faithfulness to this God. It grew to the point where God was now unequivocally backing Jesus in order to show people that he was His faithful representative. You could say that as Jesus could bring miraculous physical healing to bring sight to the blind, he was authorized and empowered to bring spirit sight to the spiritually blind. All it takes is for me to recognize and acknowledge my “spirit blindness” and come to God’s anointed, and ask him to give me “spirit sight”.

Chapter 20 footnotes:

¹ Daniel 4(34) And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth

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for ever, whose dominion *is* an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom *is* from generation to generation:

(35) And all the inhabitants of the earth *are* reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and *among* the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?

(36) At the same time my reason returned unto me; and for the glory of my kingdom, mine honour and brightness returned unto me; and my counsellors and my lords sought unto me; and I was established in my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added unto me.

(37) Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works *are* truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase.

² Hosea 6(2) After two days will he revive **US**: in the third day he will raise **US** up, and **WE** shall live in his sight.

³ Deuteronomy 6(13) Thou shalt fear the LORD (Yehovah) thy God, and serve him, and shalt swear (bind one's soul by a promise) by (in or into) his **name**.

Psalms 62(7) In God (Elohim) *is* my salvation and my glory: the rock of my strength, *and* my refuge, *is* in God ("Elohim" the family name).

Psalms 89(19) Then thou spakest in vision to thy holy one, and saidst, I have laid help upon *one that is* mighty; I have exalted *one* chosen out of the people.

(20) I have found David my servant; with my holy oil have I anointed him:

(21) With whom my hand shall be established: mine arm also shall strengthen him.

(22) The enemy shall not exact upon him; nor the son of wickedness afflict him.

(23) And I will beat down his foes before his face, and plague them that hate him.

(24) But my faithfulness and my mercy *shall be* with him: and **in my name** shall his horn be exalted.

(25) I will set his hand also in the sea, and his right hand in the rivers.

(26) He shall cry unto me, **Thou art my father, my God**, and the rock of my salvation.

(27) Also I will make him *my* firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth.

(28) My mercy will I keep for him for evermore, and my covenant shall stand fast with him.

(29) His seed also will I make *to endure* for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven.

(30) If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments;

(31) If they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments;

(32) Then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes.

(33) Nevertheless my lovingkindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail.

(34) My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips.

(35) Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David.

(36) His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me.

(37) It shall be established for ever as the moon, and *as* a faithful witness in heaven. Selah.

Jeremiah 33(22) As the host of heaven cannot be numbered, neither the sand of the sea measured: so will I multiply the seed of David my servant, and the Levites that minister unto me.

Chapter 21

(1) "Now when they drew near to Jerusalem, and came to Bethphage, at the mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, 'Go into the village in front of you, and there you will find an ass tied, with foal. Getting permission, bring them to me. And if anyone seeks explanation from you, say that the lord needs them, and then he will assign them.'

(4) This was done that it might be fulfilled which was ¹ spoken by the prophet, saying, '*Tell the daughter of Zion, "Behold, your king is coming to you, lowly, and sitting on an ass, a colt, the foal of an ass."*' So the disciples went and did as Jesus requested. They brought the ass and the colt, laid their clothes on them, and he sat

on them. And most of the crowd spread their garments on the road; others cut down branches from the trees and spread them on the road. Then the crowds who went ahead and those who followed cried out, saying, 'Hosanna to the son of David!' ² "*Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!*" Hosanna in the highest! And when he had come into Jerusalem, there was a commotion, throughout the city, people saying, 'Who is this?' So the crowds said, 'This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth of Galilee'."

This passage has been commonly named "The Triumphal Entrance Into Jerusalem", harking back to ³ David's triumphal entrance into the city with the Ark of the Covenant. This is to confirm the people's mindset of that day. They were already expecting the "messiah" (anointed one) to come and assume David's throne and rule Jerusalem to fulfill Old Testament prophecy. There were enough Jesus fans to rouse a commotion throughout the city. There were many who found it plausible that Jesus was this awaited "heir to David's kingdom". He had quickly turned into a legend throughout Judea and surrounding parts, all the way into Syria and Lebanon. There were enough miracles to seriously stir the people's enthusiasm. So this crowd was in the mood for a coronation. The common people saw the existing "powers that be", the Romans and the puppet Jewish rulers, as being lacking and abusive. They perceived Jesus as the "common man's hero", the one who deserved to be king due to all of the marvelous good he was bestowing on them. He healed the sick. He restored the lame. He cleansed the lepers. He fed multitudes. He even raised the dead! What more could the people want? Get rid of those power-hungry people abusers.

(12) "Then Jesus went into the temple and drove out all those who bought and sold in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves. And he said to them, ⁴ 'It is written, "*My house shall be called a house of prayer*", but you are making it a "*den of thieves*".' "

Once again, we see the contrast between the heavenly and the earthly. In the temple people were preoccupied with commercial endeavors and using God for them. Just as normal human beings, they were waiting for a king who would ratify and encourage them in their existing endeavors. They weren't looking for a wholesale change. They weren't looking for a man they would have to serve and obey. They were looking for a champion, a "figurehead" leader, a "ventriloquist's dummy" just like us today. So immediately Jesus shakes the people out of their **euphoric fantasy** and reveals a **real** man with a **real** will who will not let himself be the people's puppet. Before them all, he declares his allegiance to be to God his Father and not to them. Ouch! As a result, many people are confused and internally conflicted regarding this Jesus.

(14) "Then the blind and the lame came to him in the temple, and he healed them. But when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the boys crying out in the temple saying, 'Hosanna to the son of David!' they were indignant and said to him, 'Do you hear what these are saying?' And Jesus said to them, 'Yes. ⁵ Do you not ever read, "*Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants you have perfected praise*"?' Then he left them and went out of the city to Bethany, and he lodged there."

The religious leaders are totally upset. They see Jesus allowing the young boys to say, "Hosanna to the son of David!" and yet observe that he does not fit their image of who the Messiah is to be. Jesus did not fit their mold.

(18) "Now in the morning, as he returned to the city, he was hungry. And seeing a fig tree by the road, he came to it and found nothing on it but leaves, and said to it, 'Let no fruit grow on you ever again.' Then, the fig tree withered away. Now when the disciples saw it, they marvelled, saying, 'How did the fig tree wither away so soon?' So Jesus answered and said to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith and do not waver, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but also if you say to this mountain, "*Be removed and be cast into the sea*", it will be done; and all that you should be requesting in ⁶ **the** prayer (the one he taught),

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having faith, you will receive.”

Jesus is referring to the prayer of reconciliation that he taught. He is not talking about using God as a “genie” or as a “sugar daddy”. Jesus invites us to reconciliation FIRST AND FOREMOST. Once God confirms our reconciliation, LOOK OUT! Just as ⁷ he said earlier, “For MANKIND it is impossible, but for GODKIND anything is possible.” And as ⁸ was mentioned in chapter 17, a mountain is any obstacle standing in the way of my reconciliation.

In the illustration of the fruitless fig tree, Jesus is expressing the vanity of not bearing fruit.

(23) “Now when he came into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people confronted him as he was teaching, and said, ‘By what authority are you doing these things? And who gave you this authority?’ But Jesus answered and said to them, ‘I also will ask you one thing, which if you tell me, I likewise will tell you by what authority I do these things: the baptism of John, where was it from? From heaven or from men?’ And they reasoned among themselves, saying, ‘If we say, “From heaven”, he will say to us, “Why then did you not believe him?” But if we say, “From men”, we fear the crowds, for they all consider John a prophet.’ So they answered Jesus and said, ‘We do not know.’ And he said to them, ‘Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things’.”

Relentlessly, Jesus is pointing out the contrast between the heavenly realm and the earthly realm.

(28) “ ‘But what do you think? A man had two children, and he came to the first one and said, “Child, go, work today in my vineyard.” He answered and said, “I will not”; but afterward he regretted it and went. Then he came to the second and said likewise. And he answered and said, “I go, sir”; but he did not go. Which of the two did the will of the father?’ They said to him, ‘The first.’ Jesus said to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you that tax collectors and prostitutes enter the kingdom of God **before** you. For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him; but tax collectors and prostitutes believed him; and when you saw it, you did not afterward relent and believe him.

(33) Hear another parable: there was a certain householder who plants a vineyard and sets a hedge around it, digs a winepress in it, and builds a tower. And he leases it to vinedressers and travels abroad. Now when vintage-time draws near, he sends a delegation of slaves to the vinedressers to collect his fruit. And the vinedressers take his slaves, beat one, kill one, and stone another. Again he dispatches more slaves, and they do likewise to them. Then last of all he sends his son to them, saying, “They will respect my son”. But when the vinedressers see the son, they say to themselves, “This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and have his inheritance.” Upon taking him, they throw him out of the vineyard and kill him. Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vinedressers?’ They say to him, ‘He will violently destroy those violent men, and will lease his vineyard to other vinedressers who will render to him the fruits in their seasons.’

(42) Jesus says to them, ‘Do you never read in the scriptures ⁹: “*The stone which the builders reject was intended to be the chief corner stone. This was the Lord’s purpose, and it is bewildering in our eyes*”? Consequently, I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing its fruit. And whoever falls on this stone will be broken; upon whomever this befalls, it will winnow him.’ Now when the chief priests and Pharisees heard his parables, they perceived that he was speaking of them. But when they sought to lay hands on him, they feared the crowds because they considered him a prophet.”

The Parable of the Vinedressers is extremely significant. It has haunted me for many years until I finally accepted its real meaning.

In church, I was taught and it was assumed that the vinedressers represented Israel and its role as keepers of God's Word. She was the one with whom God was relating for the purpose of revealing Himself to the world. Over the years, God sent prophets to Israel to collect something from her. What it was that God wanted to collect wasn't perfectly clear to me at the time. I just knew that it was something that the Jews weren't giving up or yielding to Him. According to the biblical account, Israel rejected, abused, and even killed the prophets. So it was easy to interpret this parable to mean that the stewardship of the vineyard was taken away from the Jews and entrusted to the christian church. At least that is what they taught me. But more recently, as a result of intense searching and requesting, I am compelled to conclude that Jesus was foretelling something that was yet to come, or more exactly, BE REPEATED.

It is true that Israel, over the centuries before Jesus, did in fact withhold something from God. It is true that the message being brought by one prophet after another appeared to be the same in substance: repent, surrender, obey My voice, return to Me, and so on. And the gut reaction of every generation of Israel was the same. With the exception of certain individuals, they actually THOUGHT and were CONVINCED that these prophets were erroneous. They were lunatics. Why? Because the Jews thought that THERE WAS NOTHING WRONG WITH ISRAEL, WITH ITS RELIGION and its lifestyle, and that there was no reason to repent. They dismissed the prophets as charlatans. Contrary to modern interpretation, Israel was ALWAYS "worshiping" the God of Abraham and of Moses. They weren't worshiping strange gods. Generally, they were worshiping Yehovah, the God who took them out of Egypt. And that is why they were totally confused when prophets would come to them and tell them that they were in fact NOT doing so.

In the days of Jesus, the religious leaders did not see themselves in any way in error. They were the ones who were right and they were worshiping God properly. Jesus, and whoever contradicted them, were in error. In fact, the religious mindset prevailing in that day dictated key points that caused the religious leaders to condemn Jesus. One extremely important point was that, according to the religious, NO MAN COULD PLEASE GOD. That religious mindset is still paramount today. Another key point in the religious mentality was that NO MAN COULD BE GOD'S SON. It is all summarized in the Jewish religious mindset that ONLY GOD COULD PLEASE HIMSELF. This is still alive today. The best that could be hoped for is to keep key ceremonies and traditions alive until God comes to claim the world for Himself.

The Jews were waiting for a messiah in the days of Jesus. They have been waiting for a messiah ever since even to this day. But like two thousand years ago, he must fulfill their set of predetermined expectations and criteria before being accepted.

I then compared this list of characteristics to those of the Church, and I was made to realize clearly that the christian church is an extension of old Israel, even to this day. I was compelled to come to some key conclusions with life shaking consequences. After attentively listening to John and Matthew and absorbing the key themes revealed throughout, I had to conclude that I had to repent of being one of those wicked vinedressers. I was made to see that I, along with the church, was in fact guilty of conspiring AFTER THE FACT in the death of Jesus the Anointed, the embodiment of the Son of Man, the son of God. I was made to see that, along with the Church, I HAD TO BE GLAD THAT JESUS the INNOCENT WAS KILLED in order to derive some kind of heavenly benefit, thus making me a co-conspirator. I was claiming to benefit from the commission of a serious crime. I had to repent of the ¹⁰ SHEDDING OF INNOCENT BLOOD by extension.

As a Christian, like the Jews, I was required to see God unsatisfiable by any man. This is why the prevailing view of Jesus is that he was in fact not a man, but the embodiment of God Himself come to earth in order to fulfill His own unreasonable expectations. Like the Jews, I had to see God as being "unreasonable". I had to see that only the "perfect sacrifice" provided by God Himself could satisfy His own unreasonable demands. But I, unlike the Jews, recognized God's demanded perfect sacrifice to be in the body of His son, Jesus of Nazareth. I was made to see that the Jews **do not recognize** Jesus as the Messiah, as God's son. Therefore the Jews CANNOT TRULY FULFILL THE DESCRIPTION IN THE PARABLE OF THE WICKED VINEDRESSERS.

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The Jews do not claim the “inheritance” by knowingly benefiting from the death of the son of the vineyard owner. As far as the Jews are concerned, there is yet to be a messiah of some kind. They don’t really know clearly for what they are waiting. They just “know” that they will recognize him when they see him, just like what the Christians say pertaining to Christ’s “return”. They will know him when they see him.

I had to decisively repent of that condition and mindset. It was most traumatic to me because I didn’t know what to do with it after that. I was telling myself, “How could the whole Church be so staunchly anchored in error? How could this possibly be? What am I to do with this? I am apparently all alone in a christian universe. I cannot be correct. There must be something wrong with me and my thinking. How could billions of Christians over the centuries be wrong? And yet, strangely enough, I can’t help but see that the Church is not unanimous and in total agreement. There is a definite problem within the Church. I just didn’t know what it was until more recently after which time God decided to open up the truth to me about His son, His gospel message, and His heavenly mindset.

Chapter 21 footnotes:

¹ Zechariah 9(9) Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he *is* just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.

² Psalm 118(26) Blessed *be* he that cometh in the name of the LORD: we have blessed you out of the house of the LORD.

³ 2Samuel chapter 6.

⁴ Isaiah 56(7) Even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: their burnt offerings and their sacrifices *shall be* accepted upon mine altar; for mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people.

Jeremiah 7(8) Behold, ye trust in lying words, that cannot profit.

(9) Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense unto Baal, and walk after other gods whom ye know not;

(10) And come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, We are delivered to do all these abominations?

(11) Is this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? Behold, even I have seen *it*, saith the LORD.

⁵ Psalm 8(2) Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger.

⁶ Matthew 6(7) (DfG) But when you pray, do not babble on and on as the foreigners do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words.

(8) Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows what you need before you even ask him.

(9) In this manner, therefore, pray: our Father in heaven, let us hallow Your name;

(10) let us be of Your kingdom; let us do Your will here on earth as it is being done in heaven;

(11) give us this day the bread of life;

(12) and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors;

(13) And do not lead us into testing, but deliver us from the faulty.

⁷ Matthew 19(26) (DfG) But Jesus looked at them and said to them, “**For men (mankind) this is impossible, but for godkind all things are possible.**”

⁸ Matthew 17(20) (DfG) So Jesus said to them, “Because of your lack of assurance, for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faithfulness as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there’, and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you.”

⁹ Psalm 118(22) The stone *which* the builders refused is become the head *stone* of the corner.
(23) This is the LORD's doing; *it is* marvellous in our eyes.

¹⁰ Deuteronomy 19(10) That **innocent blood** be not shed in thy land, which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance, and so **blood** (accountability) be upon thee.

Deuteronomy 19(13) Thine eye shall not pity him, but thou shalt put away the guilt (crime) of **innocent blood** from Israel, that it may go well with thee.

Deuteronomy 21(8) Be merciful, O LORD, unto thy people Israel, whom thou hast redeemed, and lay not **innocent blood** unto thy people of Israel's charge. And the **blood** (accountability) shall be forgiven them.

Deuteronomy 21(9) So shalt thou put away the guilt (crime) of **innocent blood** from among you, when thou shalt do that which is right in the sight of the LORD.

1Samuel 19(5) For he did put his life in his hand, and slew the Philistine, and the LORD wrought a great salvation for all Israel: thou sawest it, and didst rejoice: wherefore (why) then wilt thou sin against **innocent blood**, to slay David without a cause?

1Kings 2(31) And the king said unto him, Do as he hath said, and fall upon him, and bury him; that thou mayest take away the (crime of shedding) **innocent blood**, which Joab shed, from me, and from the house of my father.

2Kings 21(16) Moreover Manasseh ("causing to forget") shed **innocent blood** very much, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another; beside his sin wherewith he made Judah to sin, in doing that which was evil in the sight of the LORD.

Psalms 94(21) They gather themselves together against the soul of the righteous, and condemn the **innocent blood**.

Psalms 106(38) And shed **innocent blood**, even the **blood** of their sons and of their daughters, whom they sacrificed unto the idols of Canaan: and the land was polluted with **blood** (accountability).

Proverbs 6(16) These six *things* doth the LORD hate: yea, seven *are* an abomination unto him:

(17) A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed **innocent blood**,

(18) An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief,

(19) A false witness *that* speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren.

(20) My son, keep thy father's commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother:

(21) Bind them continually upon thine heart, *and* tie them about thy neck.

Isaiah 59(7) Their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed **innocent blood**: their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity; wasting and destruction are in their paths.

Jeremiah 7(6) If ye oppress not the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, and shed not **innocent blood** in this place, neither walk after other gods to your hurt:

(7) Then will I cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers, for ever and ever.

(8) Behold, ye trust in lying words, that cannot profit.

Jeremiah 22(3) Thus saith the LORD; Execute ye judgment and righteousness, and deliver the spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor: and do no wrong, do no violence to the stranger, the fatherless, nor the widow, neither shed **innocent blood** in this place.

Jeremiah 22(17) But thine eyes and thine heart are not but for thy covetousness, and for to shed **innocent blood**, and for oppression, and for violence, to do it.

Jeremiah 26(15) But know ye for certain, that if ye put me to death, ye shall surely bring **innocent blood** upon yourselves, and upon this city, and upon the inhabitants thereof: for of a truth the LORD hath sent me unto you to speak all these words in your ears.

Joel 3(19) Egypt shall be a desolation, and Edom shall be a desolate wilderness, for the violence against the children of Judah, because they have shed **innocent blood** in their land.

Jonah 1(14) Wherefore they cried unto the LORD, and said, We beseech thee, O LORD, we beseech thee, let us not perish for this man's life, and lay not upon us **innocent blood**: for thou, O LORD, hast done as it pleased thee.

Chapter 22

(1) "In further reply, Jesus again says to them in parables, 'The kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who arranges a wedding feast for his son. He dispatches his slaves to call the invited to the wedding feast; and they were not willing to come. Again, he sends out other slaves, saying, "Tell the invited, 'See, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and my fatted cattle have been slaughtered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding feast'." But they made light of it and went their own way, one to his farm, another to his business. And the rest seize his slaves, mistreat, and kill them. Then the king is furious, and dispatching his troops, he destroys those murderers, and torches their city'."

Here again we encounter the contrast between the heavenly mindset and the earthly. If God is the king in this parable, who is the son? Is it Jesus of Nazareth in isolation? Who were the messengers sent to summon the invited to the wedding feast? Historically, God, the king, has sent numerous messengers to Israel (and beyond as well) to invite them to something. Israel, from generation to generation, has resisted this invitation. But what was this invitation being relentlessly sent by the king? Based upon the gospel message of Jesus, this invitation again was the one to "come home". "Stop wandering aimlessly in your independence. Come to the wedding feast of the son (of man)." We have the preconceived notion that the son was an individual marrying an individual bride. That is our preconceived prejudice. But as Jesus was teaching, the "son of man" was at first a theoretical concept before Jesus was ever born. He was there FROM THE BEGINNING in God's mind. The "son of man" was the wish, the desire that God had for Adam-kind since his creation. So in this parable, Jesus is suggesting the wedding CONCEPT be applied to this situation. Jesus was inviting us to see ourselves LIKE A BRIDE leaving behind our former life in adopting the new life and new identity in the new household. We, mankind, the invited to the wedding feast, are not invited to be guests to someone else's wedding, but rather to participate in OUR OWN WEDDING.

That is what mankind has been resisting from the beginning. Man has continually sought to be the GROOM, and not the BRIDE. Man has continually sought to build his OWN HOUSE rather than be part of someone else's house. That is why, in the book of Genesis, ¹ God declares that "man is INDEED FLESH". Therefore we can say that Jesus was the FIRST to fully respond to the invitation, to become THE BRIDE himself. And he was repeating the invitation to all those around him to do likewise as "son of man".

(8) " 'Then he said to his slaves, "The wedding is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy. Therefore go to the outskirts, and as many as you find, invite to the wedding feast." Therefore those slaves go out into the outskirts and assemble all whom they find, both faulty and good. And the wedding hall is filled with guests. But when the king came in to meet the guests, he sees there a man who is not wearing a wedding garment. So he says to him, "Fellow, how did get in without a wedding garment?" And he was speechless. Then the king says to the servants, "Bind him hand and foot and cast him into outer darkness"; there will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. **For many are invited, but few accept the invitation**'."

I need to note here that this last statement is usually translated, "For many are called, but few are chosen." In the Greek, I have found that not only does it mean, "For many are invited (called), but few accept the invitation (qualify)", but that this statement also MAKES PERFECT SENSE, especially within the context in which it is being said.

There are two distinct aspects to this parable. First of all, there is the broadcast invitation to come. All those who responded to the invitation came. All the others stayed away. And since most of the originally invited did not come, the king extended the invitation to include others who were not originally invited.

We have traditionally understood this to mean that Israel was the original one to be invited but refused to come. So God extended His invitation to the Gentiles, to whoever would come to the “wedding feast”.

The second aspect of the parable is the “wedding garment”. The celebration hall is filled, but one is found to be wearing something other than the proper “wedding garment”. And that one is thrown out. So Jesus is suggesting that it is not enough to just respond to the invitation and come to the “wedding feast”, but it must be on the king’s (God’s) terms and conditions which are represented by the “wedding garment”.

From where we come is of no real consequence in God’s view. But in our own view, we often have the attitude of entitlement. We are being told that there is no entitlement and that ² God is not a respecter of persons. He is perfectly fair and just. He treats everyone exactly the same, based on exactly the same rules of conduct and condition. ³ God works with the principle of “whoever exalts himself will be abased, but whoever abases himself will be exalted”. When we presume that we can “enter the kingdom of God” on our own terms, we are reminded in no unclear terms of our erroneous mindset: “There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth.” That is the unequivocal symptom of not being in the “wedding feast wearing the proper wedding garment.”

(15) “Then the Pharisees went and plotted how they might entrap him in word. They sent to him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, ‘Teacher, we know that you are truthful, and teach the way of God in truth; nor do you concern yourself with anyone for you are not out to impress men. Tell us, therefore, what do you think? Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?’ But Jesus perceived their deviousness, and said, ‘Why do you test me, you phonies? Show me that tax money.’ So they brought him a denarius. And he said to them, ‘Who’s image and inscription is this?’ They said to him, ‘Caesar’s.’ And he said to them, ‘Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.’ When they had heard these words, they marvelled, and left him and went their way.”

Jesus undoes their devious trap by again highlighting the difference between the heavenly and the earthly. He in fact turns it around on them by asking them where their heart is: is it with the earthly, or is it with the heavenly?

(23) “The same day the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to him and asked him, saying, ‘Teacher, Moses said that if a man dies having no children, his brother shall marry his wife and raise up offspring for his brother. Now there were with us seven brothers. The first one died after he had married, and having no offspring, left his wife to his brother. Likewise the second also, and the third, even to the seventh. And last of all the woman died also.

(28) Therefore, in the resurrection, who’s wife of the seven shall she be? For they all had her.’ Jesus answered and said to them, ‘You are mistaken, not knowing the scriptures nor the purpose of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven. But concerning the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was ⁴ spoken to you by God, saying, “*I am the god of Abraham, the god of Isaac, the god of Jacob*”? God is not the god of the dead, but of the living.’ And when the crowds heard this, they were astonished at his teaching.”

Once again, Jesus is highlighting the contrast between the heavenly and the earthly mindsets. The earthly is only the “stage” upon which the story unfolds. It is not the story itself. It has no value in itself. It is only the tool or vehicle for intangibles to be expressed, and minds to make themselves known. So Jesus is pointing this out in a skillful way. He points out the true meaning of life, and its true purpose. Man’s intended purpose is not to remain in the flesh. Yet man insists on imposing his earthly mindset upon God and the heavenly mindset. Jesus is saying that the human practice of marriage is NOT a heavenly institution. It is of the flesh and used only for the purpose

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of learning about the heavenly. It is not an objective as far as God is concerned. It is a type, a template, a tool for analogy. But ⁵ God has a plan that far exceeds our own plans. We are invited to adopt His plan, His point of view, His mindset and His reality. In heaven, God is Supreme. He has no one above Him. He answers to no one. In His heavenly realm, He is the Father of all. And we, as children, adopt WHATEVER He decides. We can have no preconceptions nor reservations when entering into the reconciled state with Him. If we do, we can NEVER be reconciled. We remain on the outside unable to look in. We are outside where there is wailing and gnashing of teeth. In other words, within the context of ETERNITY, God has a plan for us that we either receive, or reject wholesale. We cannot bring our own plans "to the table". We only bring ourselves to the "feast table" and we are to eat that which we are "fed".

It is also interesting to note that, in the very law pertaining to the brother taking his brother's widow as wife, it was with the expressed purpose of siring offspring FOR THE DECEASED BROTHER. This shows how God does not value biological lineage.

(34) "But when the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. Then one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question, testing him, and saying, 'Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?' Jesus said to him, ' *"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind."* ⁶ This is the great and foremost commandment. And the second is akin to it: *"You shall love your neighbour as yourself."* ⁷ Upon these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets'."

Of all the things that Jesus was quoted to have said, this is probably the most important, striking and the most offensive to our human nature. It addresses the core of man and asks him, "Do you love God with all of your emotions, with all of your identity, and with all of your decision making faculty?" In other words, we are being asked if we VALUE and CHERISH God's FAVOR with our ENTIRE BEING. And if I proceed beyond that, if I in fact love God with my entirety, what love is there left in me for anyone or anything else besides God? This is crucial in understanding who Jesus was, and in understanding just how jealous God really is. God will not settle for "second fiddle". Am I prepared, with complete understanding, to make God's approval my everything, my SOLE objective? That is the very issue to which Jesus was bringing our attention. And it was this very spirit (concept) which guided Jesus' everyday life.

I, as a man myself, know that I DO NOT LOVE GOD with all of my being. I am saying this with honesty and reality in mind. But I do wish to eventually get to that place where I can honestly say that I love Him perfectly. I am committed to the idea. And as I learn from day to day, I get a deeper grasp of what loving God really means. I can not presumptuously and arrogantly say to God, "I love you." In fact, the only person that can and will tell me if I genuinely love God is God Himself, either directly and personally, or through His appointed representative.

But one thing that has been driving me for so many years is the ⁸ "spirit of truth" of which Jesus told his disciples. To me, the "spirit of truth" is another way of saying, the "drive for authenticity, the hunger for that which is real and genuine". I will not settle for a pseudo-god, nor can I afford to settle for a pseudo-gospel, a false teaching which brings a false sense of security in regards to my relationship with the real God and the real Christ. I want to be genuinely reconciled with God. I do want to be a genuine and authentic son of God. What more is there?

And if I have no love for anyone else, what then? If I love God with my whole being, God will simply respond by acknowledging me as His own. And this reconciliation, which is promised if I fulfill my part, will result in my being like Jesus and having a similar status as he had. And then and only then will God the Father use me to shower those around me with His love. I will then be a channel of His peace, an extension of His love. Those with whom I will relate will experience God's love through me, not my own. God will not cater to anyone. He will not change Himself in any way "in order to save some". God is firm in His position. Either we accept Him on His terms, or we don't. Let us not play games by trying to make Him be, say or do anything that He isn't, or didn't. We do those things. We do create for ourselves false images of God in our own minds only to cater to our own wishes and nature. But in the end, it is all in vain. He says to us, "I never knew you; depart from

me, ye who practice lawlessness!" Love can only be "reconciliation and peace with God".

(41) "While the Pharisees were assembled, Jesus asked them, saying, 'What do you think about the Christ? Who's son is he?' They said to him, 'The son of David.' He said to them, 'How then does ⁹ David inspired call him "Lord", saying, "The LORD said to my lord, *Sit at my right hand, till I make your enemies your footstools*"? If David then calls him "Lord", how is he his son?' And no one was able to answer him a word, nor from that day on did anyone dare question him any more."

Here again, Jesus is making a powerful statement highlighting the contrast between the heavenly and the earthly. Jesus trapped his detractors. Because they were stuck in the flesh and the earthly mindset, they could only perceive a biological man termed "the anointed" to come from the seed of David. What Jesus was pointing to was not a man, but rather "the anointing from God." A son cannot be considered lord of his father, for this is contrary to God's word and intent. So what or who did David see in inspiration? Traditionally, Christians have interpreted this to be Jesus the Christ before having been born to Mary and Joseph. But in reality Jesus was referring to the "son of man", as I mentioned earlier. The "son of man", the "anointed", is God's theoretical ideal of His son that pre-existed the very creation of mankind. It is the theoretical type and template that Adam was invited to adopt, emulate, and ultimately, be. This is what David saw, inspired by God to express in a song. The contrast between the heavenly and the earthly...

Chapter 22 footnotes:

¹ Genesis 6(1) (DfH) And it came to pass, when the man (mankind) began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto him, (2) That the son (descent) of the Elohim saw that through daughters the man that *was* good themselves; and he took to him wives of all which he chose (the human institution of marriage as practiced today). (3) And the LORD said, My spirit shall not judge (contend) always in man IN HIS ERRING; *he is* flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years. (Adam and his sons saw that the family of man, the creation, had an innate value which excluded God in his evaluation: Family Values?!)

² Acts 10(34) Then Peter opened *his* mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: (35) But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.

³ Matthew 23(12) ***And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.***

⁴ Exodus 3(6) Moreover he said, I *am* the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God.

⁵ Isaiah 64(4) For since the beginning of the world *men* have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, *what* he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him.

⁶ Deuteronomy 6(5) And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.

⁷ Leviticus 19(18) Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I *am* the LORD.

⁸ John 14(17) Even the **Spirit of truth** (AUTHENTICITY); whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you (in Jesus), and shall be in you.

John 15(26) But when the Comforter (SUMMONS) is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the **Spirit of truth**, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:

John 16(13) Howbeit when he, the **Spirit of truth**, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

⁹ Psalm 110(1)

Chapter 23

As a beginning note, ¹ Matthew was a tax collector. And in those days, Jewish tax collectors were considered traitors by the Jewish society and were ² utterly shunned by them, particularly the religious leaders who were in fact disguised *nationalists* whose primary goal was the establishment of the *sovereign* state of Israel. This following chapter is Jesus' rebuke of religion and those religious leaders as seen through Matthew's eyes.

(1) "Then Jesus spoke to the crowds and to his disciples, saying, 'The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat, therefore whatever they tell you observe and do, but do not do like them; for they say, and do not do. For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not budge them with one of their fingers. But all their works, they do to be seen by men. They make their phylacteries broad and enlarge the fringes'."

Here is a very important but cryptic clue upon which the gospel of the kingdom is based. Jesus is instructing his disciples, Jewish common people of his day, to do what the leaders SITTING IN MOSES' SEAT tell them to do, but to not BE like them. The leaders were the keepers of God's word, therefore they were to do what they told them to do IN ORDER TO PRACTICE HUMILITY before God. This very concept at first glance is confusing, but is addressed in detail in the last section called "Going Back To Basics".

He is remarking how the religious leaders do nothing as far as genuinely seeking reconciliation with God. Their religious pretenses are exclusively POLITICAL in nature. They were trying to impress people and only people.

(6) " 'They love the best places at the feasts, the best seats in the assemblies, greetings in the market places, and to be called by men, "Rabbi, rabbi." But you, do not be called 'Rabbi', for one is your teacher, and you are all brethren. Do not choose for yourself as father anyone on earth, for one is your father the heavenly one. Neither should you be called leaders, because one is your leader, the Christ. But the greater of you will himself be a servant. And whoever exalts himself will be abased, and he who humbles himself will be exalted'."

Here is another passage that has been generally misunderstood over the years. Using the model of the Vine as mentioned in John chapter 15, what is Jesus saying? I see Jesus saying that we are not to appoint FOR OURSELVES many teachers, or even our heavenly father upon the earth. In other words, I am to ask God to reveal to me my appointed anointed apostle who is my "heavenly father", my "christ", my "rabbi", God's delegated "branch" to which I am to be attached in the Vine of Christ. I am to be attached only to **one** branch and only one, **not several**. And if perchance God sees fit to appoint me as an apostle for someone else as a disciple, it is not for religious formality nor for a title, but rather as the role of teacher, the function as guide, the example, a branch of the vine from which an "offshoot" may sprout, be engendered.

(13) " 'But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, phonies! For you shut up the kingdom of heaven from men; for you neither go in yourselves, nor do you allow to enter those who would enter'."

³ We've already touched on this earlier. "Whosoever you bind on earth shall be having been bound in heaven; whosoever you loose on earth shall be having been loosed in heaven." This condition, I have found, continues even to this day throughout the world. As said earlier, if the genuine gospel is withheld from others, they are **bound** to stay in ignorance and torment. But if the genuine gospel is made available to others, not only in theory but in reality, then they have the opportunity to be loosed from darkness and erring and to be brought into the Light.

(14) (This verse is absent in older texts)

(15) “ ‘Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, phonies! For you travel land and sea to make one convert, and when he is converted, you make him a son of Gehenna a **duplicate** of yourselves’.”

You will notice that I use the word “phonies” where they traditionally use “hypocrites”. The Greek word, “hupocratos”, literally means: “under scrutiny”. It is the word that was used to mean “actors” who play parts in plays. It did NOT mean “one who contradicts himself”. He was a pretender.

And after that, Jesus is condemning the practice of proselytizing. As Jesus was teaching his disciples, the gospel was one of reconciliation with the Father through discipleship, not religious conversion as in adopting sets of beliefs and rituals, particularly of lists of goods and evils. Religious leaders would convert Gentiles to “Judaism”, which was for them a religion, not a family to which they could belong where the convert had only one parent, one “heavenly father” to whom he was answerable and who took full responsibility for him before God. Jesus was the personal sponsor for his disciples before God. He took full responsibility for his offspring. Again, this will be addressed fully in the last section, “Going Back To Basics”.

(16) “ ‘Woe to you, blind guides, who say, “Whoever swears by the temple, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gold of the temple, he is obliged to fulfil.” Fools and blind! For which is greater, the gold or the temple which sanctifies the gold? And, “Whoever swears by the altar, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gift that is on it, he is obliged to perform it.’ Fools and blind! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that sanctifies the gift? Therefore he who swears by the altar, swears by it and by all things on it. He who swears by the temple swears by it and by Him who dwells therein. And he who swears by heaven, swears by the throne of God and by Him who sits on it’.”

Jesus mentioned this earlier. The practice of “swearing” was simply the act of “making a promise by oath with the unsaid calling upon one’s self the calamity from God if the promise is not fulfilled by that person.” Jesus is here pointing out how the religious leaders declare the creation more important and more valid than the Creator. “Heaven and earth...”

(23) “ ‘Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, phonies! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cumin, and discard the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you are required to do, and the others not to discard. Blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel!

(25) Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, phonies! For you cleanse the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full due to robbery and excesses. Blind Pharisee, first cleanse the inside of the cup and dish, that the outside of them may be cleansed.

(27) Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, phonies! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men’s bones and all uncleanness. Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of phoniness and lawlessness’.”

Jesus is simply pointing out how the religious leaders were obsessed with the appearance of righteousness in the flesh before men while not pursuing the genuine reconciliation with God the Father. If they were committed to pleasing God, they would concern themselves with the inside, not with outside appearances to impress people. If God were real to them, they would personally listen to God and heed what He has to say in order to effect reconciliation and peace with Him.

(29) “ ‘Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, phonies! Because you build up the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous, and say, ‘If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets’. Therefore you are witnesses against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. And you, accept

your share in your fathers' guilt'."

This again is somewhat cryptic. What is Jesus saying? First of all, the practice of memorializing the prophets is a practice that continues to this day. We can go to the "graveyard" where all of the prophets of old have been "buried". We go to the Bible and to religious assembly services of all kinds, and we can find all of the prophets "memorialized". In other words, we will read and listen to the words of the prophets as we listen to entertainers and music. Yet when it comes to actually hearing their words and actually putting them into practice, we fall short. Jesus was pointing this out and inviting all to repent of this very practice, the practice of NOT PAYING ATTENTION AND HEEDING THE WORDS OF THE PROPHETS, the bearers of the Words of God. By not heeding their words, we "keep the prophets in the state of non-life". Today, by not heeding the words of Jesus and putting them into practice, we "**keep him in his grave**".

(33) "**'Serpents, brood of vipers! How can you escape the judgment of Gehenna? Accordingly, look! I send you prophets, wise men, and scribes: some of them you will kill and put on stake, and some of them you will scourge in your assemblies and persecute from city to city, that on you may fall all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel, to the blood of Zechariah son of Berechiah, whom ye murdered between the temple and the altar. Assuredly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation.**

(37) *Oh Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! See! Your house is left to you desolate; for I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, ⁴ "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD"! "*

Here, Jesus is caught up in the spirit of prophecy. He finds himself speaking the words of God as a prophet. And on God's behalf, Jesus is warning God's people of what is inevitably going to happen as a result of their steadfast rejection of God. And He is declaring unequivocally, "I say to you that you will not see Me (God) anymore until you recognize and accept that I operate by sending spokesmen or delegates to you! You will NOT see Me until which time you accept and receive WHOMEVER I SEND to you. Until then, you remain children of Gehenna, in the place where children are sacrificed to false gods, the place of torment and destruction."

We have remained in this condition of hell and torment since we have outright replaced Jesus' message with a counter-gospel which preaches the substitution death of Jesus in the place of others. We invoke his blood upon us bringing his blood-guilt upon us because we claim the role and condition of conspirator in Jesus' unrighteous and unjust execution. Whoever is glad that Jesus was killed in his place and claims his blood upon himself is numbered among the murderers. The consequence is ⁵ BLOOD-GUILT. As long as we cling to the "benefit" derived from the unfair death of God's son, we cling to our condition of hell and alienation from God.

But, not all is lost. It is not the end. We need not remain in this state forever before God. We are invited to repent of our blood-guilt. As Jesus said at the beginning of this gospel, "The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent therefore and believe the PROPER GUIDANCE (gospel)." Whoever desires reconciliation and the necessary precondition of righteousness, let him ask, and he will receive. God is merciful but fair. He has committed Himself to forgive us our erring when we genuinely repent. As He says above, when we receive whomever God sends to us, and do not reject him, we will eventually be fully reconciled with Him. Until then, we will continue being ⁶ scattered sheep going each our own separate way wandering around in the wilderness only to be eaten by predators.

Chapter 23 footnotes:

¹ Matthew 9(9) And as Jesus passed forth from thence, he saw a man, named Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he saith unto him, *Follow me*. And he arose, and followed him.

² Matthew 9(10) And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans (tax collectors) and sinners came and sat down with him and his disciples.

(11) And when the Pharisees saw *it*, they said unto his disciples, Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners?

(12) But when Jesus heard *that*, he said unto them, *They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick*.

(13) *But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance*.

³ Matthew 16(19) and Matthew 18(18).

⁴ Psalm 118(22) The stone *which* the builders refused is become the head *stone* of the corner.

(23) This is the LORD's doing; *it is* marvellous in our eyes.

(24) *This is* the day *which* the LORD hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.

(25) Save now, I beseech thee, O LORD: O LORD, I beseech thee, send now prosperity.

(26) Blessed *be* he that cometh in the name of the LORD: we have blessed you out of the house of the LORD.

(27) God *is* the LORD, which hath shewed us light: bind the sacrifice with cords, *even* unto the horns of the altar.

⁵ There is a long list of scriptures pertaining to bloodshed and blood-guilt in Matthew chapter 21, footnote ¹⁰.

⁶ Isaiah 53(6) (DfH) All of us like sheep go astray; we have turned each man to his own way; and the LORD hath impinged in him with the iniquity of us all.

Chapter 24

(1) "Then Jesus went out and departed from the temple, and his disciples came to him to show him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said to them, 'Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down'."

The disciples were marveling at the temple's construction. But Jesus turned their focus from the earthly to the heavenly. "This physical temple is temporal. It is temporary and of limited purpose and duration. Focus on the eternal, the heavenly."

We could also hear between the lines that Jesus was referring to the abolition of religious traditions, practices, formalities and customs. Matthew is corroborated pertaining to this very same thing when Jesus is speaking with the Samaritan woman in ¹ John chapter 4.

(3) "Now as he sat on the mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, saying, 'Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of your advent, and of the conclusion of the age?' And Jesus answered, and said to them, 'Take heed that no one mislead you. **For many will come acknowledging that I am the anointed, and yet mislead many.**'"

It is utterly crucial that we understand what Jesus is saying. He is not talking about people going around claiming to be Christ. No. He was directly warning against those who would actually claim that Jesus is the Christ, yet mislead many. How? By **MISREPRESENTING** Jesus Christ. There will be MANY who will go about preaching a FALSE GOSPEL claiming it to be the genuine gospel. Many will go about preaching a Jesus Christ who NEVER EXISTED IN REALITY, but rather a FICTIONAL, MAN-MADE JESUS CHRIST. This is a crucial precursor to the very next verses:

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(6) 'And you will witness verbal wars and hear of wars. See that you are not troubled; for these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For community will rise up against community, and kingdom rise up against kingdom. (substitution?) And there will be famines, and shake-ups in various places. But all these are the origin of anguish.'

Jesus is referring to conflict. The mindset of man is conflicted. Therefore, prior to the resolution of God's plan, man must experience conflict of all kinds. In other words, until man acknowledges and receives God and His will for man, man will inevitably remain in PERPETUAL conflict. There can be no resolution outside of surrender to God.

(9) 'Then they will beside-give (misrepresent) you into tribulation and kill you, and you ² will be hated by all communities on account of my name.'

John said the very same thing. "They will distort who you are. They will not see you for who you are or what you are doing. They will bring upon everyone tribulation by "killing you" (erasing you from public view hence depriving you of influence)." How? By changing the disciples' identity, by replacing their real identity with a false, man-made one. And by changing their identity, they bring upon the world a prolonged age of tribulation and conflict which COULD HAVE BEEN AVOIDED had the world received them WITHOUT CHANGING THEM. I am sorry. But man has only one choice to make: continue "killing" Christ (through misrepresentation) or receive him UNDEFILED. But the choice is not without consequence. If man persists in his endeavor of "killing and persecuting" Christ, he is headed to greater and greater "hell" (torment). God has been merciful and has given man time for learning and repentance. But it is now time for FINAL JUDGEMENT to begin. It is now time for man to be made aware of his perpetual condition. And the time of misrepresentation will NO LONGER BE TOLERATED by God. Why? Because Jesus said that after two days, he (son of man) was to COME BACK TO LIFE. That is extremely important.

(10) 'And then many will be stumbled, and will beside-give (hand over or present) one another, and ³ will hate one another. Then many false prophets will rise up and mislead many.'

How does one recognize a false prophet? That is a difficult question to answer. It is the primary concern on everyone's mind, Christians and non-Christians alike. From God's point of view in the Old Testament, a prophet is one who has a true and authentic message from God to relay to others. A false prophet would be one claiming to have a message from God but is not true and authentic.

What I am doing with this work is to bring to light the Jesus Christ as represented by John and by Matthew, whom I recognize as two authentic witnesses. Anything beyond that is in God's hands. Either God will vindicate His son or He will not.

(12) 'And because of the spreading lawlessness (independence), the love of many will grow cold. But this (gospel, the well-message of the kingdom) having endured, this one shall be preserved unto fulfillment.'

Jesus is consoling his disciples that the age of MISREPRESENTATION has a limited life and duration, just like the above statement about the physical temple in Jerusalem. God will, in His good time, ⁴ bring it to an end. The genuine gospel as Jesus taught his disciples will be preserved despite the world's attempt at completely subverting it.

(14) 'And it will be announced, the well-message of the kingdom, in all the inhabited (world) as a witness to all communities, and then the end will come (of this era).'

God's agenda will be completed. God will have done what He set out to do. He will ultimately CREATE ADAM IN HIS OWN IMAGE, AND THEN SAY THAT IT IS VERY GOOD, AND THEN HE WILL TAKE HIS REST.

(15) 'Therefore when you see the abomination of desolation, which was spoken through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place, (whoever reads let him understand), let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.'

What is this "abomination of desolation"? An abomination would be something abhorrent IN GOD'S VIEW, not necessarily in our view. Secondly, this abhorrent thing brings about desolation. What does he mean by desolation? Desolation means in essence "lifelessness". So again from **God's point of view**, lifelessness means "being away from and being at war with God, the Eternal One." When Adam left God by disobeying Him, he died. His connection with the Eternal Living One was SEVERED. Man's only source of life is God. Man in his independence can only be LIFELESS.

And this abhorrent thing is standing in the "holy place". The holy place could only mean "sent of God", "on behalf of the Holy One".

So this abhorrent thing that only brings death to man, or even more accurately, STANDS IN THE WAY OF PROVIDING HIM LIFE through reconciliation with God, is the COUNTER-GOSPEL, the message of SUBSTITUTION posing as the authentic gospel.

And when you are given spirit eyes to see this phenomenon, you cannot stay where you are, but rather you must "go to the mountains", which could easily mean "go to the safety of the spirit high-places". The spirit high-places to me represents the "places of authority, the genuine heavenly authority." Those who are in the high-places of heavenly authority are those who have been given their place within that region, namely Jesus and his authentic disciples.

(17) 'Let him who is on the housetop not come down to retrieve anything out of his house.'

Materially speaking it is one thing. But Jesus is mainly talking about spirit matters. What belongs in a man's (independent) house? Jesus is saying, "Bring nothing of the old with you. Leave everything behind, take up your banner, and follow me home to the Father in the heavens."

(18) 'And let him who is in the field not go back to get his outer garment. But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing in those days!'

Now why would he say that? In the flesh, being pregnant and nursing babies is the most powerful "hostage" there is for man. It is the thing that represents everything that is important and of value for man down here on earth. The mother-instinct is extremely powerful, both in the woman and in the man by extension. Jesus is instructing that when the awareness is established, one must not hesitate to leave everything behind, all of the former attachments and values, and go to the Father.

And spiritually speaking, in my view, if the analogy is applied to christian churches, woe to churches that are "giving birth" to illegitimate children. If a Christian comes to the full realization of the genuine gospel within the context of the christian church of which he is a participant, then great conflict will arise within that church.

(20) 'And pray that your flight not be during the storm but rather for rest.'

This is traditionally translated, "your flight not be during winter or on the Sabbath." It is garbled and has no clear sense here. In the Greek, it reads more accurately as I said above and it fits the context. When one experiences the revelation of the genuine gospel displacing the counter-gospel, there is an inevitable emotional storm that ensues, within and without. So Jesus is teaching to pray to be spared this storm and to be brought to the place of rest and peace: the Sabbath.

(21) 'For then there will be such great pressure (tribulation), such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be.'

I can see very clearly from my point of view what he means here. When the world is made aware of the phenomenon of the counter-gospel having displaced the genuine gospel for these two thousand years, "Armageddon" erupts. It erupts within individuals in their own personal lives, and it will be widespread and society-wide as the awareness spreads to the masses. You who are reading this very work will assuredly identify with what I am saying. Reading this chapter 24 of Matthew with this context in mind makes everything crystal-clear.

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In addition, the worldly pressures under which we live truly work against our returning to the Father. Never has there been so much power and knowledge made available to so many. The world is full of distractions, pressures AGAINST receiving the gospel and reconciliation with God.

(22) 'And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be spared; but through the called-out, those days will be shortened.'

This is usually translated as "for the sake of the elect, those days..." In the Greek text, the word used is "dia" which means "through, by means of..." And it again fits the context very beautifully. Tribulation is due to man's choice before God. And it is by man's choice of reconciliation that the age of tribulation can finally come to an end. By resisting the call, by refusing to be a "called-out", I remain in the world wherein tribulation is imposed. But by accepting the call and becoming a "called-out", not only are the days shortened for me personally, but I also stop contributing to the PROLONGING of the age of tribulation in the world as a whole by no longer promoting the very CAUSE of the tribulation. It is only THROUGH the called-out that the age of tribulation can end.

(23) 'Then if anyone says to you, "Look, here is the Christ!" or "There!" do not believe it. For false christs and false prophets will arise and show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the called-out. See, I have told you before hand.'

He is warning of a future condition which could have happened shortly after Jesus, or could have happened two thousand years after Jesus. It is a timeless statement, only a conditional, or descriptive statement.

(26) 'Therefore if they say to you, "Look, he is in the desert!" do not go there; or "Look, he is in the dispensaries!" do not believe it.'

Isn't it curious how a prominent New Testament character claimed to have gone to Arabia (the desert) and claimed to have gotten a clear picture of the gospel which has been more or less adopted throughout the world ever since. Yet, in his beginning, he persecuted the genuine disciples of Christ, and was supernaturally visited by Jesus in a vision. But what actually transpired? Jesus said, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?" He wasn't, in his mind, persecuting anyone. He was trying to "shut up" all those individuals who were living and promoting something that was not according to his mindset, his "correct" point of view. He was a Pharisee. And as far as he was concerned he was RIGHT.

At that time, he was given physical blindness to completely render him helpless. Then he was instructed to wait in town for further instruction. Three days later, Ananias was sent by Jesus to go to Saul and to give him his physical sight, and to give him the opportunity to receive Christ IN ANANIAS. Ananias was a genuine disciple of Christ, therefore making him Christ. Jesus said to Saul, "...why are you persecuting ME?" So by persecuting Ananias, Saul was persecuting Jesus. But by receiving Ananias, Saul would be receiving Jesus. But what actually happened? Eventually, a serious conflict broke out between Saul (who renamed himself Paul) and the apostles in Jerusalem. Ultimately, Saul sold a counter-gospel to the Gentiles, one that was much more desirable than the genuine gospel that the Apostles were promoting.

And what has resulted from the anti-gospel has been the springing up of countless "dispensaries", places where varying versions of the gospel are being dispensed, and "sold". Curiously enough, many Christians have named this era "the new dispensation". Hmm...

(27) 'For as the sunlight comes from the east and shines into the west, so also will be the advent of the son of man.'

Here, in the Greek, it says what it says. Just as sudden and irresistible is the sun ("astera" which means "heavenly light") when it rises in the morning, so the "son of man's" presence shall be. As mentioned earlier, the "son of man" is God's intended purpose and role for man. When God's heavenly "light" shines within a man, all darkness is dispelled and can not resist the light. And God's

light reveals the “son of man” within those to whom this light shines. The light does not flash for a brief moment like a camera flash. It stays on. It persists and cannot be quenched or stifled. Once the sun comes up, it is day and no longer ⁵ NIGHT TIME.

(28) ‘For wherever the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered together.’

I guess one could say that the carcass could be “the dead body of Christ or son of man.” The body, as mentioned earlier, can mean “the sum total of what constitutes something or someone”, such as the body of a book, or the body politic, the student body, and so on. So when equating the “son of man” as being the “body of instructions God expressed through His prophets pertaining to the process of reconciliation”, we can then say that the dead body of the son of man has been picked by the carrion eaters. In other words, Christians by and large, pick and choose little pieces of the body to heed and to adopt. We do not come to Christ and receive him completely and in whole in order to receive life through the genuine process of reconciliation which he taught through his disciples. This is a hard realization to address.

(29) ‘Consequently, with the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the purposes of the heavens will be upset.’

What is being described here is a period of time, this time of tribulation, wherein the purposes of the heavens (God’s intent) will be upset by man.

(30) ‘Then the sign of the son of man will appear in heaven, and then all the multitudes of the earth will be shocked, and **confronting the cloudiness** they will perceive the son of man with much determination and vindication.’

What could this sign be? And when he says “heaven”, does he mean “the sky”? Or is he referring to “the mind”? Jesus spoke in riddles and imagery. Jesus’ words are always spirit as he says in ⁶ John chapter 6. So if God somehow indicates and vindicates the truth of this gospel to an individual, to that one the sign of the son of man is appearing. YOU WILL KNOW IT WHEN YOU SEE IT. When God confirms this gospel to you, you will be utterly shocked, amazed, upset. And with persistence and determination, we must “confront the cloudiness” pertaining to the genuine gospel. The gospel has been subverted and covered so much that it requires much effort to “dig it up” in order to get to the truth of the matter. And the more you “dig”, the clearer the truth pertaining to the “son of man” becomes, and the “cloudiness” is dissipated.

(31) ‘And he will send his angels with a great trumpet blast, and they will gather to themselves his called-out from the four winds (that were going in all directions), from one end of heaven to another (that were completely scattered in opinions and interpretations).

(32) Now learn this parable of the fig tree: when its branch has already become tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near. So you also, when you see all these things, know that he is near, at the very door.’

When all of these things, in time, become clear to you, be reassured that the “son of man” is near, at the very door.

(34) ‘Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things are fulfilled.’

To what generation is he referring? He is referring to whoever is given to see and experience all of these aforementioned events and conditions. He is referring to the process of “son of man”, not to a specific chronological time. In other words, on the way to the Father, this is what you are inevitably going to see and experience. It is all part of the process or “journey”.

(35) ‘Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will by no means pass away.’

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Is he saying that heaven and earth will literally pass away? Or is he saying that our PERCEPTION of heaven and earth will pass away? "No matter what happens, God will show that my words are not my words, but they are those of the One who is bidding me, God." God is the sovereign one. He will back His own words. He is the one who is in fact above heaven and earth. Those are only creations, figments of His imagination. But His intent, His wish will by no means be circumvented or denied.

(36) 'But of the day and hour no one knows, no, neither the angels of heaven, nor the son, but the Father only.'

This again brings me to ⁷ Matthew chapter 16 where Jesus responds to Peter's declaration, "You are the Christ, the son of the living God." God is sovereign and He reserves the right to reveal Himself to whomever he wills. In Matthew 11(25), Jesus says, "I acknowledge, Father, lord of heaven and earth, that you have concealed these things from the wise and intellectual and have revealed them to children (open-minded)."

(37) 'For even as in the days of Noah, so will be the advent of the son of man. For as in the days preceding the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will be the advent of the son of man.'

Jesus is comparing some important things. Firstly, he is speaking of the suddenness of the appearance of the son of man. It catches us completely unaware. We don't expect it. But when God reveals Himself and His intent for man, it is most sudden. We experience a life-shaking event, a "paradigm shift" as they say. And then we can proceed with the walk of reconciliation.

Secondly, Jesus is referring to man's preoccupation with earthly, flesh matters, including man's obsession with woman and reproduction. Suddenly, we realize how vain it all was.

And the understated third aspect is just how real God and the son of man are. The presence of the son of man is as real as being swept away by a literal flood like the Boxing Day tsunami of 2005.

(40) 'At that time, two will be in the field: one will be taken along, and the other left. Two will be grinding at the mill, one will be taken along, and the other left.'

There is more than one level of interpretation for this picture. The obvious level is the literal one. Two individuals will be together somewhere in this world, but one will be granted the revelation of God and the other one won't, thus causing one to be taken along and the other one to stay behind to continue in the "earthly grind".

Another way of looking at this picture is the concept of the two gospels. Just like in the parable of the Wheat and the Tares, two will be allowed to co-exist and function side by side. But suddenly, one day, one of those gospels will be "taken along" or adopted by an individual, and the other one is left behind, forsaken and abandoned. The false gospel is the one that withholds us from going to the Father. But once the awareness of the real gospel is established within a man, he is subsequently "taken along". Suddenly, the son of man is made real within that man causing him to actually take action and do what the son of man is intended to do: "go to the Father".

(42) 'Watch therefore, for you do not know what day your lord is coming. But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. In this way also make yourselves ready, since the son of man is coming at an hour when you do not expect him.'

Jesus is only using this analogy to stress the suddenness and the unexpectedness of such an event. When the "son of man" concept is laid upon you, it will happen as suddenly and as powerfully as a thief coming in the night.

(45) 'Who then is a faithful and prudent slave, whom his master promotes over his household, to give them food in due time? Blessed is that slave whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing. Assuredly, I say to you, that he will put him in charge of all his belongings. But if that bad slave says in his heart, "My master is taking his time", and begins to beat his fellow slaves, and to eat and drink with the drunkards, the master of that slave will come on a day when he is not looking for him and at an hour that he does not expect, and will cut him in two and appoint him his share with the phonies. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth'."

To whom is Jesus referring, a faithful and prudent slave? Is he not referring to religious leaders, pastors, teachers, or whatever titles they have? They are the shepherds of the flock. Jesus is saying that the responsibility that comes with being a shepherd is great and is serious. With being a pastor, the responsibility toward the master is to feed the flock as Jesus said to Peter at the end of the gospel of John. But if a shepherd who has the responsibility of feeding the flock withholds the spirit food from the sheep, woe be to that shepherd.

After Jesus left, over time, the caretakers of the gospel lost sight of the genuine message and started to change the message with phony ones which subsequently caused a long era of torment, of "wailing and gnashing of teeth". I don't need too much intelligence or education to recognize and acknowledge that the Church has been in a horrible state for a very long time.

In ⁸ Ezekiel chapter 34 and Zechariah chapter 11, God speaks extensively about shepherds and sheep. He declares that he will suddenly dismiss all of the shepherds who were not doing their required job. They did not feed the flock but fed themselves. And God will rectify the situation.

Chapter 24 footnotes:

¹ John 4(21) Jesus saith unto her, *Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father.*

² John 15(18) *If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you.*

(19) *If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen* (Greek "eklegomai" which means to "out-speak or out-instruct") *you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.*

(20) *Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also.*

(21) *But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me.*

³ 1John 5(1) (DfG) Everyone believing that Jesus is the anointed has been begotten of God; and everyone loving the begetter is also loving the one begotten of him.

(2) When we love God and put into practice his instructions, then we know that we are loving the offspring of God.

(3) This is the love of God in order that we may put into practice his instructions and His instructions are not heavy,

(4) since all begotten of God overcome the world. And this is the means by which we overcome the world: our faithfulness.

⁴ Matthew Chapter 13, the parable of the wheat and the tares.

⁵ John 9(4) *I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.*

(5) *As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.*

⁶ John 6(63) *It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.*

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⁷ Matthew 16(17) And Jesus answered and said unto him, *Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for **flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.***

(18) *And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*

⁸ Ezekiel 34(1) And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

(2) Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD unto the shepherds; Woe *be* to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! should not the shepherds feed the flocks?

(3) Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool, ye kill them that are fed: *but* ye feed not the flock.

(4) The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up *that which was* broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost; but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them.

(5) And they were scattered, because *there is* no shepherd: and they became meat to all the beasts of the field, when they were scattered.

(6) My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and upon every high hill: yea, my flock was scattered upon all the face of the earth, and none did search or seek *after them*.

(7) Therefore, ye shepherds, hear the word of the LORD;

(8) *As* I live, saith the Lord GOD, surely because my flock became a prey, and my flock became meat to every beast of the field, because *there was* no shepherd, neither did my shepherds search for my flock, but the shepherds fed themselves, and fed not my flock;

(9) Therefore, O ye shepherds, hear the word of the LORD;

(10) Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I *am* against the shepherds; and I will require my flock at their hand, and cause them to cease from feeding the flock; neither shall the shepherds feed themselves any more; for I will deliver my flock from their mouth, that they may not be meat for them.

(11) For thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I, *even* I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out.

(12) As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep *that are* scattered; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day.

(13) And I will bring them out from the people, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land, and feed them upon the mountains of Israel by the rivers, and in all the inhabited places of the country.

(14) I will feed them in a good pasture, and upon the high mountains of Israel shall their fold be: there shall they lie in a good fold, and *in* a fat pasture shall they feed upon the mountains of Israel.

(15) I will feed my flock, and I will cause them to lie down, saith the Lord GOD.

(16) I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up *that which was* broken, and will strengthen that which was sick: but I will destroy the fat and the strong; I will feed them with judgment.

(17) And *as for* you, O my flock, thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I judge between cattle and cattle, between the rams and the he goats.

(18) *Seemeth it* a small thing unto you to have eaten up the good pasture, but ye must tread down with your feet the residue of your pastures? and to have drunk of the deep waters, but ye must foul the residue with your feet?

(19) And *as for* my flock, they eat that which ye have trodden with your feet; and they drink that which ye have fouled with your feet.

(20) Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD unto them; Behold, I, *even* I, will judge between the fat cattle and between the lean cattle.

(21) Because ye have thrust with side and with shoulder, and pushed all the diseased with your horns, till ye have scattered them abroad;

(22) Therefore will I save my flock, and they shall no more be a prey; and I will judge between cattle and cattle.

(23) And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, *even* my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd.

(24) And I the LORD will be their God, and my servant David a prince among them; I the LORD have spoken *it*.

(25) And I will make with them a covenant of peace, and will cause the evil beasts to cease out of the land: and they shall dwell safely in the wilderness, and sleep in the woods.

(26) And I will make them and the places round about my hill a blessing; and I will cause the shower to come down in his season; there shall be showers of blessing.

(27) And the tree of the field shall yield her fruit, and the earth shall yield her increase, and they shall be safe in their land, and shall know that I *am* the LORD, when I have broken the bands of their yoke, and delivered them out of the hand of those that served themselves of them.

(28) And they shall no more be a prey to the heathen, neither shall the beast of the land devour them; but they shall dwell safely, and none shall make *them* afraid.

(29) And I will raise up for them a plant of renown, and they shall be no more consumed with hunger in the land, neither bear the shame of the heathen any more.

(30) Thus shall they know that I the LORD their God *am* with them, and *that* they, *even* the house of Israel, *are* my people, saith the Lord GOD.

(31) And ye my flock, the flock of my pasture, *are* men, *and* I *am* your God, saith the Lord GOD.

Zechariah 11(1) Open thy doors, O Lebanon, that the fire may devour thy cedars.

(2) Howl, fir tree; for the cedar is fallen; because the mighty are spoiled: howl, O ye oaks of Bashan; for the forest of the vintage is come down.

(3) *There is* a voice of the howling of the shepherds; for their glory is spoiled: a voice of the roaring of young lions; for the pride of Jordan is spoiled.

(4) Thus saith the LORD my God; Feed the flock of the slaughter;

(5) Whose possessors slay them, and hold themselves not guilty: and they that sell them say, Blessed *be* the LORD; for I am rich: and their own shepherds pity them not.

(6) For I will no more pity the inhabitants of the land, saith the LORD: but, lo, I will deliver the men every one into his neighbour's hand, and into the hand of his king: and they shall smite the land, and out of their hand I will not deliver *them*.

(7) And I will feed the flock of slaughter, *even* you, O poor of the flock. And I took unto me two staves; the one I called Beauty, and the other I called Bands; and I fed the flock.

(8) Three shepherds also I cut off in one month; and my soul lothed them, and their soul also abhorred me.

(9) Then said I, I will not feed you: that that dieth, let it die; and that that is to be cut off, let it be cut off; and let the rest eat every one the flesh of another.

(10) And I took my staff, *even* Beauty, and cut it asunder, that I might break my covenant which I had made with all the people.

(11) And it was broken in that day: and so the poor of the flock that waited upon me knew that it *was* the word of the LORD.

(12) And I said unto them, If ye think good, give *me* my price; and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my price thirty *pieces* of silver.

(13) And the LORD said unto me, Cast it unto the potter: a goodly price that I was prised at of them. And I took the thirty *pieces* of silver, and cast them to the potter in the house of the LORD.

(14) Then I cut asunder mine other staff, *even* Bands, that I might break the brotherhood between Judah and Israel.

(15) And the LORD said unto me, Take unto thee yet the instruments of a foolish shepherd.

(16) For, lo, I will raise up a shepherd in the land, *which* shall not visit those that be cut off, neither shall seek the young one, nor heal that that is broken, nor feed that that standeth still: but he shall eat the flesh of the fat, and tear their claws in pieces.

(17) Woe to the idol shepherd that leaveth the flock! the sword *shall be* upon his arm, and upon his right eye: his arm shall be clean dried up, and his right eye shall be utterly darkened.

Chapter 25

(1) “ ‘Then the kingdom of heaven will be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Now five of them were prudent, and five were foolish. Those who were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them, but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and fell asleep. In the middle of the night a cry was heard: “Behold, the bridegroom; go out to meet him!”

(7) Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said to the wise, “Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.” But the wise answered, saying, “No, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.”

(10) And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut. Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, “Lord, lord, open to us!” But he answered and said, “Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.” Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.’

This parable has key points being made. The first aspect is the suggestion of “betrothal”. A virgin is not concerned with the arrival of a bridegroom unless she be betrothed. Betrothal suggests an already established “covenant” that is yet to be “consummated”. But she is beholden to her “husband” already. So it behooves her to prepare herself for her eventual transition from virgin to wife. She must comply with the terms and conditions already established and acknowledged by her.

Secondly, when the bridegroom finally comes to “take possession” of his bride, she is required to be ready, which can be symbolized in the oil of the lamp. It is not enough to have the lamp. One could say that the oil represents the authentic heavenly identity based on the authentic heavenly instruction and preparation. Being ready therefore can be described as the required transformation from the earthly identity to the heavenly identity.

The third aspect is the one where no one knows when the bridegroom is to arrive. Those waiting must be ready for his unexpected arrival because when he arrives, the bridegroom will not tolerate non-compliance to the preset terms and conditions. The bridegroom will not pander to the virgins in any way.

We have this romantic idea in our minds that Jesus and God pursue us. I heard it said during a religious christian worship ceremony. The woman song leader THANKED JESUS FOR PURSUING AFTER HER. I heard this with my own two ears. Yet Jesus pursues no one. He pursued one thing and one thing only: his heavenly Father’s approval. I elaborated on this in chapter 22 of Matthew. Jesus said in John 5:44, “*How can ye believe, which receive **honour** (recognition or approval) one of another, and seek not the **honour** that cometh **from** God only?*”

Jesus also made a serious statement in John 5:43. He said, “I am come in the name of the Father of me and not ye are accepting me; if ever another should come in the name the own, that (one or thing) ye will accept.” To paraphrase this literal Greek translation, Jesus is saying, “I am adopting and moving into my Father’s identity (and family), my purpose, and you don’t grasp or accept me; yet whenever one comes promoting independence and the hanging onto one’s own identity, that one you grasp and accept.” This in a nutshell is the difference between the two gospels. The false gospel promotes the hanging onto one’s own independent life and identity, while the genuine gospel teaches the adopting of someone else’s identity and life just like in (God’s model of) marriage.

(14) 'For the kingdom of heaven is like a man travelling to a far country, who called his slaves and entrusted his goods to them. To one he gave five talents, to another, two, and to another, one, to each according to his own ability; and then he left on a journey. Then he who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and earned another five talents. And likewise he who had received two gained two more. But he who had received one went and dug in the ground, and hid his lord's money.

(19) After a long time the lord of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. So he who had received five talents came and brought another five talents, saying, "Lord, you entrusted me with five talents; look, I have gained five more talents." His lord said to him, "Well (done), good and faithful slave; you were faithful over a few, I will put you in charge of many. Enter into the joy of your lord." He also who had received two talents came and said, "Lord, you entrusted me with two talents; look, I have gained another two." His lord said to him, 'Well (done), good and faithful slave; you were faithful over a few, I will put you in charge of many. Enter into the joy of your lord.'

(24) Then he who had received the one talent came and said, "Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered seed. And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, there you have what is yours." But his lord answered and said to him, "You faulty and lazy slave, you knew that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not scattered seed. Therefore you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest. Therefore take the talent from him, and give it to him who has ten talents." For to the one having (some), all (the balance) will be given, and he will be made to abound; but from him who does not have, even that which he has will be taken away. And cast the unprofitable slave into outer darkness. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth.'

The only message I gather from this parable is the idea that God initially reveals to us only partial information and revelation. He expects us to take the little that we are given and to respond by seeking more, to dig deeper, to ask for more, and to knock on God's door. He expects a two way relationship. He responds to our expressed interest and effort to get closer to Him. If I am somehow given a supernatural revelation from God, and I don't continue the pursuit of God, then what little I was given will be taken away. I will not get to keep the benefit of whatever it was that I was given from God. So I am given the clue here to continue working at my reconciliation with God for my own good.

(31) 'When the son of man arrives in his fulfilment, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his achievement. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate them one from another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. And he will set the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left. Then the king will say to those on his right, "Come, you blessed of my father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was hungry, and you gave me food; I was thirsty, and you gave me drink; I was a stranger, and you took me in; I was naked, and you clothed me; I was sick, and you cared for me; I was in prison, and you approached me."

(37) Then the righteous will answer him, saying, "Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger, and take you in, or naked and clothe you? Or when did we see you sick, or in prison and approach you?" And the king will answer and say to them, "Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it

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to me.” Then he will also say to those on the left, ‘Depart from me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the traducer and his angels: for I was hungry, and you gave me no food; I was thirsty, and you gave me no drink; I was a stranger, and you did not take me in, naked, and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison, and you did not watch over me.’ Then they also will answer, saying, “Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not attend to you?” Then he will answer them, saying, “Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.” And these will go away into everlasting exile, but the righteous into everlasting life’.”

In this parable, Jesus is referring to the time of fulfillment, the time when the “son of man” arrives in his fulfillment. This is generally considered to be the time when Jesus returns. But he did not say, “I” or “myself”. He is talking about the “son of man”, the pattern of reconciliation that man is invited to adopt and fulfill. When the truth pertaining to this pattern is finally generally revealed, then a great day of judgment begins. This in fact becomes the arrival or fulfillment of the son of man with his angels, all those who participated in leading him in the process of reconciliation, namely the prophets of old. And “sitting on the throne of his achievement” is another way of saying, “finally taking the rest and the reward for having completed the challenge.” And in essence, when this takes place, all of man’s differing opinions and religious mindsets are completely dispelled and publicly discredited.

In fact, Jesus zeros in on one very specific qualifying aspect. He says, “Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these my **brethren**, you did it to me.” And later he says, “Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.” In John 13:20, Jesus says, “Amen! Amen! I am saying to you, the one who receives anyone I am bidding receives me. The one who receives me receives the one bidding me.” And in Matthew 10:40, “**HE WHO RECEIVES YOU RECEIVES ME, AND HE WHO RECEIVES ME RECEIVES HIM WHO SET ME APART.**” And again, in the first letter of John Chapter 5, we are told, “(1) Everyone believing that Jesus is the anointed has been begotten of God; and everyone loving the begetter is ***also loving the one begotten of him***. (2) When we love God and put into practice his instructions, then we know that ***we are loving the offspring of God.***”

We can find numerous more verses pertaining to this idea. But to summarize the gospel that Jesus taught to his disciples, we are taught to willingly trade in our independent lives and identities for God’s one and only LIFE AND IDENTITY, His Family name and identity. God has given notice to Adam that he cannot and will not be allowed into God’s household while retaining his own name and identity, and God will not relent nor deviate from this unshakable principle. We either surrender, or we stay out. There is no other way in. I must become Son of Man in order to eventually become acknowledged Son of God.

And pertaining to the process of judgment we saw just earlier, this is again imagery describing what in reality happens. When we are shown what the son of man really is and does, we will inevitably see who we are for who we are. Either we match and agree with who the son of man is, or we don’t, hence the “separation of the sheep and goats”. I will know if I am a sheep or if I am a goat. That is what judgment is all about. It is not something that necessarily occurs at one specific moment, but it is something real that takes place over time. Upon realizing that I am in fact a goat, even though I imagined myself being a sheep, I then address this revelation. I either persist in my “goatness”, or I decide to become a sheep. While I am a goat, I will remain in the state of conflict and torment FOREVER, for as long as I stubbornly hang onto my own life and identity. But if I decide to proceed and become son of man, and go through the process of required transformation, I become a sheep and consequently “inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” It resolves itself to something extremely simple and not complex. It is difficult, but yet simple. It is difficult only because of our goat nature, our resistance to surrender and dying to our own independent sovereignty.

Chapter 26

(1) “Now it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these sayings, that he said to his disciples, ‘You realize that after two days is the Passover, and the son of man will be delivered up to be put on the stake.’

(3) Then the chief priests, and the elders of the people assembled at the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas, and plotted to deceitfully arrest and execute Jesus. But they said, ‘Not during the feast lest there be an uproar among the people.’

(6) And Jesus having arrived in Bethany at the house of Simon the leper, a woman came to him having an alabaster flask of very costly fragrant oil, and she poured it on his head as he sat. But when his disciples saw it, they were indignant saying, ‘To what purpose is this waste? For this fragrant oil might have been sold for much and given to the poor.’ But when Jesus was aware of it, he said to them, ‘Why are you troubled by the woman? For she has done a good deed for me. For you have the poor with you always, but me you do not have always. For in pouring this fragrant oil on my body, she did it for my burial. Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this well-message (gospel) is proclaimed in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her.’

We can note here that Jesus is referring to THIS GOSPEL as opposed to the OTHER GOSPEL which has been adopted and promoted for almost two thousand years and focuses on the physical death of the man, Jesus, instead of the death of the “Son of Man”.

(14) Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, ‘What are you willing to give me if I deliver him to you?’ And they counted out to him thirty pieces of silver. So from that time he sought opportunity to deliver him.”

In this passage, we see Jesus announcing, through hints and statements with double meanings, the pending events. Even though the disciples had been given indisputable glimpses into the heavenly, as was mentioned a few times before, they were still trapped in the earthly mindset. With this mindset, they were anticipating an earthly king backed by God Himself to rise up and lead the people of Israel into that coveted place of earthly supremacy. That was the common expectation of the Jewish people in general. So when they heard Jesus say, “the son of man will be delivered up to be put on the stake (stauros),” they heard something different than what Jesus was meaning. Traditionally, the word, “stauros” has been translated into English as the word “cross”. But the word “stauros” also meant “banner” as in a political identification flag. So Jesus’ double meaning was easily misunderstood by his disciples. They thought Jesus was announcing his pending triumph and ascent to the throne. Jesus spoke enough of “kingdom of God” and “throne” and “judgment” and so on. They did not nor could not picture anything different. Jesus was backed by God Himself and no one could touch him, not the Romans, not the Jewish leaders, no one. Jesus was the anticipated Jewish Messiah.

So Judas, being of that frame of mind, went to the Jewish leaders to set up the official meeting. But Judas, knowing that the Jewish leaders hated Jesus, spoke to them in their language by saying, “What are you willing to give me if I deliver him to you?” Judas in his own mind was not betraying Jesus. Why? Because Jesus was the MESSIAH, God’s SUPER-KING. Judas knew that no one could hurt nor resist Jesus if he were to take his rightful place at the head of the Jewish nation. And Judas was going to be right there next to Jesus. He would have his place of privilege and honor being the one to help usher in this transition, his “passover”. He was there just a few days previous, as mentioned in Matthew 21:9, participating in the procession entering Jerusalem like a conquering king with the people exclaiming, “**Hosanna to the son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest.**” Judas, like everyone else, was ready for the big day.

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(17) “Now on the first day of the feast of the Unleavened Bread, the disciples came to Jesus, saying to him, ‘Where do you want us to prepare for you to eat the Passover?’ And he said, ‘Go into the city to a certain man, and say to him that the teacher says, “My time is at hand; I would keep the Passover at your house with my disciples.”’ So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them; and they prepared the Passover.”

Here again, we have an example of the two different mindsets. To Jesus, the feast of the Unleavened Bread represented the integrity of an uncorrupted Word of God. Whereas, for the Jews, it represented just another memorial associated with the Passover as recounted in the book of Exodus. For Jesus, the Passover feast itself represented the transition from the earthly realm and identity to the heavenly realm and identity. To the Jews, it simply memorialized the same event in Exodus, the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage and humiliation. So to the Jews, and to the disciples in particular, this was a fitting time to see the Messiah take his rightful place, at the head of the Jewish nation leading it into victory over all of its enemies, particularly the Roman oppressors.

(20) “Now when evening had come, he sat down with the twelve. Then as they were eating, he said, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, one of you will present (beside-give) me’.”

People have by and large insisted that this passage mean, “one of you will betray me.” As I explained earlier, I am convinced that betrayal was not meant by the word, “paradidomi”, because when the one to “beside-give” Jesus is revealed to the others, they don’t jump him in a panic or even in a gesture of concern. John says in chapter 13 of his gospel that they did not know what Jesus was talking about specifically. In addition to that, when consulting a Greek dictionary, the word “betray” is not “paradidomi”, but rather “PROdidomi”, to BEFORE-give, not “BESIDE-give”. Again, context always dictates the meaning of words in any case. Any linguist will attest to this.

(22) “And they were very disturbed, and each of them began to say to him, ‘Lord, is it I?’ Then he answered and said, ‘He who dipped his hand with me in the dish will present (beside-give) me. The genuine son of man is proceeding according to the definition written about him, but woe to that man through whom the son of man is presented (beside-given)! It was not right to him that this (son of) man was engendered.’ Then Judas, who was presenting (beside-giving) him, answered and said, ‘Rabbi, is it I?’ He said to him, ‘You said it’.”

When Jesus says that one of them would “beside-give” him, they looked at each other, and remaining in the earthly mindset each said, “Is it I, Lord?”

Jesus also makes a strange and difficult statement after that. What did he mean by, “but woe to that man through whom the son of man is beside-given”? To the disciples, it should be an honor to present Jesus as King to Israel. So, to the disciples, this was a very strange and perplexing statement. And what he says afterwards has been traditionally translated as, “*The Son of man goeth as it is written of him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born.*” By examining the Greek text, I can’t help but literally read, “fine it was **to him** (the one through whom the son of man is beside-given) if not was generated the man that.” This leads me to explain what I understand this to mean. By looking at it from the other side, instead of seeing the beside-giver as being the one of whom he is talking, I see Jesus talking about THE SON OF MAN. In the earthly mindset of the beside-giver, the son of man had a specific identity, a picture in Judas’ mind. As explained earlier, the messiah to the Jews was to be a conquering SUPERKING, not a defeated loser. So I am convinced that the one of whom Jesus is referring is THE FALSE IMAGE OF THE SON OF MAN RESIDING IN THE MIND OF THE ONE BESIDE-GIVING THE SON OF MAN. It would have been “better” if THAT one was never engendered. Why? Because technically it is that false image of the Son of Man that has been sold to the masses all over the world for two thousand years causing mankind to remain in the state of tribulation all of this time. The real son of man was assassinated and replaced with an impostor. As a result,

reconciliation between man and God has been delayed this whole time. The abomination of desolation to which Daniel referred has been remaining in the “holy place” all of this time.

(26) “And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, giving thanks, broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, ‘Take, eat; this is my body.’ Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, ‘Drink from it, all of you. For this is my blood being poured out concerning many in fulfillment of requirement for freedom from erring. But I say to you I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it anew with you in my Father’s kingdom.’ And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the mount of Olives.”

I really want to take this opportunity to share a little story with you. Many years ago, I had the honor of attending an actual Jewish Passover supper. The Passover supper has remained virtually unchanged for thousands of years. It was at that ceremonial supper that I learned of the meanings of the symbols used in this ceremony.

Firstly, if it is in fact this same bread that Jesus was breaking and sharing with his disciples, the bread represented the messiah that is to come. They would customarily hide the special loaf symbolizing that the messiah is not yet come. I also imagine that in hiding the loaf, it also represented the mysterious nature of the messiah. As he says in the seventh chapter of John, (27) “Indeed we know where he (Jesus) is from; but when the Anointed comes, no one is to know where he is from.” So the prevailing belief among the Jews was that no one would know from where the messiah would come. Strangely enough, they appear to be contradicting their own beliefs because in the second chapter of Matthew (:3-6), it says, “When Herod the king heard this, he was agitated and all Jerusalem with him. And when he had assembled all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them as to where the Christ was to be born. So they said to him, ‘In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it is written by the prophet: *“But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are not the least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel”*.’ ”

Secondly, there is an “Elijah cup” in the ceremonial supper. It is always filled and then set aside “in anticipation of the coming of the prophet Elijah” as foretold in Malachi. In case Elijah should show up for supper, this cup is poured for him in his honor. That is why no one drinks of it during the Passover supper. So it could be that this was the cup that Jesus shared with his disciples. In so doing, he would be making a powerful and provocative statement: he would be claiming to be Elijah who is to come. And causing his disciples to drink of the same cup would be telling the disciples that they also were Elijah who is to come. This would have been a potential cause of perplexity and excitement for the disciples.

To add to the picture, Jesus says some perplexing things accompanying this complete breaking of protocol and tradition. “This is my body”? “This is my blood”? Again, Jesus saw it differently than what his disciples understood. Somehow, the disciples would have heard Jesus making some kind of allusions to his upcoming coronation and rule over Israel. Whereas Jesus really meant something much deeper. The bread, as in John chapter 6, is his “body”, that is “everything that makes up his character, nature, and motivation”. Jesus “ate” all of the heavenly “bread” as served throughout Scripture and this “bread” became “his body”. He literally became what he ate. So this ceremonial UNLEAVENED bread was a picture of God’s feeding us the heavenly, UNCORRUPTED bread. And the Elijah wine simply represented the dying to self, the surrender, the adopting of God’s message and the responding to God’s invitation. In fact, to Jesus, it represented the message itself found in Malachi, “God’s father/son relationship will be established through ‘Elijah’, God’s prophet.” So to Jesus, it had extreme depth of meaning.

Then Jesus says, “Drink from it, all of you. For this is my blood being poured out concerning many in fulfillment of requirement for freedom from erring.” It sounds ponderous. To simplify, this statement has been traditionally made to conform with the counter-gospel’s message of substitution. Christianity by and large believes that Jesus died INSTEAD OF US. But this concept is refuted by the very context in which this statement is being made. In the Old Testament, the cup is referred to on a number of occasions. When a prophet said, “You will drink of the cup...” it meant, “Fulfill a task that is usually unpleasant, to do something that one does not want to do.” And just

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a few verses later, while praying in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus begs God to “take the cup away from me.” But Jesus relents and says, “Not my will, but Yours be done.” “To drink of the cup” ultimately means “surrender, to do the will of another”. So Jesus invites ALL of his disciples, those in his immediate presence, and ALL THOSE WHO WOULD SUBSEQUENTLY BELIEVE THROUGH THEIR WORD, to SHARE HIS FATE, to DO WHAT HE IS DOING. If I am a disciple, I will drink of this same cup. And if I deceive myself in thinking that I don’t need to drink of this cup yet still be considered a disciple, I will be sorely disappointed. Jesus even says in ¹ Matthew 20:23 to John and James (Jacob), the sons of Zebedee, that they would indeed eventually drink of the cup of which he is drinking.

When Jesus says that “this cup will be poured out”, it is a tricky phrase with a double meaning. On one hand, he is acknowledging beforehand that this task, this purpose that motivates Jesus, will be rejected by the masses. People in general will REFUSE TO DRINK IT and pour it out instead. And secondly, the term, “poured out”, also means “to bestow”. So this statement has been a powerful “Rorschach test”. The way I read it determines where my mindset resides and clings. If I listen to this statement as a part of a whole message, I cannot read into it the meaning of Jesus dying instead of me. But if I pick at it like a vulture picks at a carcass, I can lift it out of context and make it say something else. The literal word-for-word translation goes as follows: (27) “...he gave to them saying, ‘Drink (ye) out of it (the cup) all, this for is the blood of me of the endowment (testament) the (one) about (pertaining to) many being poured out (being bestowed) into deliverance of errings.” So how do I read this statement?

Jesus then says, “But I say to you I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it anew with you in my father’s kingdom.” Jesus is foretelling a time of transition which includes the stopping of the “drinking of the fruit of the vine”. This ties into the statement found in verse 31 coming up next where they were all to be made to stumble due to these unexpected and unwanted circumstances. They will all have to confess to themselves, LIKE PETER, that they did not, in fact, know Jesus. They harbored an erroneous picture of Jesus in their minds and in their hearts. And this event undergone by Jesus has the crucial purpose of “putting to death” the false image of Christ in the disciples’ minds. And looking far into the future, Jesus (the son of man), will not enjoy “drinking of the fruit of the vine” (partake in the fulfillment of the genuine apostle/disciple process) UNTIL he gets to drink it ANEW with his disciples in the Father’s genuine kingdom. It is the process that has been suspended for almost two thousand years. The church has been STUMBLING all of this time because the SHEPHERD WAS STRICKEN spiritually speaking. The shepherd was “put to death” by being silenced and subverted by a false shepherd. And with this false shepherd, we have all been “scattered”. We have been living in independence and ² everyone doing what is right in his own eyes.

(31) “Then Jesus said to them, ‘All of you will be made to stumble because of me this night, for it is written, *“I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.”* (Zechariah 13:7) But when I have been raised, I will go before you in Galilee.’ Peter answered and said to him, ‘Even if all are made to stumble because of you, I will never be made to stumble.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Assuredly, I say to you that this night, before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times.’ Peter said to him, ‘Even if I have to die with you, I will not deny you!’ And so said all the disciples.”

They were all willing to fight for Jesus in the flesh for a flesh king in a physical battle. They were still harboring an erroneous image of Jesus and of his cause. So when the reality of Jesus’ identity and cause are shown to be different than those of the disciples, they will be forced to retreat and re-examine the whole thing.

Jesus then says, “But when I have been raised, I will go before you in Galilee.” On one hand, he is foretelling his immediate personal resurrection. But Jesus spoke on grand, spirit scales. He was also foretelling his eventual raising from the dead IN REALITY. He was foretelling the raising of the SON OF MAN, the TRUE GOSPEL, the process of reconciliation through DISCIPLESHIP, NOT BY SUBSTITUTION DEATH. What Jesus told Peter has genuinely come to pass for almost two

thousand years. We have collectively DENIED Christ during this time of darkness. But when the “cock crows” heralding the “morning” or “sunrise”, the age of denial ends with the revelation and subsequent acceptance of the true identity of the son of man, of Christ.

(36) “Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and said to the disciples, ‘Sit here while I go over there to pray.’ And he took with him Peter, and the two sons of Zebedee, and he began to be grieved and deeply conflicted. Then he said to them, ‘My soul is very grieved anticipating death. Stay here and watch with me’.”

(39) “He went a distance and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, ‘Oh my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.’ Then he came to the disciples and found them asleep, and said to Peter, ‘What, could you not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray, lest you enter into testing. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is reluctant.’

(42) He went away again a second time and prayed, saying, ‘Oh my Father, if this may not pass unless I drink it, Your will be done.’ And he came and found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy.

(44) So he left them, went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words. Then he came to his disciples and said to them, ‘Are you still sleeping and resting? Behold, the hour is at hand, and the son of man is being handed over into the hands of errant ones. Rise, let us be going. See, he who hands me over is at hand’.”

These last few words describe a human Jesus with independent feelings and will. Here he goes through a last minute identity crisis. Does he want to identify with God his father all the way to the end, or will he decide to side with the Jews and go along with their picture of the earthly messiah? He really doesn’t relish the idea of physically suffering just like anyone else. He especially doesn’t like the idea of being publicly totally humiliated and disgraced, even for just a moment. But he resolves within himself to not back out of his purpose and former decision to side with God his father however difficult it may be at the time.

It is interesting to note that he took apart with him the same three disciples, Peter, John and James, that he took up the mountain and before whom he was transfigured. At this point, they still had not yet grasped the true identity of Jesus.

(47) “And while he was still speaking, behold, Judas, one of the twelve, with a crowd with swords and clubs, came from the chief priests and elders of the people. Now his introducer had given them a sign, saying, ‘Whomever I kiss, he is the one; take him.’ Then he went up to Jesus and said, ‘Greetings, Rabbi.’ And kissed him. And Jesus said to him, ‘Fellow, why have you come?’ Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and took him.

(51) And suddenly, one of those with Jesus stretched out his hand and drew his sword, struck a slave of the high priest, and cut off his ear. Then Jesus said to him, ‘Put away your sword, for all who take up the sword will perish by the sword. Or do you think that I cannot now pray to my Father, and He would provide me with more than twelve legions of angels? How then could the scriptures be fulfilled, that it must happen thus?’

In John 18:10, we are told that this disciple was Peter, the one who boasted of laying down his life in defense of Jesus. We can see clearly here that Peter was still of the earthly mindset where power and authority in the world are taken and enforced through violence and threat of physical pain and death. But Jesus reminds him that it is not what he is about. He had already told them in Matthew 20(25-28), “You know that the rulers of the nations lord it over them, and those who are

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great impose authority over them. Yet it shall not be so with you; but whoever desires to be great among you, he will himself be a servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, he will himself be a slave, just as the son of man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to provide his identity as the means of deliverance instead of many.”

After this, Jesus asks him, “Do you think that I cannot now pray to my Father, and He would provide me with more than twelve legions of angels?” This is very interesting. I really want to take a close look at this statement and at its ramifications. This is Jesus, the closest one to God that we have been shown. Yet, he reminds us of what prayer really is in view of who Jesus is and what his purpose is. Did Jesus not say that we could ask the Father ANYTHING? According to the prevailing christian doctrine, we have the authority to ask God ANYTHING we so desire and that He is obliged to fulfill our wish. Many Christians believe this. Yet, as we have seen earlier, Jesus always qualified his statement with “in regards to my name”, in other words, “in regards to my identity and purpose”. Here Jesus finds himself in a perfect situation to demonstrate the true meaning of prayer, and of his real purpose. His purpose is not to ask just anything of the Father to satisfy his own desires. On the contrary, his purpose is singular. His purpose is forever “to cultivate a peaceful harmonious relationship with God the Father”. In order to do this, he knows that a harmonious relationship with the Father is only possible through surrender, in acceptance of His will over ours. So if the doctrine of praying for anything I desire is in fact valid, Jesus would have demonstrated it in this particular circumstance by praying to the Father to deliver him of this ordeal, to prevent his condemnation and unrighteous execution at the hand of errant ones. But no, Jesus knew that God had a will, and we are to subordinate our wills to His if we desire peace and harmony with Him.

(55) “In that hour, Jesus said to the crowd, ‘Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs to take me? I sat daily with you, teaching in the temple, and you did not take me? But all this was done that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled.’ Then all the disciples forsook him and fled.

(57) And those who had taken hold of Jesus led him away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled. But Peter followed him at a distance to the high priest’s courtyard. And he went in and sat with the subordinates to see the outcome.”

Up until here, the disciples had followed Jesus as he had invited them. As long as things were going well and pleasant, they stuck with him. But now that things are turning out contrary to their expectations and preferences, they scatter. And Peter, one of his closest, follows at a distance to see the outcome. Isn’t this like how we are? Some of us “follow Jesus from a distance”. In other words, we don’t follow him in reality, in who he really is and does. We don’t accept to share his fate and stand for his cause. We “watch from a distance to see the outcome”. There has been such difficulty and controversy around Jesus Christ that religion has decided that the ultimate resolution would take place AFTER WE DIE, in the AFTERLIFE. We can’t see it being resolvable IN THIS LIFETIME and IN THIS AGE. How many Christians do you know say all of the words of Jesus as though they were their very own? How many Christians do you know do the things that Jesus reportedly did? These questions have haunted me for many years. I have so wished to be able to legitimately say all of the words of Jesus as though they were my very own. Why? Because Jesus himself says in many places that the disciple is to be like his teacher and apostle. He is to follow him. He is to be like him. So this has continually been on my mind. I have prayed for the resolution to this dilemma. This work reveals God’s answer to my prayer.

(59) “Now the chief priests, and all the council sought false testimony against Jesus to put him to death, but found none though many false witnesses came forward. But at last two came forward and said, ‘This fellow said, “I am able to destroy the temple of God and to build it in three days”.’

This was false testimony because Jesus had actually said in John 2:19, “YE destroy this temple (the place where God resides) and in three days, I will raise it up.” And was this a crime,

enough to convict a man to death? Good question.

(62) “And the high priest arose and said to him, ‘Do you answer nothing? What is it that these men testify against you?’ But Jesus kept silent. And the high priest answered and said to him, ‘I adjure you by the living God that you tell us if you are the Christ, the son of God.’ Jesus said to him, ‘It is as you said. Nevertheless, I say to you: hereafter, (it is by) legitimate granted ability and CONFRONTING THE CLOUDINESS of heaven that you will see the son of man abiding’.”

This enigmatic phrase has been usually translated as, (64) “Jesus saith unto him, *Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.*” I have examined the Greek text, and I have read the gospel theme as a whole, and I am persuaded to read the text as I have quoted just above. To clarify the statement, I paraphrase it to say, “From now on, one will NOT see the Son of Man UNLESS and UNTIL God gives one heavenly perception and he CONFRONTS THE CLOUDINESS that has totally engulfed the true identity and purpose of the son of man.” I have worked very hard and have dug deep in order to get to the truth of the matter pertaining to Christ. I, like a salmon spawning upstream, had to go against the current of popular dogma and belief, risking my very “life” in the process. I have to confront the Angels wielding the “flaming sword” as mentioned in ³ Genesis 3:24 in order to have access to the tree of Life.

(65) “Then the high priest tore his clothes, saying, ‘He has slandered! What further need do we have of witnesses? Look, now you have heard his slander! What do you think?’ They answered and said, ‘He is deserving of death.’ Then they spat in his face and beat him; and others slapped him with the palms of their hands, saying, ‘Prophecy to us, Christ! Who is the one who slapped you?’”

They accused Jesus of slander because the Jews had already decided IN ADVANCE that God is SO FAR, SO UNREACHABLE, SO FOREIGN that NO ONE could EVER be a son of God. How many people actually believe that it is possible or even permissible that ANYONE should aspire to be SON OF GOD here on earth? Christianity has already decided that Jesus is the ONLY SON OF GOD, and that no one else could ever claim to be a son. All we hope for is to die while being Christians and being “allowed into heaven” while still not being sons of God. This is the reality of Christianity that I was taught in my youth and that prevails throughout the world. In essence, Christians are NOT ALLOWED to be true sons of God by christian doctrine and teaching. The best we can do is “fool God” by covering ourselves with the blood of God’s “perfect sacrificial lamb”.⁴ How desperate the human heart is! It is so desperate that it will convince the mind to believe absurdities. They said, “Blasphemy!” as though God had declared it a crime against Him to actually aspire to be His son.

(69) “Now Peter sat outside in the courtyard. And a servant girl came to him, saying, ‘You also were with Jesus of Galilee.’ But he denied it before them all, saying, ‘I do not know what you are saying.’ And when he had gone out to the gateway, another girl saw him and said to those who were there, ‘This fellow also was with Jesus of Nazareth.’ But again he denied with an oath, ‘I do not know the man!’ And after a while those who stood by came to Peter and said, ‘Surely you also are one of them, because your accent gives you away.’ Then he began to curse and swear, saying, ‘I do not know the man!’ Just then, a rooster crowed. And Peter remembered the word of Jesus who had said to him, ‘Before the rooster crows you will deny me three times.’ Then he went out and wept bitterly.”

As I mentioned earlier, in my estimation and conclusion, Peter was in a genuine dilemma. He REALLY DIDN’T KNOW JESUS at that moment. He thought he had known him, but at that moment, he realized and acknowledged that he in fact DID NOT. It was extremely traumatic for him. “Who is this man that I have been following all of this time until now? He is not at all fitting my image of who I thought he was. He is being tried as a common criminal. And he is not defending himself like I thought he would. Is God not coming to the rescue? And Jesus didn’t want me to fight for him?

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I don't know him, REALLY. Now what? What am I going to do?" Peter at that moment was completely confused and lost. And if Jesus is killed, what then? Peter wouldn't know what to do with himself.

Chapter 26 footnotes:

¹ Matthew 20(22) But Jesus answered and said, *Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to **drink of the cup** that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?* They say unto him, We are able. (23) And he saith unto them, ***Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father.***

² Judges 17(6) In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was **right in his own eyes**.

Judges 21(25) In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was **right in his own eyes**.

³ Genesis 3(24) So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.

⁴ Jeremiah 17(9) The heart *is* deceitful above all *things*, and desperately wicked: who can know it? (DfH) Deceitful is the heart above all, sick and desperate; who perceives and acknowledges this?

Chapter 27

(1) "When morning came, all the chief priests and elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death. And when they had bound him, they led him away and turned him over to Pilate, the governor.

(3) Then Judas, his introducer, seeing that he had been condemned, was remorseful and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, 'I have erred by handing-over (beside-giving) righteous blood.' And they said, 'What is that to us? You will see.' Then he threw down the pieces of silver in the temple and departed, and went and hanged himself."

As I suggested earlier, I still don't see Judas having knowingly betrayed Jesus. In Judas' mind, Jesus was supposed to become king, not be condemned to death. **"What is happening?"**

(6) But the chief priests took the silver pieces and said, ¹ 'It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, because they are the price of blood.' And they took counsel and bought with them the potter's field, in which to bury strangers. Therefore that field has been called 'The field of blood' to this day. Then was fulfilled what was spoken by ² Jeremiah the prophet, saying, *'And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the value of him who was priced, whom they priced from the sons of Israel, and gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord directed me.'*

(11) Now Jesus stood before the governor. And the governor asked him, saying, 'You are the king of the Jews?' So Jesus said to him, 'You said it.' And while he was being accused by the chief priests and elders, he answered nothing. Then Pilate said to him, 'Do you not hear how many things they testify against you?' And he answered him not one word, so that the governor marvelled greatly."

Why is Jesus keeping silent? Jesus is trusting God within this terrible circumstance. He knows that God is sovereign. And he knows that it is in fact God's will that he pass through this ordeal willingly. It goes against every human impulse yet he does not resist. So this is an occasion

of understanding God's meaning of the word "trust". In the human understanding of "trust", a person entrusts something in the hands of an other IN ORDER TO FULFILL THE WILL OF THE ONE ENTRUSTING. But in God's dictionary, "trust" is synonymous with "surrender". The one surrendering places no expectations or demands upon the one to whom he surrenders. That is the very definition of surrender. And in Jesus' case, his trust/surrender included accepting a terrible, humiliating and painful physical death, a death that no one covets in normal human terms.

(15) "At the occasion of that feast, the governor was accustomed to releasing to the crowd one prisoner whom they wished. And they had then a notorious prisoner called (Jesus) BarAbbas. Therefore, when they had gathered together, Pilate said to them, 'Whom do you want me to release to you? BarAbbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?' for he knew that it was because of spite they had delivered him. While he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent to him, saying, 'Have nothing to do with that innocent man, for I have suffered greatly today in a dream because of him.' But the chief priests and elders persuaded the crowd that they should ask for BarAbbas and destroy Jesus. The governor answered and said to them, 'Which of the two do you want me to release to you?' They said, 'BarAbbas'!"

Normally, the name **Jesus** BarAbbas does not exist in most Bibles, only the name BarAbbas. But according to my New King James Version of the Bible, there is a footnote stating that the NU Text includes the name **Jesus** BarAbbas. The NU Text is considered by many to be the set of older and more reliable manuscripts.

So based on this discovery, I can make an interesting observation. Here is displayed a powerful demonstration of man's preference and choice. Both prisoners have the name **Jesus**. In Hebrew, the name Jesus means "God saves". And in Hebrew, the name BarAbbas means "successor or heir of the father". "Bar" means "heir or successor" whereas "ben" means "son". In common usage, they are considered synonymous. But they have a substantial difference of meaning. "Bar" suggests the human mindset of "inheritance and succession (due to one's father's death)", whereas "ben" means "son (without the suggestion of death of the father)". This is, in my estimation, an important clue to man's mindset versus God's mindset. Man seeks to supplant and replace the father, not remain under his father. This is a very important aspect of Jesus' message. As Jesus said in John 8:35: "*And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but **the Son** abideth ever.*"

And John explains that BarAbbas was a robber, and in the book of Mark, it is said that he was even a murderer, a seditionist. In other words, he is the kind of man that the Jews wanted the Messiah to be: a military and political leader to lead Israel in rebellion against the Romans. I find it very interesting how man prefers the earthly Jesus to the heavenly Jesus.

(22) "Pilate said to them, 'What then shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?' They all said to him, 'Let him be put on stake!' Then the governor said, 'Why, what wrong has he done?' But they cried out all the more, saying, 'Let him be put on stake!' When Pilate saw that he could not convince them at all, but rather that a riot was rising, he took water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, 'I am innocent of this man's blood. You will see.' And all the people answered and said, '**His blood be on us and on our children.**' Then he released BarAbbas to them; and when he had scourged Jesus, he handed him over to be put on stake.

Did they have ANY idea what they were saying when they said, "His blood be on us and on our children"? Scripturally speaking, this statement literally means, "We take FULL RESPONSIBILITY for this man's death. We accept the FULL CONSEQUENCE for this man's death." To them, Jesus was not sent of God.

And history has proven that yes, God has exacted perfect justice over Jewry AND OVER HER CHILDREN for two thousand years! Christianity is a direct offshoot of Judaism. All those who invoke the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob are "Jews", literally or spiritually. And in ignorance, Christianity has repeated these very words thinking that salvation and redemption can be found by "pleading the blood of Jesus to cover us". By claiming the blood of Christ,

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Christianity claims its share of RESPONSIBILITY for his death. As I said earlier, I realized that I, as a Christian, had to repent of this condition in order to proceed toward reconciliation with God the Father of Jesus Christ, the ³ VINEYARD OWNER. I had to accept that true reconciliation with God was impossible while remaining covered with the blood of God's son. In fact, God says in ⁴ Numbers chapter 35 that there IS NO SUBSTITUTION for murder. Murder is ONLY satisfiable by the EXECUTION of the murderer. And God also includes CHARACTER ASSASSINATION in the broad category of "murder". When I deliberately take it upon myself to misrepresent someone to others, I am guilty of "spiritual murder". Hmm...

(27) "Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the praetorium and gathered the whole garrison around him. And they stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him. When they had braided a crown of thorns, they put it on his head, and a reed in his right hand. And they bowed the knee before him mocking, saying, 'Hail, king of the Jews!' Then they spat on him, and took the reed and struck him on the head. Then when they were done mocking him, they took the robe off him, put his own clothes back on him, and led him away to be put on stake."

(32) "Now as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name. They compelled him into service to bear his stake. And when they had come to a place called Golgotha, that is to say, 'Place of a Skull', they gave him ⁵ wine mingled with gall to drink. But when he had tasted it, he would not drink. Then they put him on stake, and divided his garments, casting lots. (Psalm 22:18) Sitting down, they kept watch over him there. And they put up over his head the accusation written against him: THIS IS JESUS KING OF THE JEWS.

(38) Then two robbers were put on stakes with him, one on the right and one on the left. And those who passed by reviled him, wagging their heads and saying, 'You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! If you are the son of God, come down from the stake.' Likewise the chief priest, also mocking with the scribes and elders, said, 'He saved others; he cannot save himself? He is king of Israel? Let him now come down from the stake, and we will believe on him. He trusted upon God; let Him deliver him now if He will have him for he said, "I am the son of God".' Even the robbers who were put on stake with him also reproached him in the same manner."

It isn't only the Romans who mocked Jesus. It was the Jews as well mocking the son, just as their predecessors mocked the prophets of old, all those sent of God.

(45) "Now from the sixth hour until the ninth there was darkness over all the land. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, 'Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani!' that is, '*My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?*' Some of those who stood there, when they heard that, said, 'This man is calling for Elijah.' Then one of them ran and took a sponge, filled it with sour wine and put it on a reed and gave it to him to drink. The rest said, 'Leave him alone; let us see if Elijah will come to save him.' Jesus, when he had cried out again with a loud voice, yielded up the breath.

(51) And behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rock-masses were split, and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the holy ones who had fallen asleep were raised; and coming out of the graves after his resurrection, they went into the holy city and were made apparent to many."

We can read this portion literally to see described a literal phenomenon. Apparently an earthquake took place that day. It apparently caused the veil of the temple to be torn from top to bottom. To me, this could symbolize God "rending his cloak in emotional outburst" similar to what

the ⁶ priest did in the last chapter as an expression of outrage. But tearing the veil of the temple could also have a deeper meaning. It could mean that the veil that hid and obscured God from man is finally torn in order to reveal God TO THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN GIVEN SPIRIT EYES to see.

But pertaining to the next portion, I have a hard time reading it literally. If many individuals of old had physically come back to life and were made apparent to people, would that not have caused a MAJOR upheaval in the city and surrounding countryside? I cannot say one way or the other.

Nevertheless, seeing it from Matthew's point of view, I strongly suspect that he is describing a spirit phenomenon which took place with Jesus' resurrection. The disciples, with Jesus' resurrection, saw the "bodies" of prominent biblical characters "come to life". In other words they saw the words of the prophets made manifest in the flesh and fulfilled in their sight IN THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS. The "veil was torn" and the "earth" itself was shaken. This could all be imagery describing a spirit phenomenon which was relevant to the immediate disciples AND TO THE ONES WHO WERE GOING TO BE DISCIPLES SHORTLY THEREAFTER as a result of their testimony. According to the book of Acts and other historical accounts, the apostles were headquartered in Jerusalem for a time and many disciples were made there after Jesus was gone.

(54) "Now when the centurion and those with him who were guarding Jesus, saw the earth quake and the things that had happened, they feared greatly, saying, 'Truly this was the son of God!'" And many women who followed Jesus from Galilee, attending to him, were there looking on from afar, among whom were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James (Jacob) and Joseph, and the mother of Zebedee's sons."

So there must have been a literal earthquake that struck at that time. Being a natural phenomenon, people could have taken it as being only such, or people had the occasion to recognize it as being of much greater importance. It is all in the "eyes of the beholder". "Unless one is born from above, one cannot see the kingdom of God."

(57) "Now when evening had come, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who himself had also become a disciple of Jesus. This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be given to him. And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his new tomb which he had hewn out of the rock-mass; and he rolled a large stone against the doorway of the tomb, and departed. And Mary Magdalene was there, and the other Mary, sitting opposite the tomb.

(62) On the next day, which followed the day of preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees had a meeting with Pilate, saying, 'Sir, we remember while he was alive, how that impostor said, "After three days I will be raised up"; therefore command that the tomb be made secure until the third day, lest his disciples come and steal him away, and say to the people, "He has risen from the dead." So the last error will be worse than the first.' Pilate said to them, 'You have a guard; go your way, make it as secure as you know how.' So they went and made the tomb secure, sealing the stone and setting the guard."

Chapter 27 footnotes:

¹ As far as I can tell, there is no Biblical basis for this declaration to be made. There is no law pertaining to the price of blood. It must have been a Talmudic law or something to that effect.

² Somehow, an error was perpetrated when writing down the name of Jeremiah instead of Zechariah (Zechariah 11:12-13). Why? I don't know. Why is it not rectified in modern Bibles, I do not know. It is perplexing. Was it a simple error, or was it deliberate?

³ Matthew 21(33-41), The parable of the vinedressers.

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⁴ Numbers 35(30) Whoso killeth any person, the murderer shall be put to death by the mouth of witnesses: but one witness shall not testify against any person *to cause him* to die.

(31) Moreover ye shall take no satisfaction (RANSOM) for the life of a murderer, which *is* guilty of death: but he shall be surely put to death.

(32) And ye shall take no satisfaction (RANSOM) for him that is fled to the city of his refuge, that he should come again to dwell in the land, until the death of the priest.

(33) So ye shall not pollute the land wherein ye *are*: for blood it defileth the land: and the land cannot be cleansed of the blood that is shed therein, but **by the blood of him that shed it**.

(34) Defile not therefore the land which ye shall inhabit, wherein I dwell: for I the LORD dwell among the children of Israel.

⁵ I have learned that this concoction, “wine mingled with gall”, was used as an act of mercy toward the prisoners being executed. It was a powerful sedative which would alleviate the pain and prolonged suffering. It is for this reason that Matthew notes that Jesus refused to drink it. Jesus wanted to experience the full measure of God’s will without in any way seek to escape it. It was brave but calculated. Jesus was convinced that he had to do it this way.

⁶ Matthew 26(65) Then the high priest **tore his clothes**, saying, “He has slandered! What further need do we have of witnesses? Look, now you have heard his slander!”

Chapter 28

(1) “Later during the Sabbaths, as a Sabbath day began to dawn, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb. And behold, there was a great quake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone, and sat on it. His countenance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow. And the guards shook for fear of him, and became like dead men. But the angel answered and said to the women, ‘Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was put on stake. He is not here, for he was raised up, as he said. Come, see the place where he was lying. And go quickly and tell his disciples that he was raised up from the dead, and indeed he is going before you into Galilee; there you will see him. Behold, I have told you.’ So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to bring his disciples word.

(9) Behold, Jesus met them, saying, ‘Rejoice!’ And they came and held him by the feet and did obeisance to him. Then Jesus said to them, ‘Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brethren to go to Galilee, and there they will see me’.”

Reflecting back at the events leading up to this, and reflecting on the Garden story of God with Adam and Eve, I see the full circle take place. Adam had chosen to side with creation and independence over God thus choosing the automatic consequence of death that God had pronounced from the beginning. Then Jesus, four thousand years later, “goes back to the Garden of Eden” so-to-speak, as a son of Adam, and goes all the way siding with God in surrender and in preference to the creation, thus undoing the consequence of death for himself as pronounced by God in the beginning, thus becoming ¹ God’s FIRSTBORN. It is a wonderful and marvelous picture. But the extra wonderful news for us today is that Jesus was our example. He was the first to fulfill the requirements of Son of Man thus being rewarded and vindicated by God for his decision and determination by being declared His firstborn son. With him as our example, we are told and shown that it is now possible for anyone of us to repeat the process, this giving the very same vindication TO WHOEVER WILL DARE. This is pronounced SEVEN TIMES at the beginning of the Book of Revelations to John: “To him who conquers...” And in the ² third chapter of Malachi, verse 17, God says: “*And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my ³ TREASURE; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.*”

In regards to the other statement made by both the angel and by Jesus, “Go back to Galilee and there you will see me,” I get perhaps a clue with subtle meaning. It is possible that this was an invitation by Christ to his disciples, then and now, to “go back to Galilee”, or rather “to go back to the beginning where it all started”. Since their erroneous image of Jesus and of the Christ message were completely discredited and destroyed before them, they needed to re-examine everything that Jesus had said and done in order to come to terms with the real Jesus and his message. Even though Jesus may have appeared to them briefly in the flesh after his resurrection, this only motivated them to take some time together to review and “rehash” these past few years with him. They needed to come to terms with his real message, and they needed to come to terms with their identity and mandate which was handed down to them from Jesus, as summarized at the end of this chapter in verses 18 and 19. Seeing that it was not going to be a geopolitical, earthly kingdom that they would be involved in establishing, they really needed to co-operate with God’s spirit in order to finally learn their true purpose and calling.

(11) “Now while they were going, behold, some of the guard came into the city and reported to the chief priests all that had happened. When they had assembled with the elders and taken counsel, they gave a sufficient sum of money to the soldiers, saying, ‘Tell them, “His disciples came at night and stole him away while we slept.” And if this comes to the governor’s ear, we will appease him and corroborate you.’ So they took the money and did as they were instructed; and this is a popular rumour among the Jews to this day.”

Even now, the religious leaders are too proud to honestly accept the events as they are unfolding. They will do anything to “save face”. They are completely and totally oblivious to a real God who might actually be at odds with them. To these men, there is no God except some imaginary God of their own fabrication which they use to manipulate the public TO THEIR OWN ADVANTAGE AND AMBITION. They will even bribe the guards to bear false witness to the events, they are so proud and unyielding. Matthew is writing about this event many years later. We can only know of what we are told. Matthew would not have been witness to what he describes. And he is honest by saying that “it is a popular rumour among the Jews to this day.” We do have evidence to suggest that a few of the religious leaders would have had contact with the apostles over the years and may have related some of the “back-room stories” to them.

(16) “Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had appointed for them. And when they saw him, they did obeisance to him; but some doubted.”

According to John’s account, Jesus had initially appeared to the eleven in the upper room a couple of times before they actually returned to Galilee where John recounts meeting with Jesus on the beach of the sea of Galilee. And according to Matthew, there was another encounter at the top of a mountain as he describes here.

(18) “Then Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptising them into the name of the father and of the son and of the holy spirit (theme, motivation, purpose) teaching them to be guarding all that I have instructed you; and, lo! I am with you always, even to the end of the age’.”

Jesus is telling his disciples that “all authority has been given to him IN HEAVEN AND ON EARTH”. God the Father has placed His seal on him. And this one whom God has sealed placed his seal of authority AND mandate upon his apostles IN ORDER TO CONTINUE HIS WORK. So what was Jesus’ work? To summarize it, Matthew explains it to be the “making of disciples of ALL the nations, baptising them INTO the name of the father and of the son and of the holy spirit.” Jesus told his disciples that “it is sufficient for the servant to be AS his master, and the student to be AS his teacher.” Discipleship is the invitation to LEAVE EVERYTHING BEHIND, TO ADOPT THE LEADER’S IDENTITY AND PURPOSE, AND TO FOLLOW HIS LEAD. So anyone desiring to follow Jesus AFTER HIS LEAVING EARTH, had to follow one of the disciples who represented

Jesus, NOT A VIRTUAL CHRIST. In many places, I repeat, Jesus said, "Whoever receives whomever I bid, receives ME. And whoever receives me, receives the one who bids me." You could summarize these instructions by saying, "Go into the world and proclaim THIS GOSPEL."

In the original Greek text, there are four instances of the word ⁴ "gospel" in the book of Matthew and none in the book of John. There are many instances of this word throughout the New Testament, including its verb form, to "evangelize", which is used once in Matthew and twice in the Book of Revelations by John. As a recap, the word "gospel" is the translation of the Greek word, "euaggelia" (pronounced Eu-ang-GAY-lia) which is composed of three Greek words: "Eu", which means "well, proper", "ago", which means "to lead", and thirdly "agele", "that which is led". So in a nutshell, we can say that "euaggelia" is "the mechanism by which proper leading and guidance are done". It cannot be simply "the generic message" of the kingdom. It is much deeper than that. The "euaggelos" (proper angel) is the one through whom the "euaggelia" is brought. The word suggests not only the message, but also the means of guidance itself. Jesus was not only bringing the message of the kingdom, but also the MEANS OF GUIDANCE to the kingdom. He was at the same time THE MESSENGER of the MESSAGE and also the MEANS. This may be difficult to grasp at first. But upon understanding the fundamental principle behind the message of Christ, one can then fully appreciate the meaning of the word "to evangelize".

But what is the underlying principle upon which this gospel message is built? We have seen much evidence and many clues throughout the gospels of John and Matthew, and throughout the Old Scriptures. Let us take a fresh look at Scripture by going back to basics.

Chapter 28 footnotes:

¹ Exodus 22(29) Thou shalt not delay to offer the first of thy ripe fruits, and of thy liquors: the **firstborn** of thy sons shalt thou give unto me.

² Malachi 3(1) Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the LORD, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts.

(2) But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he *is* like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap:

(3) And he shall sit *as* a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness.

(4) Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the LORD, as in the days of old, and as in former years.

(5) And I will come near to you to judgment (in judicial process); and I will be a swift (prompt) witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in *his* wages, (that oppress) the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger *from his right*, and fear not me, saith the LORD of hosts.

(6) For I *am* the LORD, **I change not**; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.

(7) Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept *them*. **Return unto me, and I will return unto you**, saith the LORD of hosts. But ye said, Wherein shall we return?

(8) Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings.

(9) Ye *are* cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, *even* this whole nation.

(10) Bring ye **all the tithes** into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that *there shall not be room enough to receive it*.

(11) And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the LORD of hosts.

(12) And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith the LORD of hosts.

(13) Your words have been stout against me, saith the LORD. Yet ye say, What have we spoken *so much* against thee?

(14) Ye have said, It *is* vain to serve God: and what profit *is it* that we have kept his ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully before the LORD of hosts?

(15) And now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, *they that* tempt God are even delivered.

(16) Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard *it*, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name.

³ (17) And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my TREASURE (kjb reads “jewels” which is erroneous because the Hebrew word is NOT PLURAL, but rather SINGULAR, making it ONE, **UNIFIED** TREASURE); and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.

(18) Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not.

⁴ Matthew 4:23 And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the **gospel** of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people.

Matthew 9:35 And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the **gospel** of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.

Matthew 24:14 *And this **gospel** of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.*

Matthew 26:13 *Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this **gospel** shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her.*

Going Back To Basics

In the days when Christianity was failing to offer consolation and answers to my personal dilemmas, I was compelled to come to God and ask Him to deliver me of my confusions, of my personal griefs by explaining to me the truth FROM HIS POINT OF VIEW. I made a deal with Him so-to-speak. I decided to “throw away the baby with the bathwater”. I committed to come to Him and to His word with no preconceived ideas. Everything that I had learned in the past, I placed “on a shelf”. I came to Him as a “blank sheet of paper upon which He could write anew”. I needed to do this because I was getting nowhere within the Church.

So I went back to the very beginning of the Bible. John appeared to be giving clues here and there to that effect. I then proceeded to read the entire Bible from beginning to end. Whenever I felt moved or inspired to note a scripture portion relevant to my dilemma, I did so. After many days of devouring Scripture, I ended up with a very interesting series of Scriptures, which I conveniently call “Back To The Garden”, that ultimately caused me to re-examine, not only the man/woman relationship, the dilemma which plagued me, but also the very theme of Scripture which holds the Bible together. Once God opened my eyes to this theme, the entire Bible had a completely different appearance to me. It solved the riddles and the apparent contradictions found throughout Scripture. It was, as you could say, the “key” that unlocks the Word of God, and the “key” to God’s own heart. The unexpected by-product was the revelation of the meaning of the words, “sin” and “innocence”.

(Quoting from the New King James Version unless otherwise noted)

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

Looking back at John and Matthew, I noticed a great deal of emphasis on distinguishing between the heavenly and the earthly. The heavenly and the earthly are both God’s creation, the product of God’s Mind. The earthly realm is the physical “stage” upon which the “play” is enacted and by which all intangible, abstract concepts and ideas are manifest indirectly, just as in John 3(8) (kjk), “*The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.*”

The heavenly realm or “heavens” especially involves RELATIONSHIPS, particularly between WILLS of “freewill” entities, people. But in the Bible it involves mainly the relationship between man and God, this singular relationship having precedence, the one affecting and governing people’s relationships with each other.

2. Genesis 1:26-31 (kjk) And God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.” So God created man in his *own* image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, “Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.” And God said, “Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which *is* upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which *is* the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat. And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein *there is* life, *I have given* every green herb for meat”: and it was so. And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, *it was* very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

Here we are told that God created man to be similar to God in character, and to be the focal point and **culmination** of His creation as a whole, the planet and the heavenly bodies, the plants and the animals being the setting for man's living and relating with God. In the words, "...have dominion over...", my understanding goes beyond the superficial. I hear the invitation by God to man to "surpass, to be greater and rise above the animals" rather than "to dominate". These would be some of the words that Jesus would have heard in the call to become a son of God. He would have understood that God's original intent for man is "to transcend the flesh, to be better than mere earthly, to exceed the animals in character, value and purpose".

In the following text, John 1:1-5, instead of quoting from the King James Version, I will quote a more direct translation from the Greek.

3. John 1:1-5 First and foremost was the Mind, and the Mind was God thinking to Himself, and divine was the Mind. This was originally God reflecting. All through It were created, and apart from It none were created which were created. In It was life; and the life was the light of men; and the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not grasp it.

This is of utmost importance I think. Before the creation of things, the Universe, animals, plants, and man himself, there was nothing, nothing except one thing and one thing only: God's MIND. We have the tendency to see things in a three dimensional physical manner. But as far as we are concerned, GOD IS. There is nothing OUTSIDE God, again, as far as we are concerned. The created Universe is not an external fabrication or artifact. It is a "virtual" world within God's MIND. We are all figments of God's imagination, not the other way around. Man desperately wants to SELF-EXIST, to not have a dependent existence upon the whim of another superior will. But the Word of God states clearly that God created ALL THINGS out of NOTHING.

We, being created in God's image, can begin to perceive God as a THINKING PERSON. And God, being perfectly alone and bored, IMAGINED US ALL INTO BEING. He wanted to entertain Himself, satisfy His basic needs which could not be fulfilled by anything or anyone outside Himself. So He imagined a story, a scenario in which little characters, simulations of Himself, could interact with each other and with Him.

Today, in our modern technological age, we can begin to get a picture of God's reality. We can begin by examining the computer. A computer is nothing more than an instrument whose only purpose is to process DIGITAL INFORMATION. It does nothing of itself. The programmer must INPUT program instructions and data in order for the computer to do something. In our case, using this analogy, the computer within which we exist is GOD'S MIND. The program is the one by which our Universe exists and functions, including our own human existence. THE LAW, for the lack of a better name, is the complete set of rules of operation that God has determined and decided to implement with PERFECT DISCIPLINE in regards to this story of Creation. And part of this program includes the INTENT of the PROGRAMMER. God has an ultimate intent for man. Jesus learned it, lived it, and passed it on to those who would follow after him. The "physical universe" within which we exist IS NOT God's intent for man. It is only the SETTING in which man exists and relates with God, the PROGRAMMER. But God is well above the program which is being executed within His own mind. God is "living out a story" within His mind. We are characters within that story. We appear to have a will of our own. We think and feel like independent entities within this story. But we are still, strictly speaking, figments of God's imagination. God "GIVES LIFE" to any and all "living creatures" within this framework.

In this story of Creation, we are told that when Adam was initially created, he was relating openly and "physically" with God, the Creator. God placed him ABOVE the creation, and intended him to remain faithful to his Creator, his FATHER. Man was given a condition to fulfill in order to maintain a healthy and pleasant existence IN RELATION TO his Father. He was told that of all the trees in the garden, he was not to eat of a specific tree called "The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil".

So the "heavenly" and the "earthly" were blended and in harmony at first IN THE BEGINNING.

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4. Genesis 2:8 The Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there he put the man whom He had formed.

The expression, "Garden of Eden", could mean a specific place upon the earth, but within the framework of the story as a whole, rather than a geographic position on earth, it would be better to say that it is "the setting, the condition within which man is in harmony with his Father" and this condition is not geographically nor chronologically sensitive.

5. Genesis 2:15 Then the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to tend it and to keep it.

Man was given a role by God. God placed the man on earth, "in the Garden of Eden", to be a STEWARD, not an owner. Man was intended to be a faithful SON, not a usurper. He was not intended to claim ownership AWAY FROM GOD, THE ONLY TRUE OWNER. Is there anyone who recognizes God as the ONLY TRUE OWNER?

If one recognizes God as the owner, what then? What does it mean? First and foremost, we see ourselves as stewards over someone else's property. If I am a steward over someone else's property, what then? It means I must have an open and honest relationship with the owner. Naturally, flowing from that, for the sake of having a HAPPY and PERPETUATED relationship with the owner as a STEWARD, I must fulfill the owner's expressed WISHES, stay within the owner's expressed WILL AND INTENTS. For Adam, what was the expressed condition that he had to fulfill and to which he had to comply in order to maintain a healthy and continued relationship with the owner, God, his Father?

6. Genesis 2:16-17 And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree in the garden you may freely eat, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."

So the condition to which Adam had to FAITHFULLY comply was to "**abstain from eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil**". By keeping to this condition, Adam had all of his physical sustenance provided AND his state of PEACE AND HARMONY WITH GOD, HIS FATHER was maintained. His state of peace with God, THE ETERNAL ONE, IS HIS ETERNAL LIFE, nothing else. Outside of this peaceful state with his Father, Man is relegated to MORTAL STATE by GOD'S DECREE: "...for in the day that you eat of it, YOU SHALL SURELY DIE!"

To Adam, what was "to die"? He didn't know what that meant as such. If it meant to stop physically functioning as a physical entity, that was one thing. Other than that, what was to die? That was a concept that did not impinge on his awareness in the beginning. It was one of those intangible concepts that he had to learn THE HARD WAY. Adam was to learn that the kind of death to which God was referring was the SPIRIT kind of death, the death of the PEACEFUL, HARMONIOUS RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD, HIS FATHER. From GENERATION TO GENERATION, Adam was to learn what spirit death really meant by STUBBORNLY CLINGING to that state of death (non-life) for SIX THOUSAND YEARS. I say that because shortly, we will see that God DID IN FACT allow for Adam to return to that state of peace and harmony IF HE HAD SO CHOSEN AT ANY TIME after KILLING THE RELATIONSHIP WITH HIS FATHER. Yes, I said "KILLING" because that is what Adam did. He "murdered" the RELATIONSHIP with his father thus CUTTING HIMSELF OFF from the Supplier of Life. In essence, Adam committed SUICIDE as a result. He MURDERED HIMSELF. And by begetting progeny in the state of alienation, he was adding insult to injury. He was defiantly telling his Father that reconciliation WAS NOT AT ALL HIS OBJECTIVE. He was stubbornly CLINGING to his state of death and passing it on to subsequent generations, making it difficult for those subsequent generations to UNDO what Adam had done. But it was and is not entirely impossible to undo. We will encounter evidence to this effect.

When I look at the “tree of the knowledge of good and evil”, I can choose to define it as some literal physical tree that existed six thousand years ago. But if I do that, I cannot receive any lesson from this story that could apply to me today. So, having learned that God speaks to man in allegories, I choose to look at the Garden Story with this mindset. I choose to perceive the story and its elements with symbolism in mind. This “tree of the knowledge of good and evil”, I can see it as symbolizing man’s natural tendency to EVALUATE and FORM OPINIONS about everything.

From childhood, we gravitate towards our own independence and self-will. How often have we heard a child say, “But what’s WRONG with that?” And is that not how mankind lives and behaves even today? Is not MORALITY a powerful motivating and guiding force in man’s individual and collective behavior? When we talk, do we not say, “That’s GOOD!” or “That’s BAD!”? And isn’t it curious to note how morality, “right and wrong”, actually changes and modifies over the years, even within one’s own lifetime? What could be at one time “right” could then suddenly be “wrong”, and vice versa. This is an observable and indisputably real phenomenon. This is found in “fads”. What is “in style” one day, is suddenly “out of style” another day. Even the market as a whole is DRIVEN by opinions.

When I LIKE SOMETHING to the point of BUYING something, it means that I have decided that I will be benefited and exalted in one way or another by the purchase (commitment to adopt and value) of something or other, whether that item be a TANGIBLE GOOD, or an INTANGIBLE CONCEPT OR PRINCIPLE. The world runs on this phenomenon without question. A powerful recent example of this is the sudden awareness of “global warming”. Suddenly it is “bad” to burn fossil fuels, and “good” to find alternate sources of energy. Morality evolves through time. For ages, homosexuality was regarded by society as “bad”. Now, it is not so bad after all. Why? Because morality changes over time. Morality is nothing more than opinions in the minds of people. Opinions are not ABSOLUTE ENTITIES OR CONCEPTS in their own right. We are told that we are made in God’s IMAGE. We are told that we have His character traits. So if morality is allowed to be entirely flexible within man, then we must allow it to be flexible in God, the Creator. If man forms and harbors opinions, then God FORMS AND HARBOURS OPINIONS. LET US KEEP THIS IN MIND.

What does this mean, “of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat”? My logical conclusion as to its meaning is: “You will NOT form and harbor INDEPENDENT OPINIONS; you will adopt and value MY (your father’s) opinions and make them your own.” When God said this to Adam, He was GUARANTEEING that eventually someone was going to rebel, if not Adam, then one of his progeny. We are made in God’s image. We have His character traits. The most powerful character trait is our desire to BE LIKE GOD, to be SOVEREIGN. It was just a matter of time...

This human trait is the one that can be genuinely identified and acknowledged today. Upon what is DEMOCRACY built? Upon what is the ECONOMY built? What causes countless WARS AND CONFLICTS among people? EVERYONE WANTS TO BE THE BOSS. But NO ONE WANTS TO BE SUBORDINATE. It is the perfect formula for EVERLASTING CONFLICT. Wills are perpetually competing for domination and supremacy.

7. Genesis 2:18 And the Lord God said, “It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him.”

Let us take careful note here. If we stay true to the chronology, God had already created Adam, the man, and had already placed him in the Garden to tend and to keep it with the instructions already having been given to him, particularly the one about not eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. In other words, Eve, the woman, was NOT YET FORMED OR PRESENT. Yet Adam had already lived and related with God for a period of time. God had already established his covenant with Adam the man, not with the woman. In fact, the very next verses in Genesis say that God had created the animals first and brought them to Adam for him to “name”. How long did this last? Has Adam stopped naming animals?

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I can see this as being God's process of teaching and revelation. Parading the animals before Adam introduced him to the idea of "male and female". Animals came in the two types in order to together REPRODUCE and multiply by producing progeny. Hmm... So after time, Adam will have noticed that HE WAS ALONE in that respect. He had no reproduction partner like the animals. He was not able to have progeny like the animals. That was ultimately all part of God's plan. So after placing Adam "in a deep sleep" and "taking his rib" to form the woman, God brought the woman to Adam and introduced her to him (again in the intended spirit of stewardship, NOT OWNERSHIP).

8. Genesis 2:23-24 And Adam said, "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined (**cleave**) to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

This is Adam's natural response to God's "gift" of the woman. Man says, "WOO! MAN!" No? We have to laugh. This is the nature of the man in regards to the woman. To man, woman is the culmination of all of creation. She is the ONE thing that man values in this world more than anything else, sadly, even more than his relationship with his Father.

And sadly, because of our natural tendency, we bring our selfish mindset to the above text and make it say something different than was intended. We have collectively decided and agreed that God COMMANDED the man to leave his father and mother in order to pursue the woman and cling to her FOR DEAR LIFE as is said in verse 24. Or was it a COMMANDMENT? If it were a commandment, to "leave (forsake) father and mother IN ORDER TO CLEAVE TO (PURSUE) WOMAN", then why would God appear to contradict himself by stating in Deuteronomy 10:20 (kjv), "*Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God; him shalt thou serve, and to him shalt thou cleave, and swear by his name.*" This is the exact same word as "**cleave** to his wife" in the text above. And again in Deuteronomy 11:22 (kjv), "*For if ye shall diligently keep all these commandments which I command you, to do them, to love the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, and to cleave unto him;*" the same word, "**cleave**", is used. And again, in Deuteronomy 13:4 (kjv), He says, "*Ye shall walk after the LORD your God, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and ye shall serve him, and cleave unto him.*" And again it says in Deuteronomy 30:20 (kjv), "*That thou mayest love the LORD thy God, and that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him: for he is thy life, and the length of thy days: that thou mayest dwell in the land which the LORD sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them.*" We could continue with many more scriptures using this same word in different circumstances, but these are enough to get the meaning of the word "**cleave**". It must mean "to pursue with determination, to make the securing and obtaining a PRIORITY."

So, did God command man to forsake father and mother and "cleave" unto the woman, as is believed by Christians AND non-Christians alike? God instructs Israel by saying in Exodus 20:12 (kjv), "*Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.*"

When would God command a man to forsake his father and mother? Even Jesus rebuked the religious leaders of his day pertaining to this very commandment. They had modified and changed the meaning and intent of this instruction to the point of making it of no effect:

Matthew 15:3-6 (DfG) But he answered and said to them, "Why do you also sidestep the instruction of God by your tradition? For God said, '*Honour your father and your mother*'; and, '*He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death*'. But you say, 'Whoever says to his father or mother, "Whatever profit you might have received from me is a gift (without obligation)" is released from honouring his father.' Thus you have made the word of God of no effect by your tradition."

So ultimately, if I am honest and logical about it, the statement in Genesis 2:24 must NOT be a commandment but rather can only be a COMMENT by the author of the book in regards to the natural predilection of man to prefer Woman and side with Creation rather than with his PROGENITOR, his GIVER OF LIFE. The comment can then be paraphrased thusly: "Because man has fallen 'head over heels in love' with woman, he will forsake everything and choose to

pursue her (the flesh) and make his relationship with her his priority.” She represents the world and the flesh to man. She represents the GREAT ALTERNATIVE to God for man. Is man doomed to forever remain in this condition? He would have to overcome this natural tendency in order to return to God the Father and receive EVERLASTING LIFE by restoring peace and harmony between himself and God, his FATHER. That IS man’s perpetual dilemma and challenge.

So returning to the spirit and intent of God, Adam was intended to have Eve AS A STEWARD, not as an owner. She was placed under Adam’s care AND authority. She was to answer to Adam JUST AS Adam was to answer to God. This is not to say that Adam was supposed to FORCE Eve in any way against her will. Look at how God treated Adam. God gave Adam FREE WILL, FREEDOM OF CHOICE in regards to his relationship with God. Therefore, God gave Eve the same freedom of choice in regards to her relationship with Adam AS AN EXTENSION to her relationship with God.

As noted above, God established a relationship of responsibility and accountability with Adam BEFORE EVE WAS INTRODUCED to Adam. And Eve’s responsibility and accountability to God was THROUGH Adam, as we will soon see.

9. Genesis 3:1-6 Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, “Has God indeed said, ‘You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?’” And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which *is* in the midst of the garden, God has said, ‘You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die’.” And the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.

Of course, I have never met a serpent that speaks. So what could this serpent symbolize seeing that it must be allegorical? It couldn’t have been Adam. So who was speaking to Eve? Was it some “ghost” or “disembodied spirit”? Today, now, when there is no one else around me, who speaks to me? Is it not myself? Do I not find myself speaking to myself at any time, anywhere? Here, I can understand Eve naturally speaking to herself just like any person does today.

So, remembering the chronology again, Eve was not present when God instructed Adam about the trees and such. So everything that she must have heard would have come through Adam, her steward, her head. So following her natural tendencies, she would have doubted everything Adam would have told her. She could easily distort what she heard because of her own natural mindset. Being created in the image of God, she would have the same character traits as God, naturally gravitating toward insubordination, independence, and ultimately sovereignty, just like Adam. Her tendency would be to “know better”, to have the “power of discernment”, to “know between right and wrong”. So the serpent here must symbolize “the inner voice”.

So, not trusting Adam’s reliability and God-given status as head, she challenges him by testing him. How? She overcomes her initial apprehensions pertaining to the eating of the fruit, and she samples it. She would have experienced a moment of vindication when, upon eating of the fruit, NOTHING HAPPENED! Wow! Adam would have been TAKEN ABACK. Adam himself would have ended up doubting his own senses and his relationship with this God. He would have been at a loss as to justifying his stand before her. So, for whatever reasons, Adam decided to gamble and to go along with his woman, Eve, and he sampled the fruit as well.

But LOOK! What IMMEDIATELY happened when Adam ate of the fruit?

10. Genesis 3:7 Then the eyes of **both** of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings.

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When she ate, nothing happened to her. It was only when Adam ate of that forbidden fruit that they both experienced a fundamental change. What happened? They didn't physically fall dead. What happened? They were suddenly aware of something of which they were not aware before. THEY HAD NO CLOTHING OR COVERING. They felt "naked", "exposed", "VULNERABLE". This was new and different. They were suddenly no longer "safe" and "innocent". They were now "guilty", "ACCOUNTABLE". Their "guilt" was accompanied by feelings of "embarrassment". They needed to cover themselves with something. So they sewed fig leaves together and made for themselves coverings to help assuage their feelings of "exposure".

Even to this day, we naturally seek to cover up something that may make us look bad before others. We naturally want to protect ourselves from "reproach" and "attack". And when it comes to embarrassing and shameful deeds, due to our pride, we tend to cover up with EXCUSES rather than admit and seek reconciliation. Guilt and shame are normal realities with which we all live. We really don't know any different.

In fact, upon deeper examination, Man experienced FEAR for the first time. He actually had to cover himself, and when he heard God approaching, he HID himself, cowering in FEAR.

What is fear? Adam had just taken something that God had forbidden him from taking: HIS INDEPENDENCE. Then from that moment on, in order to KEEP HIS INDEPENDENCE AND SOVEREIGNTY, Adam would thenceforth have to DEFEND his sovereignty and independence, just like people all over the world today. Man is in perpetual CONFLICT, conflict of competing SOVEREIGNTIES. EVERYONE wants the very same thing that EVERYONE ELSE WANTS: TO BE GOD, TO BE THE HEAD OVER EVERYONE ELSE. That is human nature. It starts off in a small way by ASSERTING sovereignty over SELF. At such a moment, the child suddenly becomes an adult in character and nature.

After asserting sovereignty over self, man seeks to extend his sovereignty to an ever growing dominion. Man is never contented. He seeks to claim dominion over as much of the world (and now beyond) as possible. Man EVEN DARES TO CLAIM sovereignty IN HEAVEN. That is the ROOT of RELIGIOUS and INTELLECTUAL conflict.

People with varying talents and abilities still all share the same root NATURE of wanting sovereignty, GODHOOD. So that is why there is SO MUCH VARIETY in the world today. The ECONOMY is the ARENA wherein individual people compete and negotiate pieces of the kingdom (dominion) of God. No single man will ever be allowed to hold the entire kingdom for himself. It is not POSSIBLE. There are too many competing foes. And man is simply TOO WEAK AND VULNERABLE as a man to be able to defend such a dominion. Man WANTS TO BE GOD, but DOES NOT HAVE GOD'S POWER to in fact BE GOD. So man tends to content himself in comparing himself with others. He contents himself in "being the richest man in the world", or "selling the most records", or "holding the world record for something...", or whatever claim to fame that an individual may have.

So what is FEAR? FEAR is nothing more that the feeling of being threatened to have someone else's will IMPOSED. Fear is the feeling associated with the threat of having MY WILL contravened. It is my instinct of SELF-PRESERVATION, SELF-DEFENSE.

In 4:18 of John's first letter, John says (kjv), "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because **fear hath torment** (since the very beginning). He that feareth is not made perfect in love."

When nothing happened when Eve ate the fruit proves that Adam had the final say in the outcome for both of them. He didn't have to go along with Eve's suggestion. If he hadn't eaten of the fruit, if he had stayed true to his Father, God, things would have turned out differently. Adam would have had to approach God and discuss this matter with Him. "What do I do with her, Father? She's trying to get me to side with her against You. She wants me to compromise myself. What should I do?" And God would have dealt with Adam in whatever way He saw fit. But at least Adam would have remained faithful to his father and would NOT have killed their relationship.

But the way it actually turned out is what is important. When Adam ate of the forbidden fruit, they were both ashamed and fearful. They sewed fig leaves into garments. Then later, when God came to visit with Adam, He found them hiding. Ultimately, God confronted the whole situation. After confronting Adam:

11. Genesis 3:12-13 Then the man said, “The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate.” And the Lord God said to the woman, “What is this you have done?” And the woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”

Instead of taking full responsibility for his own actions, Adam tried to “cover up” by “passing the buck”. Adam DEFENDED himself. He even tried to blame God for his actions by saying, “The woman whom YOU gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate.” Adam could have said, “Yes, Father, I ate of the fruit. I’m ashamed, and I’m sorry. Is there any way I could make up for it? Is there any way for me to undo this deed?” Instead, Adam proceeded to continue living for around nine hundred years away from God, his Father, and begat many children. By the time the flood of Noah occurred, there must have been millions of progeny filling the earth. In fact, “a thousand years is like a day to God”. So in that sense, not only did Adam immediately kill his relationship with God, Adam died physically within one “God day” (a thousand years). To make it all the more poignant, the family that Adam valued more than God was ALL destroyed at the time of the flood.

Noah couldn’t really be considered a true son of Adam because he had a different attitude towards God. Noah was found to be righteous before God. That is the reason why Noah was spared. If there was not one man found to be righteous on all the earth, God would have started all over with another “Adam”.

Strangely, even Eve “passes the buck” and blames the “serpent” of all things. She thought it was OK, and she ate. I suspect that Adam had pointed out a particular tree to Eve, and called it the “tree of the knowledge of good and evil”. And at some point, Eve could have witnessed a serpent take a bite of the so-called forbidden fruit. Of course, the serpent would have been unharmed. So using her own logic, she would have deduced all of the things that she deduced and one thing leads to another. And voilà! A soap opera was born...

12. Genesis 3:14 So the Lord God said to the serpent; “Because you have done this, you are cursed more than all cattle, and more than every beast of the field;”

Come on. Is God speaking to a serpent? Or is God speaking to what the serpent represents, the whole process of independent deduction and rebellion, the insubordinate attitude, the earthly mindset in man? God is telling Adam that this whole thing that the serpent represents is the lowest thing in God’s opinion. God loathes it and stated His unchangeable position in regards to it. “If you value the ‘serpent’ (the earthly mindset), you are clinging to the thing that I despise, Adam and Eve. It’s entirely up to you. You have the choice. But accompanying this cursed ‘way of thinking’ are consequences, consequences that you will never be able to escape while clinging to the ‘serpent’.” God equates the serpent with “eating the dust of the earth”, the lowest of the low.

13. Genesis 3:16 To the woman He said, “I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; in pain you shall bring forth children; your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.”

Isolating the woman, God describes the consequences that will apply to her while clinging to her earthly mindset. And to top it off, God tells her that her desire shall continue to be for her husband. The word “desire” (Hebrew “tesh-oo-kaw) occurs only three times in the Old Testament. It is a strong desire for possession and control. The context explains the meaning. We will encounter this same word soon when God addresses Cain before he slew his brother Abel.

Eve will want to possess and have her way with Adam. She knows that she can’t overpower him physically, but she will instinctively seek to overpower him with her “assets” one way or another. But God warns her that no matter what, the man would ultimately still have the final say over hers. She would be able to do NOTHING except what the man would allow her to do. That is a historical fact. Woman would have absolutely no sway in society EXCEPT for what authority MAN grants her. If man were to not grant her any authority collectively, she would be powerless to do anything about it. And when an individual man sides with God instead of her, she has no power over him. He has

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chosen to be a spiritual “virgin”. (See Revelations 14:4)

So what has transpired as a result of this original situation is man’s perpetual conflict, conflict between man and man, but especially between man and woman, “the battle of the sexes”. It is not really a battle as such, but rather man’s inner struggle with himself. The woman is the tool that best addresses his inner condition. If man decided to side with God, there would be no “battle” with woman. Adam would finally let her go instead of finding all kinds of illegitimate ways to try to have her. It is man’s unfettered covetousness that keeps him in perpetual slavery and hell. Man **COVETS** the woman. Man wants her for his **VERY OWN**, but she will never belong to him for real. God has decreed this. She will accompany man for a time with the express purpose of teaching him and revealing him **TO HIMSELF**. What Adam wants of Eve is what God wants of Adam. What Adam likes in Eve, God likes in Adam. What Adam detests in Eve, God detests in Adam. She is the perfect mirror.

14. Genesis 3:17-19 Then to Adam He said, “Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, ‘You shall not eat of it:’ cursed is the ground for your sake; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you are, and to dust you shall return.”

God didn’t say, “Because you’ve eaten of the tree,” He said, “**BECAUSE YOU HAVE HEEDED THE VOICE OF YOUR WIFE...**” God was not addressing the act, he was addressing the very reason, the motive for the act. God was rebuking Adam for listening to his woman **INSTEAD** of God, his **FATHER**. How clearer must it be before Adam will finally learn? “Because you preferred woman, you loved and sided with the creation instead of your **SPIRIT FATHER**, your **GIVER OF LIFE**, you will suffer greatly in your struggle for survival. But ultimately you will physically die.” Alienation from God is death.

15. Genesis 3:22-24 Then the Lord God said, “Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever;” therefore the Lord God sent him out of the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken. So He drove out the man; and He placed cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life.

Again, the two trees mentioned in the Garden of Eden are symbolic. Just as the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is an attitude, a mindset, a way of being, so is the Tree of Life an attitude, a mindset, and a way of being. In fact, in the original Hebrew, it is not “tree of life”, but rather the “**LIVING TREE**”. When Jesus used the analogy of the vine to describe the apostle/disciple relationships that he and his disciples would espouse, he was describing the “**LIVING TREE**”, the “**TREE OF LIFE**”, the “**God Family Tree**”. Anyone of the Elohim Family Tree lives forever. Those of the earthly mindset and priority are **NOT** part of the Elohim family. They are of below, of the dust of the earth.

God had originally intended the physical family of Adam to be at the same time the **SPIRIT FAMILY OF GOD**, the Tree of Life. They were intended to be overlapped and simultaneous. But with Adam’s alienation, God had to start building His Spirit Family somewhere else. He prepared the way by setting apart a people, Israel, by which a firstborn would volunteer to be the first of **GOD’S FAMILY**, the reconciled and restored Adam. This one happened to be Jesus of Nazareth. And in that position of reconciled Adam, Jesus was to bear spirit progeny as the original Adam was intended to do: “Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth, and subdue it...”

It is also strange how God refers to Himself in the **PLURAL**, “*Behold, the man has become like one of **US**...*” As I explained in the earlier work, and as is suggested just here above, God’s intent is to have a **FAMILY**, a family of **ELOHIM**. This was the essence of Jesus’ message. This is also the essence in the book of Genesis when addressing Adam. Adam was never intended to strike out on his own and start his **OWN** family. He was really intended to remain a son of God and continue

GOD'S family. Today, we are born into the family of Adam, not Elohim. Jesus said (John 3:6), *"That which is born of flesh is flesh; that which is born of spirit is spirit."* So the contrast is made even in Genesis. It is not as clearly stated, but it is described indirectly by the story recounted. Jesus states it much more clearly. And John states it clearly in his three letters, particularly in the first one.

16. Genesis 4:6-7 So the Lord said to Cain, "Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not well, sin lies at the door. And its **desire** is for you, but you should rule over it."

Here, the emotion of "anger" is introduced. God asks Cain, "Why are you angry?" So what is anger? Is it not the instinctive reaction to a thwarted and frustrated will?

A little earlier, I pointed out the word "desire", as in, "Your desire shall be for your husband." This is the second of three places throughout the Old Testament where this word is used. God addresses Cain prior to the murder of Abel his brother, (based on original Hebrew text) "...Is there not, if you do well, exaltation? And if not you do well, at the opening sin is crouching (ready to pounce); and toward you (is) its desire. But you should rule over it." Jesus said to the Pharisees in John 8:34, "Whoever practices sin is the slave of sin..." We are being told that Cain had the choice, just like his father, Adam, to surrender to "sin", the eating of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, or to rule over it. INTERESTING.

The prevailing christian teaching is that ALL MEN are born with the ORIGINAL SIN. Why then did God address Cain IN THIS WAY if this were in fact true? We are NOT necessarily born WITHOUT CHOICE sinners. In fact, Jesus says elsewhere, "Unless you become as LITTLE CHILDREN, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven." So if Cain was NOT born with Adam's original sin as God Himself declared here, what then? What lesson can we derive from these few words? Like Adam, Cain HAD THE CHOICE. What choice? He had the choice to give into and surrender to his sinful TENDENCY or POTENTIAL. Cain could have RESISTED the temptation to give into his FEELINGS and natural inclination to INDEPENDENCE. Cain could have decided to come to Abel, his righteous brother, and to God and to Adam in order to get to the bottom of this whole God/Man relationship matter. But no, Cain chose the path of "least resistance" and chose to "kill God by substitution" by killing Abel. As the text describes, Abel was righteous before God whereas Cain was not. And Cain was ANGRY for God not accepting him as he was. Cain was angry that God was not impressed by his "offering". Cain refused to seek to comply with God's conditions and requirements for RIGHTEOUSNESS. Cain wasn't interested in GENUINELY PLEASING GOD. Cain wasn't coming to God on God's terms, but rather demanding God to accept him on his own terms.

I can't help but observe this story and apply it to myself. Throughout my life there were moments where I was genuinely angry with God. There were moments where I felt like lashing out and hurting someone because I was not being recognized and appreciated in my own right. Isn't that just human? Are we not motivated to IMPRESS rather than PLEASE? The world runs and functions on this principle. Who seeks to please another ON THE OTHER'S TERMS? We tend to try to impress others into "looking up" to us in admiration (worship), to influence them in one way or another. We want to impress others on OUR OWN TERMS, not theirs. Not only that, but we seek to impress AS MANY OTHERS AS WE CAN instead of SEEK TO PLEASE ONE AND ONLY ONE. That is human nature. We want to be somehow God, or rather displace Him. We don't want to be the subordinate, subject to another. That is human nature. But God states to Cain, "If you do PROPERLY, will you not be EXALTED (rewarded and lifted up)?" It is ultimately our choice. Cain had the choice to seek exaltation from God. He had the choice to seek to please God ON GOD'S TERMS. He had the choice to seek to be at peace with God rather than be at odds with Him.

So "sin" is being described here within this context as being a DECISION, A GIVING IN TO our natural tendency to NOT SEEK TO PLEASE GOD. It is not the tendency or predilection itself. "Sin" can be said to be the "pursuit of pleasing and exalting SELF on one's own terms". Whereas "righteousness" could be described as "the pursuit of pleasing God (someone other than myself) on His terms" IN SPITE of the natural inclinations.

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17. Genesis 6:1-3 Now it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born to them, that the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves of all whom they chose. And the Lord said, "My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he is indeed flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years."

In the Hebrew text, it says, "My Spirit shall not contend with man always IN THEIR ERRING..." They omitted this part in the King James Bible. Anyway, let us look at the above text. For some reason the writer refers to men as "sons of God". In the Hebrew text, it says, "The son of Elohim", singular. In other words, the writer lumps ALL MEN as the SON OF GOD. Interesting. Why? It must be because Adam (mankind) is figuratively the biological progeny of God. And according to Genesis, God took Adam's "rib" and formed the woman. So in the biblical sense, she is Adam's daughter, hence the expression above, "The daughters of Adam". This would be somewhat confusing otherwise. But the point is being made. Adam was created by God to relate with Him. God placed the FULL RESPONSIBILITY of the world on Adam's shoulders, including responsibility for the woman. She is Adam's WARD. Adam is the STEWARD. Adam IS NOT ACCOUNTABLE TO WOMAN, ONLY TO GOD.

But Adam rebelled against God, his Father, by GOING HIS OWN WAY WITHOUT REPENTANCE. Adam steadfastly stuck to his pride. He went to the point of declaring "woman", and his "family" as being GOOD (eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil). Adam valued his earthly family MORE THAN his reconciliation with God, HIS FATHER. He remained in that condition of ERRING unto his physical death. In fact, mankind collectively stood fast upon his erring mentality and attitude all the way to the Great Flood of Noah. Even Jesus quoted this fact. "Just as in the days of Noah where men were eating, drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, and then the flood came and took them all away, so shall it be for this WICKED AND ADULTEROUS GENERATION." In other words, both God and Jesus had nothing good to say about man's erroneous practice of VALUING AND PURSUING WOMAN and EARTHLY FAMILY. It is all in vain in the end. "Man is INDEED FLESH," God says, "And I will NOT strive with him forever IN HIS ERRING."

God sees all of mankind as ONE ENTITY, ADAM. So when he says that He will not strive with Adam forever, that means, MANKIND will not be allowed to remain in his condition of straying and error FOREVER. There will be a day where God will decisively end it once and for all, even if it means total earthly ANNIHILATION, as in the day of the Flood of Noah. But, to my understanding, God has a better plan in mind. The prophets say in many places that God will in fact take away "Jacob's erring" for good. God goes to the point of saying, "...his days shall be one hundred and twenty years." I wonder what that means. We can see it meaning that any one specimen of Adam would not be allowed to live any more than 120 years. Yet throughout the ANTEDILUVIAN age, before the Great Flood, men normally lived close to a thousand years (almost one "God" day). And later on in Genesis, we read that Noah still lived to be 900 years old, 300 years after the flood. And many of the biblical characters lived far beyond the 120 year limit, including Abraham himself. So that can't be exactly what he meant. I've heard it said by preachers that God declared this 120 years prior to the flood, hence the 120 year period leading up to the flood. SO WHAT DID GOD MEAN BY THIS STATEMENT, "...his days shall be one hundred and twenty years"? I suspect, again, only suspect, that God was talking symbolically of 120 GENERATIONS, NOT YEARS.

It is not something over which to get obsessed. But it is very interesting to note that Jesus was the 62nd generation OF ADAM, four thousand years after creation according to the Biblical chronology. Jesus was the 42nd generation since Abraham according to Matthew which spanned roughly two thousand years. All I am saying is that, no matter what, God is sovereign. Man is not. If God sees fit to "blow the whistle" at any point in the "game", He is entirely authorized and able to do so. God has ALLOWED man to stubbornly cling to his "independence" during all of this time, and He is quite capable of DECISIVELY informing man of his error, and to no longer allow man to continue convincing himself of being JUSTIFIED in his erring. In other words, as far as I am concerned, God will at some point COMPLETELY ABOLISH RELIGION, particularly the one pertaining to the Hebrew Bible and the Hebrew tradition. That includes ALL OF CHRISTIANITY.

God will ONCE AND FOR ALL inform man that IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO EAT FROM THE TREE OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL AND YET LIVE (NOT DIE) as the serpent so craftily told Eve in the Garden of Eden. Religion, by deduction, is the practice of “eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil WITH GOD’S IMAGINED SANCTION.”

18. Genesis 16:1-2 Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no children. And she had an Egyptian maidservant whose name was Hagar. So Sarai said to Abram, “See now, the Lord has restrained me from bearing children. Please, go into my maid; perhaps I shall obtain children by her.” And Abram heeded the voice of Sarai.

Sarai thought to herself. She used her own logic and deduced that God was not going to fulfill His promise by having Sarai bear a child. So, using her own deduction, she suggests to Abram to use Hagar, Sarai’s servant, as a surrogate, a proxy womb. Then it says that Abram “went along with Sarai’s suggestion”. So just as Eve influenced Adam, so does Sarai influence Abram. It is not just a generic influence. It is an influence contradicting and vetoing God’s communication with man. Just as Adam’s heeding of Eve brought about a terrible consequence upon people, SO DID ABRAM’S heeding of Sarai bring about a terrible consequence upon mankind. Hagar bore a son called Ishmael, the ancestor to the Arab peoples. At that time, God declared in Genesis 16(11-12) (kjv), And the angel of the LORD said unto her (Hagar), “Behold, thou *art* with child and shalt bear a son, and shalt call his name Ishmael; because the LORD hath heard thy affliction. And he will be a wild man; his hand *will be* against every man, and every man's hand against him; and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren.” It almost sounds like a perpetual thorn in everyone’s side.

This example here with Abram is a demonstration of God’s desire to have communion with someone. But God, being who He is, is perfectly demanding and strict. God had decided from the beginning that he was going to have His relationship with Man, not with Man THROUGH Woman. God told Abram directly that he was going to have a son, not only a son but progeny that number as the stars of the heavens, that number as the dust of the earth. God ultimately tested Abram’s faith in this situation. “Will He value his relationship with Me so much that he is willing to gamble everything for it? Will he be willing to stake his reputation and life on My words or not?”

19. Exodus 13:11-15 “And it shall be, when the Lord brings you into the land of the Canaanites, as He swore to you and your fathers, and gives it to you, that you shall set apart to the Lord all that open the womb, that is, every firstling that comes from an animal which you have; the males shall be the Lord’s. But every firstling of a donkey you shall redeem with a lamb; and if you will not redeem it, then you shall break its neck. And all the firstborn of man among your sons you shall redeem. So it shall be, when your son asks you in time to come, saying, ‘What is this?’ that you shall say to him, ‘By strength of hand the Lord brought us out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. And it came to pass, when Pharaoh was stubborn about letting us go, that the Lord killed all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both the firstborn of man and the firstborn of animal. Therefore I sacrifice to the Lord all males that open the womb, but all the firstborn of my sons I redeem’.”

God is repeating something important here. He cloaked it in physical imagery. But the sense is clearly made. God is placing emphasis upon the God/Man relationship here. Man needs to be “redeemed” (delivered). Man needs to repent and effect reconciliation on behalf of himself AND woman, his ward. Man is continually God’s main contender and main purpose. God continually deals with mankind through Adam, not Eve. Adam needs to “come out of her”. Revelations 18(4) (kjv), And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, “*Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.*” This is NOT, I repeat, NOT to promote “male chauvinism”. It has nothing to do with it. Man is to CEASE AND DESIST his PERPETUAL PURSUIT OF THE CREATION! It cannot be said any simpler or more clearly. Adam is to once and for all ADMIT to the facts and FINALLY decide to seek reconciliation with God, the Father. Otherwise, there is nothing but pain and death awaiting. That IS the message of the entire Old Testament, AND the Gospel of Jesus Christ. How much longer must God TOLERATE man in his erring? How much

longer must Adam TEST GOD'S PATIENCE? Let us put it another way. God does not put the RESPONSIBILITY of reconciliation upon woman. God does not see woman as being responsible for Adam's decision and erring. Adam is responsible and it is Adam who must "face the music". Woman is released of this responsibility. If a woman in her heart desires to see man reconciled with God, the best that she can do is faithfully and patiently submit to God THROUGH HER HUSBAND and trust God to deal with him. She need NOT be concerned with correcting Adam or changing him in any way IN ORDER TO secure salvation for herself. It is not her responsibility. It is Adam's responsibility to face God FOR HIMSELF. She will enjoy reconciliation with God WHEN Adam reconciles with God.

20. Exodus 20:17 "You shall not covet your neighbour's house; you shall not covet your neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbour's."

Here, God is instructing that the woman is subordinate to the man. She is his ward. He is the STEWARD. And as such, fellow men of God's people are to learn and to keep this mindset. In GOD'S HOUSE, man is the steward, not the owner. GOD OWNS EVERYTHING. Therefore everyone of God's house is responsible and answerable for THAT WHICH HE HAS BEEN ENTRUSTED FROM ABOVE. Therefore covetousness is a nonsensical concept to those of God's household. We are all BROTHERS, all those of God's household. And we must address and manage all that is in our care ACCORDING TO THE EXPRESSED INSTRUCTIONS of the FATHER, who is ULTIMATELY GOD. Because we do not actually own anything, we are NOT free to use and abuse all that is in our care ACCORDING TO OUR OWN OPINIONS AND WISHES. "Adam, Man, you have been told from the beginning, 'You will NOT eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for in the day that you eat of it you will surely die'." Ultimately, we are coveting GOD'S belongings if we covet our neighbor's "belongings".

21. Exodus 21:1-11 "Now these are the judgments which you shall set before them: If you buy a Hebrew servant, he shall serve six years; and in the seventh he shall go out free and pay nothing. If he comes in by himself, he shall go out himself; if he comes in married, then his wife shall go out with him. If his master has given him a wife, and she has borne him sons or daughters, the wife and her children shall be her master's, and he shall go out by himself. But if the servant plainly says, 'I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free'; then his master shall bring him to the judges. He shall also bring him to the door, or to the doorpost, and his master shall pierce his ear with an awl; and he shall serve him forever. And if a man sells his daughter to be a maidservant, she shall not go out as the manservants do. If she does not please her master, who has betrothed her to himself, then he shall let her be redeemed. He shall have no right to sell her to a foreign people, since he has dealt deceitfully with her. And if he has betrothed her to his son, he shall deal with her according to the custom of daughters. If he takes another wife, he shall not diminish her food, her clothing, and her "marriage rights" (Direct from Hebrew: PROTECTIVE SHELTER). And if he does not do these three for her, then she shall go out free, without paying money."

As part of the instructions set out by God to Israel, this one appears particularly perplexing. But again, keeping the spirit or theme of God in mind, we can re-examine this passage. If a Hebrew man "contracts" himself to serve another Hebrew man, it is in the spirit of "indenture", "paying of a debt". This particular instruction does specify that if the servant enters the time of service already having a wife, he gets to leave with her (and by extension her children) upon conclusion of the six year period. But strangely enough, if the man came in wifeless, and his master supplied him a woman during this six year period, THE WOMAN BELONGED TO THE MASTER, NOT THE SERVANT. Again, this is in the spirit of STEWARDSHIP, NOT OWNERSHIP. She was in a sense "assigned to" the servant by the master. She was to be the servant's WARD, NOT POSSESSION. This helped to teach and to train the mindset of STEWARDSHIP within the community of Israel as a whole. And if this assigned woman had children by him, they STILL

BELONGED TO THE MASTER as though the master were in fact the FATHER OF THE CHILDREN. WOW! God is ruthless sometimes, isn't He? We tend to say, "But that's WRONG!" Who says God is wrong? Is God EVER WRONG? To whom does God answer and give an account? Who is above God? Interesting. Rather than try to change the words or meanings of the above text, or justify our own mindset and opinions, let us listen to what God is teaching us. He is teaching us about SUBORDINATION, and STEWARDSHIP, and FAITHFULNESS.

After that, there is an interesting proviso included. If the servant (temporary slave) decided that he wanted to stay permanently with his master, all he had to say was "I want to stay". Therefore, the servant was to be promoted to adoptive SON. He was no longer a servant. THIS IS AN EXTREMELY IMPORTANT ASPECT OF THIS INSTRUCTION. God was giving many clues and hints pertaining to His MIND, His WISHES, His WAY OF THINKING. Jesus said, "The servant does not abide in the house forever, BUT THE SON ABIDES FOREVER!" What more could be said? This is the very HEART of God's Mind. This is what God is seeking from us.

Of course, we could also look at it from the other side. If the world is my master, and I plainly say that I "love my master, my wife and children", I will be enslaved in the world. Again, Jesus said elsewhere, "Whoever loves father, mother, wife, children, brothers, etc, more than me, is not worthy of me." "There where your treasure is, there be your heart also."

So, AFTER SIX THOUSAND YEARS, will man plainly say that he loves his earthly existence more than reconciliation with God? Good question.

In the following portion, God is suggesting in the instruction that the woman is NOT man's possession to be dominated and abused. If the woman is not "pleasing" to the man, as in "she is not willing to fit into my life and my household", she is to be "set free", "let go". There is no point in trying to hang on to her if she is being rebellious. But if she is trying to be subordinate and to fit in, then the man MUST NOT seek to dismiss her or "get rid of her". She is a WARD, not a selfish POSSESSION. The man is supposed to see himself as a STEWARD. Again, this is another aspect of God's mind. He wants willingness. He wants willing VOLUNTEERS to be part of His household, not rebellious, reluctant, unwilling participants. This is very important to God. If anyone has the power to force anyone into compliance, it would be God. Yet God has decided and decreed that ONLY WILLING PARTICIPANTS are to be part of His household. All others are considered "foreigners", "outsiders".

22. Exodus 22:16-17 "And if a man entices a virgin who is not betrothed, and lies with her, he shall surely pay the bride price for her to be his wife. If her father utterly refuses to give her to him, he shall pay money according to the bride price of virgins."

This instruction is meant to address man's attitude towards his daughter more than anything. For some reason, man covets HIS OWN DAUGHTER. He wants her selfishly for his own glorification as a "possession", not as a WARD OR TRUST from above. If a man entices an uncommitted daughter, he is also guilty of covetousness. He wants to satisfy his lust for INDEPENDENT GLORIFICATION. He doesn't see himself as part of a unit, God's family, God's household. HE SUCCUMBS to his drive to BUILD HIS OWN HOUSE. By her own willingness to lie with the man, she is also guilty of not being faithful to her father. In Deuteronomy 22(28-29) (kjv), they elaborate on a similar yet different circumstance: "*If a man find a damsel that is a virgin, which is not betrothed, and lay hold on her, and lie with her, and they be found; then the man that lay with her shall give unto the damsel's father fifty shekels of silver, and she shall be his wife; because he hath humbled her, he may not put her away all his days.*" This was done outside of the authorization of the damsel's father. It was in fact an ACT OF VIOLENCE. In Exodus, they specify that the man ENTICED the damsel. In the Deuteronomy case, she was forced to lie with the man, but outside the father's authority (she was not "sold" to the man), the man has in fact "married" the damsel but is NOT ALLOWED to EVER PUT HER AWAY like an ordinary betrothal. If she doesn't please him, he can't divorce her. She probably ended up tormenting the man. That was his "punishment". More than that, it is God's opinion of the matter. He has an already established plan and purpose for man. Yet God allows for erring in the way that He sees fit out of mercy in order to give man the opportunity to learn.

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Most importantly, in both of these similar cases, whether the woman lay with the man willingly or not, SHE WAS NOW CONSIDERED HIS WIFE IN GOD'S OPINION. In both cases, the woman was meant to remain a SUBORDINATE, IN THE FATHER'S HOUSE, AND IN HER HUSBAND'S HOUSE. She has a different role than man. The rules are different for her in God's opinion. Since Adam and Eve, God has placed the woman UNDER THE MAN'S AUTHORITY. And that is the common point that is being stated in both of these scriptural texts, Exodus 22:16-17 and Deuteronomy 22:28-29.

But at least this was not treated as adultery with another man's previously betrothed woman. In that case, if she were raped by the man, the man was to be put to death. If she lay willingly with the man, they were both considered adulterers and were both to be put to death.

23. Exodus 23:17 "Three times in the year all your males shall appear before the Lord God."

God is making a strong point here that He wants MAN, ADAM, to repent and to reconcile with God. Adam is responsible for himself AND for the woman BY EXTENSION. "Adam, where are you? Don't you want to be my son?" If man returns to God, woman will also with him.

24. Leviticus 18:8 "The nakedness of your father's wife you shall not uncover; it is your father's nakedness."

God sees the woman as PART of her man. How I treat the mother IS how I treat the father. God doesn't see her as separate. It is in the same theme as when Jesus says, "Whoever receives whomever I am bidding receives me; and whoever receives me receives the One bidding me." God is hinting strongly at what he wants for us. He wants us to be ONE with Him, NOT SEPARATE FROM HIM. In John 17(20-21) (kjv), Jesus prays to God, "*Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me **through their word**; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.*"

On top of that, the word "nakedness", as is suggested in Genesis, after Adam and Eve ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, represents "GUILT" and "SHAME". So if a son exposes his father's "NAKEDNESS", the son is committing an offense before God. The spiritual offense is not the act of removing physical clothing. That is MEANINGLESS before God. The act, spiritually speaking, is the act of EXPOSING THE FATHER'S GUILT OR SHAME, THE ACT OF HUMILIATING YOUR FATHER, THE OPPOSITE OF HONOURING YOUR FATHER. The son is forbidden to expose his father's NAKEDNESS. Again, the key is found in the statement, "You will NOT eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die." And if my earthly father HAPPENS TO BE MY HEAVENLY FATHER, in other words part of the Elohim family, then "pointing my finger of blame" at my father is in fact "pointing my finger of blame" at God Himself. "Pointing the finger of blame" is another way of saying "criticizing", "voicing my disapproval". And God is not pleased with such behavior and attitude. John says in his first letter, chapter 3(19-21) (DfG), "By this we will know that we are legitimate, when we surrender our heart to him. When our heart **points the finger of blame**, God is greater than our heart and He knows all. Beloved, when our **heart stops casting blame**, then we have total confidence in relation to God." And Jesus says in Matthew 12(33) (DfG), "Either declare the tree good and its fruit good, or else declare the tree bad and its fruit bad; for a tree is known by its fruit." Jesus was talking about a man, specifically A TEACHER. And in John 3(12) (DfG), "If I tell you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you ever believe when I tell you heavenly things?"

These are all clues in regards to a very important principle that God expresses and that He wants us to learn. When I become like a little child, my attitude towards my (heavenly) FATHER is that of complete trust and surrender. I CEASE EATING FROM THE TREE OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL. I cannot criticize Him and then expect Him to voice His approval of me after doing so. And if God has declared to me that I should treat a specific man here on earth as HIS REPRESENTATIVE, I must treat that man as God Himself. In other words, the very thing that MAN WANTS OF WOMAN, MAN MUST BE WILLING TO DO FIRST. God HAS indeed said that

a man is to HONOR HIS FATHER AND MOTHER (as unto GOD HIMSELF). But Jesus said, "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers? They are those who do the will of my Father, THE HEAVENLY." So Jesus fulfilled the Law by transposing it into the spirit where God intended it all along. But the instruction to HONOR FATHER AND MOTHER still applies, but in the spirit.

So WHO IS MY HEAVENLY FATHER therefore? Jesus says that it is "the Christ", God's appointed divine representative HERE ON EARTH. So who is MY heavenly father? Firstly, I must ask God that question. And He will MOST GLADLY answer because Jesus said that He would answer such requests. He will reveal which man He has chosen for me.

25. Leviticus 18:16 "You shall not uncover the nakedness of your brother's wife; it is your brother's nakedness."

Again, here is the same principle repeated. The wife is an EXTENSION of the husband, WHOEVER HE MAY BE. In this case, it is "my brother".

26. Leviticus 19:20 "Whoever lies carnally with a woman who is betrothed as a concubine to another man, and who has not at all been redeemed nor given her freedom, for this there shall be scourging; but they shall not be put to death, because she was not free."

27. Leviticus 20:10 "The man who commits adultery with another man's wife, he who commits adultery with his neighbour's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress, shall surely be put to death."

This is again the seriousness with which God views marriage, not the earthly definition of marriage, but the heavenly definition of marriage. And God is NOT addressing strangers and foreigners. He is addressing HIS PEOPLE, all those who have SWORN BY HIS NAME (sworn allegiance to Yehovah, the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Moses). Within these instructions, God's people will learn God's heart, God's intent, God's wish and mindset. We can't learn if we approach God with our own prejudices and preconditions. We must come to Him as LITTLE CHILDREN, knowing NOTHING, but willing to learn EVERYTHING. So spiritually speaking, if I covet and entice another man's wife to be UNFAITHFUL to her husband, I have been the instrument of temptation and betrayal. I have played the role of the SERPENT as in the garden of Eden. As well, I have committed the crime of covetousness, and of "theft" so-to-speak. I showed disrespect towards God's wishes, God's family plan. Ultimately, I acted in INDEPENDENCE. I did NOT do this deed in SUBORDINATION TO MY HEAVENLY FATHER. Any time that I do ANYTHING in independence, yet claim to be God's, I am deceiving myself. If I am genuinely SUBJECT to my heavenly father, everything that I do is within THAT FRAMEWORK, and nothing else. If I "went rogue" and slept with my neighbor's wife, I am guilty of INSUBORDINATION AND REBELLION towards the one to whom I am intended to be subject. So anything done IN REBELLION and INDEPENDENCE to my heavenly father is ultimately "eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil." The penalty for doing so is "death", being cut off from God's family, a branch pruned from the vine. That is why Jesus said to the rich young ruler in Matthew chapter 19, "IF YOU WANT TO BE PERFECT, go and sell all that you have and give to the poor, you will have treasures in heaven; come and follow me." And in Matthew 13:52 (DfG), Then he said to them, "Therefore every scribe disciplined into the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who **throws out** of his treasure things new and old."

It all boils down to this: if a man is a member of God's family, God's household, he MUST live by the will of the HEAD OF THE HOUSEHOLD, not his own. He cannot do just anything he wants and remain a member of the house. God states this viewpoint and opinion very clearly throughout the Scriptures. If we are "lawless", we are "**out**".

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28. Numbers 5:29 “This is the law of jealousy, when a wife, while under her husband’s authority, goes astray and defiles herself...”

This is fairly straight-forward. This instruction applies if a man senses that his wife is being unfaithful. We must really pay attention here. Let us not look at the letter of the law but rather at the “spirit” of the law. It never, ever talks about a WIFE being jealous of her husband. According to God’s mentality, a husband could NEVER be unfaithful to his wife. The wife could not claim ownership over her husband. In fact, the only way a husband could treat his wife “deceitfully” according to the words in Malachi 2:15-16 is by driving her away. That is the ONLY crime a man could commit regarding his wife according to GOD’S OWN WORDS. God hates the “putting away of the wife”, just as Jesus reiterated in Matthew. Putting a wife away forcibly places her in a state of jeopardy by making her go on her own, not being under the “protective umbrella” of her husband’s care and authority. Not only does this place her in a vulnerable condition of accountability, the man is NOT living up to the responsibility that GOD HAD PLACED UPON HIM in regards to the wife (his dependent).

So what is in fact being said here? Keeping the theme of STEWARDSHIP in mind, the man is not the owner, but is intended to be accountable to another in regards to HIMSELF and those under his care. His wife is a TRUST by his superior, his FATHER or FATHER-FIGURE. In an army, this is called a “superior officer”, the one to whom a soldier is answerable. See Jesus’ reaction to the centurion in Matthew 8:9-10 (kjv): “For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this *man*, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth *it*. When Jesus heard *it*, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, *Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.*”

So piece by piece, we are getting a clearer picture of God’s mindset, the heavenly mindset. The earthly mindset is the normal human mindset that prevails worldwide. The earthly mindset is INDEPENDENCE, and the BUILDING UP OF ONE’S OWN LIFE, HOUSE, and EGO. The earthly mindset is being ADULTS, whereas the heavenly mindset is being CHILDREN. Children are always under the authority and “protective custody” of another. When a child remains faithfully under the authority and guidance of his guardian, he is SAFE as far as God is concerned. If the child rebels and goes on his own, he is NO LONGER SAFE as far as God is concerned. Everything is to be from GOD’S POINT OF VIEW, NOT OUR OWN.

So in the above “law” in Numbers 5:29, what is being addressed is not the man’s sensing his wife’s unfaithfulness, but rather THE WOMAN’S UNFAITHFULNESS ITSELF and used as a LESSON FOR MAN. God is saying to man, “Do YOU like an unfaithful wife? How does that make YOU feel? Now TURN THAT AROUND. Now do you understand how that makes ME feel when YOU are unfaithful to ME? How you want to treat your unfaithful wife is how I want to treat YOU, you unfaithful man. Is that how you want ME to treat YOU, ADAM? I really SHOULD. By your own attitude, you are telling me that I should. If you insist on putting away your unfaithful wife, I will IN LIKE MANNER put you away, oh unfaithful man.”

29. Numbers 30:3-16 “Or if a woman vows a vow to the Lord, and binds herself by some agreement while in her father’s house in her youth, and her father hears her vow and the agreement by which she has bound herself, and her father holds his peace, then all her vows shall stand, and every agreement with which she has bound herself shall stand. But if her father overrules her on the day that he hears, then none of her vows nor her agreements by which she has bound herself shall stand; and the Lord will forgive her, because her father overruled her. But if indeed she takes a husband, while bound by her vows or by a rash utterance from her lips by which she bound herself, and her husband hears it, and makes no response to her on the day that he hears, then her vows shall stand, and her agreements by which she bound herself shall stand. But if her husband overrules her on the day that he hears it, he shall make void her vow which she vowed and what she uttered with her lips, by which she bound herself, and the Lord will forgive her. But any vow of a widow or a *divorced woman*, by which she has bound herself, shall stand against her. If she vowed in her husband’s house, or bound herself by an agreement with an oath, and her husband heard it, and made no response to her and did

not overrule her, then all her vows shall stand, and every agreement by which she bound herself shall stand. But if her husband truly made them void on the day he heard them, then whatever proceeded from her lips concerning her vows or concerning the agreement binding her, it shall not stand; her husband has made them void, and the Lord will forgive her. Every vow and every binding oath to afflict her soul, her husband may confirm it, or her husband may make it void. But if her husband makes no response whatever to her from day to day, then he confirms all her vows or all the agreements that bind her; he confirms them, because he made no response to her on the day that he heard them. But if he does make them void after he has heard them, then he shall bear her guilt. These are the statutes which the Lord commanded Moses, between a man and his wife, and between a father and his daughter in her youth in her father's house."

This was a KEY Scripture which helped me with my man/woman relationship dilemma. Something phenomenal occurred as well as a byproduct. Firstly, within this instruction to Israel, the daughter was under her father's authority wherein she had no authority outside of his AS LONG AS SHE WAS UNDER HER FATHER AS A FAITHFUL DEPENDENT. If she rebelled, the rule above did not apply. She was a rogue, a fugitive from her father's house. But as a MEMBER OF HER FATHER'S HOUSE, her father had the FINAL SAY over her about EVERYTHING. She could not "bind herself" (make independent commitments) on her own. If her father confirmed her commitment within the same day that he heard of it, he would ratify it. But if he denied her commitment within the same day that he heard of it, she would be released of her ATTEMPTED or SUGGESTED commitment. Very simply, the FATHER, having the final say, would either TAKE UPON HIMSELF the commitment that she suggested, or he would not. He HAD THE FINAL SAY OVER HERS. It was in fact HIS COMMITMENT, NOT HERS.

We are instructed that the WIFE had the exact same kind of relationship with her husband. She was NOT viewed as an independent entity EMPOWERED TO MAKE COMMITMENTS OUTSIDE OF HER HUSBAND. Only the HUSBAND had the authority to take on any commitments ON BEHALF OF THE ENTIRE HOUSEHOLD. In other words, there was ONLY ONE HEAD.

This is a small picture of what is intended for man as well. In principle, it is the HEAD OF THE HOUSEHOLD who makes commitments and has FULL RESPONSIBILITY and ACCOUNTABILITY for all those of the household. If this man, who happens to have a wife, is under the authority of another, namely his FATHER, then it is the FATHER who has full responsibility and accountability for the behavior of all those IN HIS HOUSEHOLD. Ultimately, by Jesus' teachings and example, if the HEAD OF THE HOUSEHOLD IS GOD, then ultimately God is the one who has FULL RESPONSIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY for all those of His household. That was the ultimate intent of God concerning Mankind SINCE THE GARDEN OF EDEN. But this status of responsibility and accountability is CONDITIONAL upon the dependents being faithfully SUBJECT (submitted) to the head of the household. If they were not subject, they were REBELLIOUS (gone independent), just like Adam did in the Garden of Eden in regards to HIS Father, God. Even Jesus himself said in John 15:14 (kjb), "*Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command* (instruct) *you*." There is a remarkable consistency between the Old Testament and what Jesus taught.

God also excluded the widows and the divorcees. They were ON THEIR OWN. They were not under the protective umbrella of a husband. In their independence, they were forced to take full responsibility over themselves. They were vulnerable and "not safe". In God's intent, there were never to be any widows, orphans, or divorcees. God's house was to be composed of ETERNAL ONES, those NOT UNDER THE PENALTY OF DEATH. God's house IS THE TREE OF LIFE. Therefore, as a direct consequence of Adam's original sin, and man's perpetuation of Adam's sin, THERE ARE WIDOWS, ORPHANS, AND DIVORCEES, THOSE NOT UNDER THE PROTECTIVE UMBRELLA OF ANOTHER. When Jesus said, "There is no greater love than for one to 'place his soul over' his friends" as in John 15:13, it is EXACTLY of the same meaning as this Old Testament instruction. When one "places one's soul over" another, he is taking full responsibility BEFORE GOD for that person. He becomes like a HUSBAND, a FATHER, a GUARDIAN before God. And this was the message that Jesus was instructing his disciples by which they were to live and that they were to promote. They were in fact THE TREE OF LIFE, the VINE OF CHRIST.

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So whoever would be attached to the vine was now attached to God. But the condition of attachment was as was said just a little earlier in John 15:14-15 (kjv), *“Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.”* By becoming members of the Vine of Christ (the Tree of Life), the disciples were now authorized and MANDATED to sprout OFFSHOOTS, BRANCHES, DEPENDENTS. This is God’s FAMILY. So God’s family can have ANY NUMBER OF GENERATIONS.

Thus far, the Man/Woman relationship has been extremely instrumental in teaching MAN about his own relationship with GOD. Am I a faithful “subordinate”? Do I WANT to be a faithful subordinate? Or do I covet SOVEREIGNTY so much that I will remain estranged from God forever? It is MY CHOICE. God gives me the choice. Jesus said in John 5:22 (kjv), *“For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son.”* “Judgment” here means “choice”. God has given the man FREE CHOICE as to being a faithful “WIFE” or not. I am given the power of free choice by God. In like manner, the husband is supposed to allow the woman FREE CHOICE as to being a faithful wife or not. But as God is perfectly strict about the CONDITION of being a faithful wife, so must a man be strict with his subordinates concerning the condition of being faithful subordinates. In other words, Man is to treat woman exactly the same way as God treats Man. Man is NOT to pursue nor cater to the woman JUST AS GOD does not pursue nor cater to the Man. Man is to be open to receive woman AS A WARD, as a RESPONSIBILITY, not as a TROPHY, a “bragging tool”. Man is to FIRST be a WIFE, NOT A HUSBAND. When man seeks to be a husband, he is not with God. He is in fact seeking to TAKE GOD’S PLACE. As a result, marriage and the man/woman relationship have been completely distorted from God’s original plan since the beginning. God’s original plan was that the woman was to subordinate herself willingly to her husband JUST AS the man was to subordinate himself to HIS FATHER. EQUALITY. It is the same for everyone.

30. Deuteronomy 22:13-29 “If any man takes a wife, and goes into her, and detests her, and charges her with shameful conduct, and brings a bad name on her, and says, ‘I took this woman, and when I came to her I found she was not a virgin’, then the father and mother of the young woman shall take and bring out the evidence of the young woman’s virginity to the elders of the city at the gate. And the young woman’s father shall say to the elders, ‘I gave my daughter to this man as wife, and he detests her; now he has charged her with shameful conduct, saying: “I found your daughter was not a virgin”, and yet these are the evidences of my daughter’s virginity.’ And they shall spread the cloth before the elders of the city. Then the elders of that city shall take that man and punish him; and they shall fine him one hundred shekels of silver and give them to the father of the young woman, because he has brought a bad name on a virgin of Israel. And she shall be his wife; he cannot divorce her all his days. But if the thing is true, and evidences of virginity are not found for the young woman, then they shall bring out the young woman to the door of her father’s house, and the men of her city shall stone her to death with stones, because she has done a disgraceful thing in Israel, to play the harlot in her father’s house; so you shall put away the evil person from among you. If a man is found lying with a woman married to a husband, then both of them shall die, both the man that lay with the woman, and the woman; so you shall put away the evil person from Israel. If a young woman who is a virgin is betrothed to a husband, and a man finds her in the city and lies with her, then you shall bring them both out to the gate of that city, and you shall stone them to death with stones, the young woman because she did not cry out in the city, and the man because he humbled his neighbour’s wife; so you shall put away the evil person from among you. But if a man finds a betrothed young woman in the countryside, and the man forces her and lies with her, then only the man who lay with her shall die. But you shall do nothing to the young woman; there is in the young woman no sin worthy of death, for just as a man rises against his neighbour and kills him, even so is this matter; for he found her in the countryside, and the betrothed young woman cried out, but there was no one to save her. If a man finds a young woman who is a virgin, who is not betrothed, and he seizes her and lies with her, and they are found out, then the man who lay with her shall give to the young woman’s father fifty shekels of silver, and she shall be his wife; because he has humbled her he shall not be permitted to divorce her all his days.”

This is a mouthful. It sounds like a bunch of gibberish. But if we pay close attention to what is said, it is very enlightening.

Firstly, God views the man/woman relationship WITHIN HIS HOUSEHOLD, with THOSE OF HIS FAMILY, as being VERY IMPORTANT. It is SO IMPORTANT to God that God set out some VERY strict rules regarding it. Most importantly, these rules reflect God's ORIGINAL INTENT for man and woman since the beginning. Man was not to claim woman for his OWN possession. Man was intended to view woman as a trust, a RESPONSIBILITY placed upon him by God. Man was intended to wait for woman UNTIL she is entrusted to him from above, and not to go forth and TAKE HER for himself. AS SUCH, man was intended to view HIMSELF as a MEMBER of a much bigger house, not his own house. Therefore, he was expected to address and deal with the woman according to the wishes and intent of the HEAD of the household, not his own wishes and intents. This goes completely against man's "grain".

Secondly, God was expressing EXTREME and SERIOUS JEALOUSY regarding His own household. If one of His household were to rebel in such a dramatic fashion as to LIE WITH HIS BROTHER'S TRUST, God would EXCOMMUNICATE that individual from His household. That man was to be "CUT OFF FROM AMONG HIS PEOPLE". So in the flesh, in the case of the adulterer and adulteress, they had to physically put them to death "so that the uncleanness be purged from God's people". God was expressing the seriousness of His will and intent here. He says it clearly: "...for as when a man riseth against his neighbour, and slayeth him, even so is this matter:" (Deuteronomy 22:26)

Yet we COLLECTIVELY continue in perpetual ADULTERY in EVERYTHING THAT WE DO. We must remember that ADULTERY applies to a WIFE in regards to her husband. It does not apply to prostitutes. A wife is a woman who has committed herself by agreement to be subject to HER HUSBAND. If a woman has not committed herself to a husband, but remains independent, the rule of adultery does not apply. So for all those who have made the covenant with God, committing themselves to God by "claiming His name", then God's rules apply to them, not to strangers. It is very simply this: all those of God's household abide by God's will and intent. All those of the household are SUBJECT TO the head of the household. God views men as "female". God considers a man who commits himself to God "LIKE A BETROTHED, LIKE A WIFE."

We have such a difficult time recognizing this. But God declared that "whoever eats of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil DIES". Is it a wonder then why man is in a perpetual state of death today? The words were said. The evidence proves it.

31. Judges 19:1-2 And it came to pass in those days, when there was no king in Israel, that there was a certain Levite sojourning in the remote mountains of Ephraim. He took for himself a concubine from Bethlehem in Judah. But his concubine played the harlot against him, and went away from him to her house at Bethlehem in Judah, and was there four whole months.

Here is another example given to us in regards to God's view of the man/woman relationship. A Levite took for himself a concubine. She was like a wife. She belonged to her man, her husband. Yet this particular text states that in order for her to "play the harlot", all she had to do was leave her husband without his authorization, and go back to her folks' home. That is all. She didn't have to have extramarital sex. All she had to be was UNFAITHFUL and INSUBORDINATE.

32. Ruth 1:16-17 "Entreat me not to leave you, or to turn back from following after you; for wherever you go, I will go; and wherever you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God shall be my God. Where you die, I will die, and there will I be buried. The Lord do so to me, and more also, if anything but death parts you and me."

This is a powerful text describing something so foreign to us. Here, an old Hebrew woman, Naomi, loses her husband, Elimelech. As a widow, she continued living with her two sons and their wives. The two wives were foreigners and not of the house of Israel. After about ten years, both sons die. So Naomi is stuck with these two foreign daughters-in-law. She tells them both

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to leave and to return to their former people. One leaves, but Ruth decides that she will remain with her new family. She declares to Naomi the words quoted here above.

This is a powerful example for us by which we can learn something important. In God's opinion, this is what God wants to hear from us in regards to His household, His family. God is not out to adopt anyone. He wants US to adopt HIM and His family AS OUR OWN. He wants us to VOLUNTEER, to genuinely WANT to be part of Him and of His plans.

33. Esther 1:22 Then he sent letters to all the king's provinces, to each province in its own script, and to every people in their own language, that each man should be master in his own house, and speak in the language of his own people.

Here the message is that the man is the head of the household, not the woman. He needs to stand firm in his own identity not allowing himself to be detracted by those of his household, particularly if his wife is a foreigner.

34. Esther 2:17 The king loved Esther more than all the other women, and she obtained grace and favour in his sight more than all the virgins; so he set the royal crown upon her head and made her queen instead of Vashti.

I've heard many commentaries about this book and this situation in particular. God is giving us a strong hint here of His point of view and of His intent. The king represents God. He expressed absolute disdain for Vashti's proud and insubordinate attitude. So the king dismissed Vashti, the former queen. And he expressed pleasure in Esther's attitude of humility and surrender. Because it pleased him so much, he promoted her to the status of queen, the highest status a woman could be given within the kingdom.

35. Proverbs 7:10-11 "And there a woman met him, with the attire of a harlot, and a crafty heart. She was loud and rebellious, her feet would not stay at home."

Here is another clue from God for our benefit. We get His opinion on a certain attitude and resulting behavior.

36. Proverbs 9:13-18 "A foolish woman is clamorous; she is simple, and knows nothing. For she sits at the door of her house, on a seat by the highest places of the city, to call to those who pass by, who go straight on their way: 'Whoever is simple, let him turn in here;' and as for him who lacks understanding, she says to him, 'Stolen water is sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant.' But he does not know that the dead are there, that her guests are in the depths of hell."

This is a vivid picture of a character, feminine in nature. This is a description of a person who lacks wisdom and entices others to behave viscerally and not logically. This person tempts others to live life today according to one's feelings and not according to wisdom. Wisdom is simply looking into the future with one's mind and evaluating one's actions with their ensuing consequences. In God's realm, ultimate wisdom revolves around the long term relationship between a person and God. If I behave with my ultimate "good" in mind, I will behave appropriately in order to obtain LONG TERM favor and exaltation from God. I will not be concerned with SHORT TERM GAIN, PLEASURE, OR "BENEFITS". I want that which is BEST for me. That is wisdom.

This passage could be a personification of "places of worship", "religious high places". Religion tempts man to stray from true wisdom. Like Eve, religion tempts man to "eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil" believing that it is sanctioned from God. But man is to resist her in preference to his heavenly FATHER. Jesus taught "subordination to an apostle". Jesus taught "hearing God's instruction and putting it into practice." Jesus taught "I am the Vine, ye are the branches."

37. Proverbs 31:1-3 The words of King Lemuel, the utterance which his mother taught him, “What, my son? And what, son of my womb? And what, son of my vows? Do not give your strength to women, nor your ways to that which destroys kings.”
38. Proverbs 31:10-12 “Who can find a virtuous wife? For her worth is far above rubies. The heart of her husband safely trusts her; so he will have no lack of gain. She does him good and not evil all the days of her life...”

This describes the attitude and character of the ideal wife in the eyes of man. And in reflection, this is the description of an ideal son of God in the eyes of God.

39. Isaiah 3:12 “As for my people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them. O my people! Those who lead you cause you to err, and destroy the way of your paths.”

We see clearly what is being said here. Who is leading whom here? Or more exactly, WHO IS FOLLOWING WHOM here? In other words, God’s men are focusing on THOSE WHO ARE SUPPOSED TO BE THEIR SUBORDINATES instead of focusing on the ONE LEADING. Man is “heeding the voice of the woman” instead of “heeding the voice of God’s ANGEL” as Moses instructed in Exodus 23:20-22 (kjv), “*Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not; for he will not pardon (endure or bear) your transgressions: for my name is in him. But if thou shalt indeed obey his voice, and do all that I speak; then I will be an enemy unto thine enemies, and an adversary unto thine adversaries.*”

This is what Jesus was teaching and demonstrating. The GOSPEL is in fact GOD’S ANGEL sent to lead us home. The GOSPEL (Greek “euaggelion”, the “proper angel or guidance”) is EMBODIED within the ANGEL himself. God instructs his people that if we want to be right with God and do what pleases HIM, we must follow and obey HIS ANGEL. If we allow ourselves to be taught and led by His Angel, we will “enter the promised land” and God will bless us with RECONCILIATION, making us members of His household. This is God’s instruction to us THROUGH MOSES and corroborated THROUGH JESUS and his APOSTLES.

40. Isaiah 4:1 “And in that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying, ‘We will eat our own food and wear our own apparel; only **let us be called by your name, to take away our reproach**’.”

The term, “seven women”, can easily represent “the sum total of the people claiming God’s name”, the number seven in Hebrew meaning “All, the whole, completion”. In the Book of Revelations, there is reference to “seven churches”.

This is religion at its fundamental. We are taught that we should fend for ourselves in this world and cling to our independence while CLAIMING GOD’S or JESUS’ NAME in order to be “absolved” (meaning “not accountable for one’s actions”). Yet it is only a fabrication of man’s imagination. It isn’t real. NO ONE is absolved while clinging to false and deceptive ideas. God has indeed said what He has said. And He does not deviate nor recant from THAT WHICH HE HAS SAID: “You will not eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for in the day that you eat of it YOU SHALL SURELY DIE.” God makes no exception to this rule. The only way to have this declaration REVERSED is by repenting (ceasing and desisting) of the practice of eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Upon successfully doing so, one receives EVERLASTING LIFE as Jesus says. In other words, when the cause of the DEATH PENALTY is removed, the penalty of death is rescinded. “Death” in this case from God’s point of view is the SEPARATION from God. And “Life” in this case is the ATTACHMENT to God. We cannot claim legitimate attachment to God while living UNATTACHED. It is not enough to just claim association (take the name) but rather it is required that we receive the full IDENTITY, not just the name. In Matthew 12:48-50 (kjv), But he answered and said unto him that told him, “*Who is my mother? and who are my brethren?* And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, *Behold my mother and*

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my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother."

As an aside, God did not object, in principle, to a man having seven wives. Whereas God does not recognize a woman having seven husbands. God considers this ADULTERY (total confusion and contradiction of God's purpose and intent.)

41. Jeremiah 3:20 "Surely, as a wife treacherously departs from her husband, so have you dealt treacherously with Me, O house of Israel," says the Lord.
42. Jeremiah 3:12-13 "...Return, backsliding Israel," says the Lord, "and I will not cause My anger to fall on you; for I am merciful," says the Lord, "and I will not remain angry forever. Only acknowledge your iniquity, that you have transgressed against the Lord your God, and have scattered your charms to alien deities under every green tree, and you have **not obeyed my Voice**," says the Lord.

With and through Israel, God has been working at undoing Adam's original sin in the Garden of Eden. He has been ceaselessly inviting man to repent and to return to his FATHER. Yet, as in this case, God reminds Israel that "she" has not genuinely undertaken the task of reconciling with God, "her" HUSBAND. She has been living LIKE A HARLOT, A PROSTITUTE seeking her love and provision from every "suitor" OTHER THAN YEHOVAH, "HER" HUSBAND. In other words, she utterly refuses to be a wife, a surrendered dependent of her husband. She insists on keeping her sovereignty, her independence. "She" is invited to change her mind and her attitude. God says that His wrath will be lifted from "her" once she has genuinely repented.

43. Jeremiah 31:21-22 "Set up signposts, make landmarks; set your heart toward the highway, the way in which you went. Turn back, O virgin of Israel, turn back to these your cities. How long will you gad about, O you backsliding daughter? For the Lord has created a new thing in the earth: a woman shall encompass a man."

What does "encompass" mean? It means "to surround, to muffle, to enclose, to capture, to keep in a pen, to overcome, to control."

44. Jeremiah 35:8 "Thus we have obeyed the voice of Jonadab the son of Rechab, our father, in all that he charged us, to drink no wine all our days, we, our wives, our sons, or our daughters."
45. Jeremiah 35:18-19 And Jeremiah said to the house of the Rechabites, "Thus says the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel, 'Because you have obeyed the commandment of Jonadab your father, and kept all his precepts and done according to all that he commanded you, therefore thus says the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel, Jonadab the son of Rechab shall not lack a man to stand before Me forever'."

In this particular passage in Jeremiah, we learn that the Rechabites exhibit unquestioned obedience to their father, Jonadab. God, through Jeremiah, is acknowledging this trait, this faithfulness, and expresses his PLEASURE and admiration. God declares that Jonadab will not lack a man to stand before Him forever.

This is another striking example expressed for our benefit today regarding God's Heart and Intent. God is pleased with childlike faith, obedience, devotion to a father. He is expressing His desire, His intent for mankind as a whole. He wants us to have that kind of unquestioning trust and obedience towards Him.

There are many more instances and examples that confirm and elaborate upon this theme. In fact, if we look with this theme continually in mind, we will find that the entire Old Testament is dedicated one way or another to this frame of mind, God's original intent.

Coming to the last book of the Old Testament, the book of Malachi, we read:

46. Malachi 4:4-6 “Remember the Law of Moses, my servant, which I commanded him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments. Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I strike the earth with a curse.”

This passage is like a bridge, bridging the Old Testament with the New Testament. The last words recorded for us in the Old Testament are words describing RECONCILIATION, not just generic reconciliation, but more specifically, the restoration of God's ORIGINAL FAMILY INTENT. By adopting God, we are to adopt His way of thinking. By adopting God's purpose and goal, we in fact adopt God. Why? Because God's original intent was that Adam, the FIRSTBORN MAN, would remain attached to God, NOT GO ON HIS OWN. And by remaining attached, the firstborn son of God would automatically pass on and promote GOD'S PURPOSE and INTENT. The family was the mechanism that God created to PERPETUATE and PROSPER His PURPOSE down here on earth: FAMILY UNITY, ONENESS, uniting of the PLURALITY. It is implicit within the name YEHOVAH ELOHIM, which means “Forever existing People of God.”

47. Matthew 5:17-18 “Do you think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets? I did not come to destroy but to fulfil. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the Law till all is fulfilled.”

We are instructed in the New Testament that the second “Adam”, Jesus, came and undid Adam's original sin by becoming genuinely REATTACHED to God. Jesus became the spirit FIRSTBORN of God's earthly family. Jesus was the one who finally received all of the words of God sent through the prophets of old, and adopted them completely for himself. By receiving God's words, Jesus received God Himself AND HIS INTENT. By adopting and putting into practice God's words, Jesus fulfilled God's invitation to repentance and reconciliation. From there, Jesus recognized God's mandate of “being fruitful and multiplying and REPLENISHING the earth, and SUBDUING it (the earth).” Jesus HAD to pass on his learning and status to disciples, to PROGENY. It was an instruction from God FROM THE VERY BEGINNING. Jesus recognized that the TREE OF LIFE is in fact THE FAMILY OF GOD, not some physical tree from which we eat fruit or something. It is in fact the LIVING TREE to which we, as individuals, are invited to be attached and remain attached. By remaining attached, we live forever.

Psalm 40:6-10

(Direct from Hebrew)

(6) **Sacrifice and offering You did not desire**; my ears You have opened: **burnt offering and sin offering You have not asked**.

(7) Then I said, Lo, I come: in the roll of the book *it is* written of me,

(8) **I delight to do Your will, my God**: yea, Your law *is* within my bowels.

(9) I have preached righteousness in the great assembly: look, I will not restrain my lips; O Yehovah, You know.

(10) I have not concealed Your righteousness within my heart; I declare Your faithfulness and Your salvation: I have not concealed Your lovingkindness and Your truth from the great assembly.

Deuteronomy 30:10-20

(kjv)

(10) If thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to keep his commandments and his statutes which are written in this book of the law, *and* if thou turn unto the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul.

(11) For this commandment which I command thee this day, it *is* not hidden from thee, neither *is* it far off.

(12) It *is* not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it?

(13) Neither *is* it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it?

(14) But the word *is* very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it.

(15) See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil;

(16) In that I command thee this day to love the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments and his statutes and his judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply: and the LORD thy God shall bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it.

(17) But if thine heart turn away, so that thou wilt not hear, but shalt be drawn away, and worship other gods, and serve them;

(18) I denounce unto you this day, that ye shall surely perish, *and that* ye shall not prolong *your* days upon the land, whither thou passest over Jordan to go to possess it.

(19) I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, *that* I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live:

(20) That thou mayest love the LORD thy God, *and* that thou mayest **obey his voice**, and that thou mayest **cleave** unto him: for **he is thy life**, and the length of thy days: that thou mayest dwell in the land which the LORD sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them.

Epilogue

God's ultimate intent, as expressed to us by Jesus Christ, through his faithful witnesses, is for man to genuinely "return to God", to stop clinging to man's "independence" and "sovereignty". It is only wishful thinking in any case. Man is only living out a "virtual" independence because ultimately, man is not truly independent: he only wants to be. He needs to come to terms with the reality that he can never be truly independent. Man's existence can only be perpetuated by God's active will and effort of perpetuating it. Unless God perpetuates man, man will ultimately cease to exist, be erased from God's mind. That is just how dependent man really is. If God does not willfully perpetuate my existence, I cannot exist at all.

Within this framework, and with this in mind, I can truly begin to appreciate my own existence in relationship with God, my existence provider. If I begin to truly understand and appreciate this reality, if I want to continue to exist, then I will more likely gravitate towards my EXISTENCE SUSTAINER. If I wish to perpetuate my existence, no matter what, I must address and deal with my existence provider. And if I want to have a happy and fulfilled condition, then again, I must address the CREATOR, the one who has the final say to my condition, my state of being, my sense of fulfillment.

Jesus gave us everything that we need in order to address this very issue. He gave us the instructions pertaining to our continued existence and fulfillment. We were instructed that perpetuated life and fulfillment are only possible with them being granted by God, the CREATOR. And the WAY by which these are granted is elaborated throughout the Old Testament of the Bible, and revealed by example and through Jesus' faithful witnesses, John and Matthew. But man resists accepting this set of instructions as given to the apostles. Man tends to prefer the anti-gospel of substitution as promoted by the Pharisee and adopted by the Church. Even though our fulfilled existence depends entirely upon the compliance to God's instructions, we cling to our "imaginary sovereignty". Being created in the image of God means that man has the same natural tendency of wanting absolute power and authority.

Therefore, surrender, the condition which the Creator has placed before man in order to effect reconciliation, is a concept quite foreign to man unless he somehow learns it. So we could say that this is God's intent after all. Man is created like a child, completely ignorant (without knowledge) yet endowed with the ego of God. It is quite the quandary.

I have been taught that virtual surrender is not satisfying to God. He wants genuine demonstration of humility and surrender. The virtual surrender to God by virtual surrender to a virtual Christ is not acceptable to God. God is seeking genuine surrender to His anointed one, His genuine anointed one. Is there enough proof of this set before us? To me, there is. I see it, and I am convinced. "Sprinkling the blood of the Lamb" is not what God requires of me in order to make peace with Him. By eating his "flesh" and drinking his "blood", as Jesus said, being attached "to the vine", we have everlasting life.

About The Author

Robert Labossière was born and raised in an ordinary French-Canadian family. They lived the farm life near St. Leon, Manitoba, Canada. But very early, his parents believed that he had a “special” calling. So they “pinched their pennies” and sent him to an all-boys boarding school where he spent most of his teenage years. This school was run by Jesuits and formed many young priests.

Robert would return home for the usual holidays and summer vacations to “touch base” with the world back home. Life at college was difficult. As the years progressed, he became more and more disturbed with the church’s history. Along with the normal yearnings of a young man, he hungered for more.

Robert married and begot three little boys, One day, he teased his mother, saying, “Don’t think of it as losing a priest. Think of it as having gained three more.”

But all was not well. Bob became increasingly restless and disturbed with the state of affairs at home. So he opted to take a chance and moved his family from Manitoba to Saskatchewan. There he briefly operated an automobile dealership. The first two years were great. But at around that time, Detroit fell into very difficult times and the market lost confidence. Business suffered. A few years later, Robert had to declare bankruptcy.

Oddly enough, he found some solace in music along with his family. Together, they embarked on a short-lived “career” as amateur musicians. But the music wasn’t bringing genuine consolation. The turmoil festered within until one day, Robert “cried out to God” and challenged Him to show Himself, for he could not bear to continue living in such a state. With his wife and four children, he undertook an ambitious project, a sabbatical, a cross-Canada musical tour. The whole family took a year off of normal activities including school. They all zealously engaged themselves in this project with great hopes and aspirations.

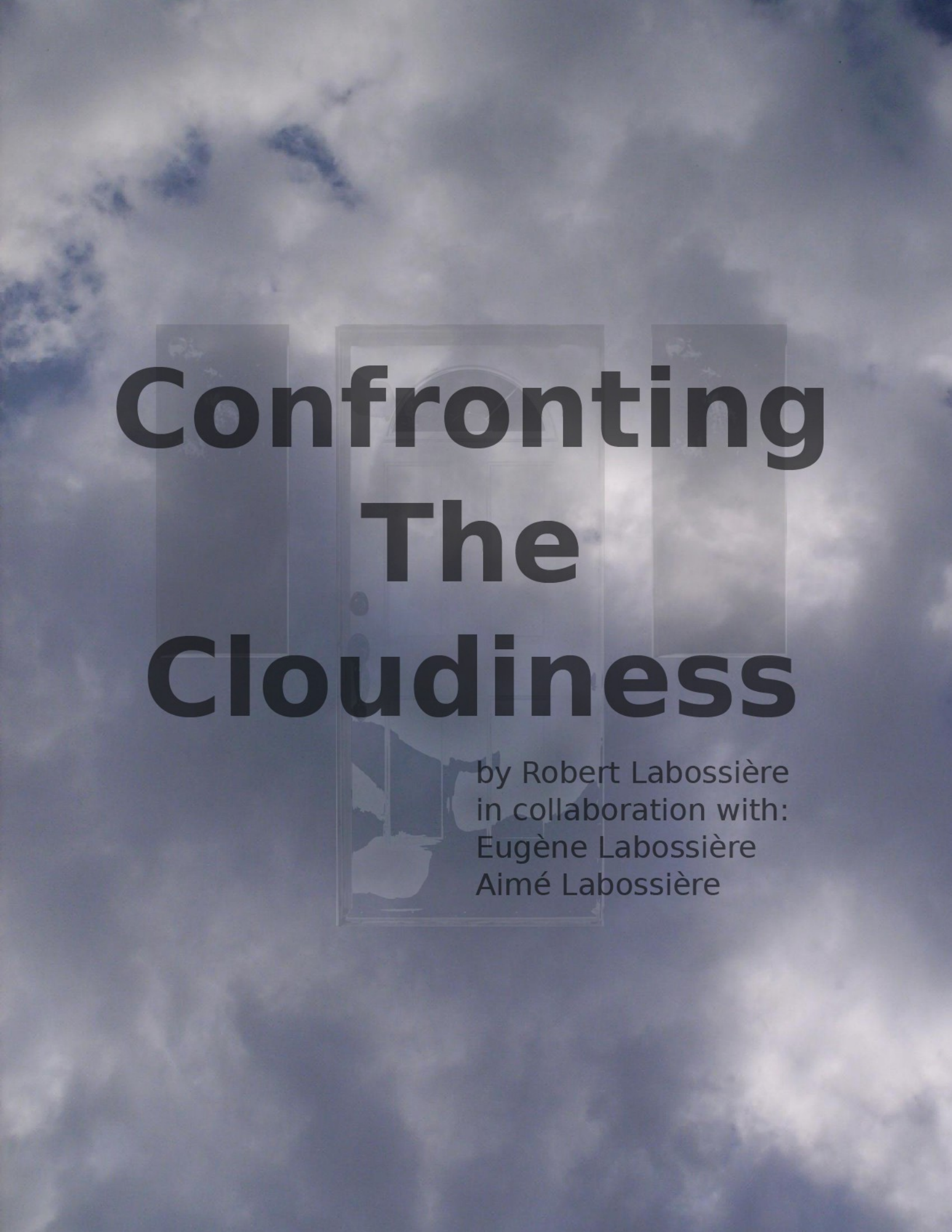
After almost a whole year of planning and touring, the family was led to a special place and time where God introduced Himself to them. From that moment on, life as they knew it was no longer the same. And Bob was satisfied that his silent prayer was being answered.

So for a time, redirected by the “magic” of that encounter, the family returned home to Regina with a new outlook on life. Yet it soon proved that things were still not well at home. The marital problem that “dogged” Bob never went away: It only grew more pronounced. It grew to the point where his wife “had” to leave. And she has never returned. She ran away to not be found. When her own brothers and sisters attempted to contact her, she returned word through a third party agency that SHE DID NOT WANT TO BE FOUND. In fact, it was “her Jesus” who took her away.

This left Bob totally bewildered and dismayed. “But God! Can’t you heal my marriage?” With this fresh on his mind, he brought his three sons to Saskatoon where he spent time inquiring and beseeching God. It was during this critical time that God revealed the key to the Scriptures to him. It was at this time that God began to reveal His heart and mind pertaining to Christ, to Man, to Woman, and to Reconciliation.

For a more extensive biography, download or order a copy of the book, “I And My Father”, written by Aimé Labossière, Robert’s son, at:

www.iandmyfather.com



Confronting The Cloudiness

by Robert Labossière
in collaboration with:
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Aimé Labossière