



The
Christian
Faith

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*note: all scriptures from NKJV,
unless otherwise denoted/the authors

NOW & THEN

*The
Christian
Faith*



MICHAEL D'AIGLE

WILLIAM RIVERA



DEDICATION

We dedicate this book to all of the Christians through the ages, some renowned and some nameless; who were faithful witnesses for Christ - to their generation and world which they lived. From the first recorded Christian martyr, Stephen to those now being persecuted and killed for their faith in Jesus; including countless others who have quietly lived their lives before God and man. We celebrate their courage, faith, and legacy by sharing the Christian Faith they have all given to us.

We marvel at how twelve men, with humble credentials by the world's measure; were able to change history for the better – change lives for all eternity by simply choosing to follow a man most Jews of His day rejected. Their decision to serve and follow Jesus Christ – the Messiah and Savior of the world came at a great price; with all of them but the beloved apostle John dying cruel deaths as martyrs of the faith.

To them and to all who this present day continue to follow this man – the man: Jesus Christ; we dedicate this book to all of you. We pray this book will strengthen your faith and draw you closer to God

THE INTRODUCTION

The genesis for this book/The Christian Faith began over 30 years ago when an extensive study and review of Christianity and its core teachings began as a simple quest to know what it means to be a Christian, and what are the essential truths and doctrines of orthodox Christianity. This proved to be a tedious and lengthy journey that meant hundreds of hours researching and examining key words and scriptures in the Bible (both Catholic & Protestant) that most Christians include in their catechism and statements of faith.

The desire to share what years of prayerful study and research has shown us, is now presented to anyone desiring to understand the basic tenets/teachings of Christianity, in a clear, concise manner that is suitable for people across a wide spectrum of education and diverse backgrounds. This book is certainly not intended to be a definitive treatment of Christianity, but rather a broad breakdown of Christianity's birth out of Judaism with its myriad of laws and covenants; to the establishment of The New Covenant, and the doctrine/teachings of Christ and the early apostles.

This book is intended to be a tool and means of sharing the Christian Faith with people all over the world, and our goal is to

have it translated into many different languages with the hope that Christians, pastors & teachers, and anyone wanting to know what the Christian Faith is and isn't; can simply access the texts and use them as they deem profitable to them and those they may want to teach or minister to.

We are making this book available for free in pdf format, to be available to read/download in their own native languages; and our hope is that this book will help new Christians and even those well established in the Christian faith to be better prepared to share the Gospel, and message of Jesus Christ with confidence and clarity.

We believe this book will help fill in some of the gaps or misunderstandings, that many Christians have because often the Christian faith is not taught as a whole, but rather in terms of section or part within Christian doctrine. This book endeavors to take the reader on a journey from the roots of historic Judaism, to the birth and establishment of The New Covenant ushered in by Jesus Christ.

Much of this book is about the transition from the Old Covenant, with Moses and the Law and many ordinances right up to and through the difficult period of leaving the Old Covenant to living under the New Covenant of grace. We can be thankful that the early church having witnessed the risen Savior Jesus Christ from the dead, and the many miracles that were

evident during and after Christ's ascension ; were wholly committed to this new way of living – this new covenant that had been given to them.

That New Covenant is what has been handed down to us – and it is with great awe and reverence that we approach the handling and utmost care that we present the thoughts and truths written in these pages. While scriptures and references are included in this book; in the end we know that there are and will always be differences in interpretation and what the Christian doctrines are and what they mean... We have attempted to avoid controversy or addressing doctrines within Christianity that are divisive or unnecessarily offensive.

That being said, it is unavoidable that with a writing of this nature, that there will be points of disagreement and contention with some of the views and thoughts presented here. We are admonished to “speak the truth in love”, and that has been our aim throughout – so if anyone reading this book is upset or offended; please know that is not and never will be our intentions.

Our hope is that anyone reading this book, whether a Christian, or of another faith, or even if they consider themselves to be non-religious; will come away having a very clear understanding and perspective of what the Christian Faith is really about.

We know Christianity is often misunderstood, and also often presented in ways that are not in line with “orthodox Christian” theology; but this book is not about addressing “heresies” or false teachings; nor is it about attempting to sway or direct anyone to a particular branch or denomination within the whole of the Christian churches.

It is merely our efforts to shine the light on what we believe every Christian should know about the faith they have chosen to embrace and commit their lives to. In the end, Christianity is about Jesus Christ.

We pray every person who reads this book, is challenged to go beyond what is presented here; and go on to dig deeper and deeper into your own study and examination of the New Testament, and other pertinent documents and Christian writings through the centuries. If anyone reading this book comes away with a better understanding of Christianity and who Jesus Christ is and what He has given us under The New Covenant – we have accomplished a great deal!

Blessings to everyone in Jesus name,

The Authors

THE CHRISTIAN FAITH

THE CHRISTIAN FAITH

(Some Basic Facts)

The Lord Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man comes to the Father, but by Me" Jn.14:6

Today there are thousands of religions in the world at present (some estimate that to be more than 4000); but most religions fall under the major religions that are familiar to all of us. Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Buddhism and Hinduism. These 5 religious groups are the predominate religions in the world today. These 5 major religions are estimated to comprise 85 percent of the world's population.

It is worth noting that the pages of human history reveal that we as human beings are spiritual beings - that the inherent drive within us to worship - to pray - and to believe in God or gods (though the God or gods may have different names and attributes) has been a universal trait in people of all cultures since the beginning of recorded history. Animals and plants as far as we know are not disposed to do such things; which indicates that something deep within the very DNA of the human beings draws them to desire communion with God, or at least on some level seek for meaning and answers that cannot be readily found in the everyday routine of most people's lives.

For a summary of the cultures & nations that have engaged

in some kind of devotion to a god or deity they deemed worthy of worship and devotion; and in many cases offerings of animal and sometimes human sacrifices - please

visit: ([Time Line of World Religions past to present](#))¹

The God or gods we choose to worship and serve may differ, but the simple fact remains: people will worship and search for God in their lives without any coercion or coaxing; it's the way God has made us. We as human beings were created to worship the One true God, and the god or gods a person chooses to follow and worship(or chooses not to follow) is in the end - the most important decision an individual will ever make.

The world we live in gives us all a myriad of choices. There are many gods to be sure, but we believe Christianity points us to worship and serve the Only true God and His Son - Jesus Christ. The warning to all is clear: Choose wisely - your eternal destination hangs in the balance!

Jn.17:3 *And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.*

That means the other 15 percent of the world's population consider themselves to be "atheists" or "agnostics." That means by nature - or by natural inclination we may conclude that there is something within human beings that instinctively - naturally

draws them to God - or to the worship and search for something supernatural and beyond this earthly and materialistic world.

Though many among these two groups might call themselves "non-religious;" that assertion might be argued by some that in fact the devotion and passion to "not believe" in God or anything connected to organized religion - does by definition qualifies as being a type of "[religion](#)"² , albeit a secularist and humanist one.

Christianity/Islam and Judaism are considered all "Abrahamic" religions (including Baha'i) that trace their roots and beginning back to the Patriarch Abraham, who is considered the founder and historical root of these religions. Hinduism/Buddhism (Sikhism/Jainism) are all considered Indian religions. At this time Christianity is the worlds largest religion with approximately 2.4 billion followers. Islam is the 2nd largest religion with about 1.8 billion followers, and is the fastest growing religion in the world as of this writing.

According to [worldatlas.com](#)³, the top ten religions are listed below with the number of people who identify as followers and members of these religions. Please keep in mind that according to [Pew Research Center's Forum on Religion and Public Life](#) (Pew Research Center⁴), more than 80 percent of the world identifies with a religious group. (For more information on the major world religions, use the links at the bottom)

TOP TEN WORLD RELIGIONS

(listing from the smallest to the largest)

- 1. CHRISTIANITY - 2.4 Billion Followers**
- 2. ISLAM - 1.8 Billion Followers**
- 3. HINDUISM - 1.1 Billion Followers**
- 4. BUDDHISM - 500 Million Followers**
- 5. SHINTOISM - 104 Million Followers**
- 6. Sikhism - 25 Million Followers**
- 7. JUDAISM - 14 Million Followers**
- 8. DAOISM - 12 Million Followers**
- 9. MUISM/SINISM/SHINGYO - 10 Million Followers**
- 10. CAO- DAI - 4.4 Million Followers**

WHAT IS CHRISTIANITY

Christianity is over 2000 years old, and is centered around the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. It's central theme is based on the sinless life of Jesus Christ, which qualified Him to be the perfect atonement/sacrifice for the sins of all humanity. The death of Jesus Christ on the cross for the sins of all humanity; and His resurrection from the dead are unquestionably the two foundation doctrines of Christendom.

Christianity teaches that Jesus Christ is the only way to God and the only means of obtaining salvation and avoiding Hell. These fundamental doctrines of the Christian Faith, must be believed before anyone can be considered saved and a true Christian.⁵ ([what do Christians believe?](#))

Those two doctrines and other cardinal doctrines of Christianity have been capsulized and formulated by the early church Fathers -into what are known as the Apostolic Creeds. *([The Apostles Creed & the Nicene Creed](#) ⁶are the most well known) These creeds were in response to the heresies and false teachings that were undermining the Christian faith and leading many Christians and uninformed people away from the Orthodox doctrines of Christianity. Knowing these creeds and publicly professing them has long been a way of affirming openly that a person is in agreement with the articles of the

Christian faith. Today this is still done in many churches worldwide.

We encourage you to examine the Christian Creeds and consider carefully the truths they contain. We believe they have allowed Christians through the ages to understand and share the Christian faith with people everywhere - both religious and non-religious alike. * See - [Christian Creeds](#)⁷

A person does not have to understand all the doctrines of the Christian faith in order to be saved or to be considered a Christian. Growing in the Christian Faith is a process and takes time - considerable time. However, it should be pointed out that there are certain experiences or things that are necessary before a person can be said to be truly saved and part of God's holy church(The Body of Christ).

Only those who have been born again, and washed in the blood of the Lamb; whose sins have been forgiven can enter God's kingdom in heaven. There is no "one formula or special prayer" that a person has to do or say to enter heaven; but there are things that God requires before anyone can be considered "saved" or in other words: Ready to be allowed into heaven - into God's presence in eternity. When Jesus was asked what works must we do , *He answered them with these words:*

Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might

work the works of God?[29](#)Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent. **Jn.6:28**

(Acts 16:30-31, NIV). "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" Paul and Silas replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved..."

Jn.3:7 ISV Don't be astonished that I told you, 'All of you must be born from above.'

We will discuss the matter of how a person can be saved, and what God requires of us in the following lessons. One thing is clear from the above scriptures: Believing in Jesus is absolutely a prerequisite to being saved or born again. Now the real question that has to be answered is: What does it mean to believe in Jesus. There is more there than meets the eye...We will examine that question and answer that in the following lessons.

The Three Branches Of Christianity

Christianity, is comprised of three main branches presently: Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy, and Protestantism. There are many denominations within Christianity, but Christians today can all be categorized as belonging to one of

these three branches of Christianity. About 50 percent of Christians today belong to the Catholic church and hold the Pope as their highest spiritual leader.

There are some significant differences between all of these 3 branches within Christianity; but we want to emphasize what they have in common rather than digress to the things they do not agree on.

These teachings & lessons presented here, are focused on Christianity, and not the other world religions; but it is good to have a clear perspective on where Christianity is in relationship to all the other religions in the world today. For a better perspective on other world religions we suggest you do your own investigation and research.

You may go to the following links listed below to learn more about the major religions in the world today; and how they differ from Christianity in both doctrine and practice. Our focus here is to simply give a basic overview - of Christianity's central doctrines of the Christian faith, in an easy and concise manner.

Christianity Is Different !

The Christian Faith like all religions has doctrines/teachings that are presented to those who are members or followers; and

it has religious ordinances, traditions and ceremonies such as water baptism, prayer, worship, and the reading and study of scriptures and other religious practices that are found in most other religions. (both major and minor) But, while Christianity has many similarities to other world religions - there are some important differences that need to be addressed.

Christianity, is the only major religion whose leader and founder/Jesus Christ is believed to be still alive - even after thousands of years since it's inception! No one believes that the prophet Mohamed or Confucius are alive today... or any of the other founders of the world's greatest religions past or present. Christians do!

That fact alone makes Christianity not only totally unlike any of the other religions in the world past or present; but it is also something that has caused many people to stumble at when it comes to accepting the idea of anyone actually rising from the dead. Believing that Jesus Christ has risen from the dead - is considered absolutely necessary if one wishes to be a Christian, though admittedly it is not always easy for people to accept or believe - that has always been true.

Even Thomas, one of the 12 Disciples, who had spent over 3 years with Jesus; and had witnessed a myriad of miracles with Jesus, including seeing Lazarus the brother of Mary and Martha raised from the dead - doubted that Christ had risen from the

dead after His resurrection! Thomas who was not present when Jesus first appeared to the other Disciples after His resurrection refused to believe that He was risen. So great was his doubt, that he needed proof - physical evidence before he would believe Jesus was still alive...

Jn.20: 25: *So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe."*

Eight days later Jesus again appeared with the Disciples and showed Thomas the scars in His hands and feet; much to the amazement of Thomas; one can only wonder what thoughts were going through Thomas's mind as he examined Jesus' scars. There was now no doubt that Thomas believed that Jesus had risen from the dead.

Jn.20:28-29: *"Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."*

Unlike "Doubting Thomas", most of us here on earth will never see the nail scars of Jesus this side of Heaven. But the good news there is significant evidence today that not only makes believing in Jesus resurrection from the dead probable

and likely, but reasonable and factually credible for even the most skeptical of doubters among us.

For more information on evidence that Jesus Christ did rise from the dead - follow these links: [7 proofs](#)⁸, [Evidence of Jesus resurrection](#)⁹, [14 evidences](#)¹⁰

Believing that Jesus died for our sins and that He has risen from the dead are central to the Gospel message and the essence of the Christian Faith. The 3 branches of Christendom may depart ways on various teachings and ordinances within the framework of Christian theology; but on the matter of Jesus Christ's atoning death for the sins of the world, and His resurrection from the dead - there is virtually no disagreement.

That does not mean that they all agree on what that means in terms of how those two historical events are taught; or how they are to be applied to a believer's own religious life; but on whether these two events happened as revealed in the scriptures - they are in unanimous agreement.

The belief that Jesus not only lived a perfect life - a sinless life and then died on the cross for all of humanities' sins is not so hard for many people to fathom and consider as possible; but rising from the dead after three days - that's another story. That story - the story of Jesus Christ perfect life, atoning death on the cross, and His ultimate triumph over death - is what

separates Christianity from all other religions.

Those assertions, which Christians believe are facts to be believed are for Christianity the very foundation upon which everything rests. Without Christ rising from the dead - Christianity would not be what it is - the greatest story ever told!

1Co.15:14 *And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith.*

1Pet.1:3 *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. (**emphasis mine**)*

1 Co.15:20 *But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. (**emphasis mine**)*

Rom.10:9 *Because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.*

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This story of redemption, this message of Christ's death on the cross for our sins, and His resurrection from the dead is what has been called THE GOSPEL, or THE GOOD NEWS for centuries since the beginning of the early Christian church. Christians believe that this message - this Gospel of Christ has to be preached - and believed to be saved and be given eternal life. Before Jesus ascended into heaven, he commissioned his disciples to go into all the world and to preach the Gospel. It is this Gospel that God has ordained as the means to save people.

Mk.16:15 *And he said to them, "Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation.*

The Gospel message is so simple a child can understand it, yet so profound that the wisest and smartest of humanity cannot comprehend God's wisdom contained in it's message! **(1Co.1:18-25)** Paul the Apostle, who was called Saul before becoming a Christian - was on his way to Damascus intent on finding Christians to have have them killed and imprisoned when he had an encounter with Jesus Christ. (Acts.8:1-22)

Paul went on to become the greatest proponent and defender of the Christian Faith in the early church - and some would argue of all time... Paul preached the Gospel Message to the Jews and Gentiles with amazing results; traveling on 3 missionary trips(some argue four); planted 14 churches, and wrote 13 of the books/letters in the New Testament) visit: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Saint-Paul-the-Apostle>¹¹

Here is the Gospel message that Paul and the early church preached and carried to the ends of the earth at that time in church history... The Gospel message is still being shared today in every possible form and way imaginable - print/television/radio/the internet, and as in the past - face to face. We hope and pray that you will also share the Gospel message with those who have yet to know Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord.

1 Co.15:1-4 *Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures*

Rom.1:6-17 *For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is*

God's power for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. 17 For the righteousness of God is revealed in the gospel from faith to faith, just as it is written, "The righteous by faith will live."(NET) (emphasis mine)

SAVED BY GRACE

"Not Our Own Works"

Eph.2:8-9 *For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.*

Rom.11:6 *But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace.*

Besides the resurrection of Christ from the dead, there is another important distinction that sets Christianity apart from all other religions. **God saves us - period!** Most religions require people have to do certain things or refrain from doing certain things if you expect to earn God's favor or a place in God's eternal kingdom after our physical life here on earth is over.

Nothing could be further from the truth. Christianity teaches that nothing we can do in our own efforts can merit heaven or eternal life. Only faith in Jesus Christ atoning death and his resurrection from the dead can bring us into right relationship with God!

Rom.3:23 *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,*

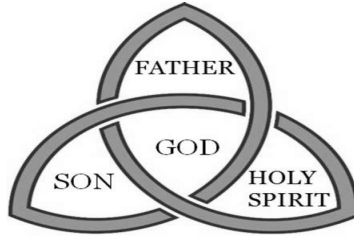
The Bible which is the basis for all of Christian doctrine teaches us that every human being has fallen short of God's holy standards - except one person: JESUS CHRIST. And, that all of us have sinned and cannot save ourselves - the law of Moses could not save anyone, the blood of animals could not save anyone, and no man or woman will ever be good enough to earn or merit heaven or forgiveness of sins.

The reason Jesus came to earth was to die for our sins so we could be forgiven, and be reconciled to God. This simple message of Jesus dying on the cross for everyone's sins on the cross is the very heart of Christianity. We might say that Jesus resurrection from the dead "sealed the deal."

Gal.2:16 *nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified.*

2 Tim.1:9 *who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began, (emphasis mine)*

THE GODHEAD/THE HOLY TRINITY



The Father - The Son - The Holy Spirit)

Rom.1:20 *For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse,*

Of all the Christian doctrines there is certainly none more thought provoking, and difficult to comprehend than that of the Christian's teaching on the Godhead. Today orthodox Christian theology refers to The Godhead/God The Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, as "The Trinity." The early church did not use this term, but made general statements about the deity and divine nature of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The Trinity doctrine is commonly expressed as the statement:

that the one true God exists as or in three equally divine "Persons", the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Every term in this statement (God, exists, as or in, equally divine, Persons) has been interpreted in various ways. The guiding principle has been the credal declaration that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit of the New Testament are consubstantial (i.e. the same in substance or essence, Greek:*homoousios*).

Because this shared substance or essence is a divine one, this is understood to imply that all three named individuals are divine, and equally so. Yet the three in some sense "are" the one God of the Bible. Though there have been variations on some minor points of interpretation regarding exactly how to describe or define God in terms of the relationships between The Father, The Son, and The Holy Spirit; there has generally been consistent agreement that all three are divine in nature, and part of the Godhead.

The "Need For Creeds"

The theology behind the formation of the [Trinitarian doctrine](#),¹² took centuries to finally be articulated in the form of

creeds or "statements of Christian Faith", such as the [Athanasian Creed](#),¹³ The Nicene Creed, and the more commonly known - The Apostles' Creed. All of these Christian Creeds, were born out of the need to refute anti-trinitarian doctrines as well as providing a simple yet formal way of presenting the most important Christian doctrines of the Christian Faith.

By putting these doctrines an Articles of the Christian Faith into the form of "Creeds" and written documents sanctioned by the leaders of the Church proper; they could then hold accountable anyone who might be guilty of teaching doctrines that were contrary to these Articles of the Christian Faith. This is especially true when it comes to the doctrine of The Trinity, and how each entity or person of the Godhead was to be taught.

Such false doctrines are called "[heresies](#)"¹⁴, and those who advanced these deviant doctrines were known as "heretics." Anyone who was charged with teaching heresies could be excommunicated from the Church, but only after they were first given the opportunity to recant and renounce their errors.

The early Church did have serious disputes over the way the Godhead or Trinity was to be defined; and eventually there was a major split that followed the Council of Nicea in 325. [The Arian Controversy](#),¹⁵ The traditional view of The Trinity that the Christian church finally embraced resulted in the non-trinitarians and anti-trinitarians losing their control and influence, over the

way in which the Doctrine of The Trinity would ultimately be taught throughout most of Christendom."

The Final Choice

The major issue in the 4th Century for the Church Fathers at the Council of Nicea, was how to express the Image of God - the divinity of God without creating a "pluralistic" God. How to maintain the monotheism that Christianity was at that time; and still resolve the complex questions of explaining the deity of each of the three entities/persons we find in the scriptures as: The Father, The Son, and The Holy Spirit. Below are the three competing views and theological concepts that were being proposed... ([The Trinitarian Doctrine chosen](#))

The Sabellians (after the Libyan Sabellius) taught that there was a single entity, the *prosōpon*, made up of God the Father and Christ the Son.

The Trinitarian Church fathers, Bishop Alexander of Alexandria and his deacon, Athanasius, believed there were three persons in one god (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)

The Monarchianists believed in only one indivisible being. These included Arius, who was presbyter in Alexandria under

the Trinitarian bishop, and Eusebius, Bishop of Nicomedia (the man who coined the term "oecumenical council" and who had estimated participation at a substantially lower and more realistic attendance of 250 bishops)

The Trinitarian Bishops were able to have their position on The Trinity become the core teaching for the Christian church, with the Emperor Constantine siding eventually with Bishop Alexander and the other protrinitarian Bishops. Arius was exiled as a heretic to what is now modern day Albania.(Illyria)

Today, the largest group of opponents to the traditional view of The Trinity, are the Unitarians who believe: **God to be identical to one and only one divine self, the Father.**

Their teaching on the Godhead, and The Trinity in particular are held as "unorthodox" and not compatible with the long held doctrine of The Trinity.([The Unitarians today](#))¹⁶ Because of that, many theologians and major denominations do not believe they are truly "Christian."

Regardless of the controversies over the Trinity Doctrine, which are still ongoing the Christian churches among all three branches of Christendom, hold to the pro-Nicene view of The Trinity. Though in recent years it has not been emphasized or taught as aggressively as in the past.

Below is the Nicene Creed/325 AD, which is a good example

of how the early Christian church stated in words - the official view of how The Godhead, which came to be referred to as The Trinity - was to be believed and taught at that time.

THE NICENE CREED

We believe in one God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, Very God of Very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father by whom all things were made; who for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary, and was made man, and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate.

He suffered and was buried, and the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures, and ascended into

heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of the Father. And he shall come again with glory to judge both the quick and the dead, whose kingdom shall have no end.

And we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life, who proceedeth from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, who spoke by the prophets. And we believe one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins. And we look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

THE APOSTLE'S CREED

I believe in [God the Father](#)¹⁷ Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth. And in [Jesus Christ his only Son](#)¹⁸ our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father

Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic* Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

*Note – to learn more about the Athanasian Creed – visit this link/address:

<https://www.learnreligions.com/the-athanasian-creed-p2-542141>

GOD IS

Heb.11:6 *But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is,*

The Bible is clear that to please God - we have to believe that God exists! That He is. But, then we have to contemplate just who God is? What is God like? What is God's nature and character? There are so many questions that we have about God that truthfully; our finite minds can only begin to fathom who God really is.

We could spend our entire lives thinking about God, and still only glimpse a fraction of how awesome and infinitesimal God

is in all of His glorious attributes! Just imagine that this is in fact what the early Christians were doing when they wrestled with how to define or express God in a manner that agrees with both the Old and New Testament scriptures.

The fact that the doctrine of the Trinity is not explicitly expressed in scripture, though numerous scriptures clearly demonstrate and infer that is so; meant great care and thought went into putting the actual words together that would ensure it would be sound doctrine and withstand the certain scrutiny that would inevitably come. Looking back at how the Doctrine of The Trinity came to be; and all the controversies surrounding how The Godhead was being described as essentially "One God in three persons"; has proved to be one of the strangest accounts within Christendom regarding "how a Cardinal Doctrine of Christianity" came to be!

One thing is certain and hasn't changed - The Trinity as a doctrine - is still as mysterious and profound today as when it was first introduced to the Christians in the church at that time. It's still a doctrine that one can meditate and reflect upon for days on end.

And, though the word "trinity" is not found anywhere in the scriptures; there is significant scriptural evidence that clearly reveals The Father , Son(Jesus Christ) and Holy Spirit are all "God." That conclusion, that all three of these entities, or

persons are "one God" has been the subject of endless debates and contemplation; but in the end the Christian church has embraced "The Trinity" as a necessary and fundamental article of faith. Here are scriptures that show the "deity" and divine nature of all three within The Godhead/Trinity.

Below are scriptures found in both The Old & New Testaments; that show the "deity" and "divine nature" of all three persons that we know as The Trinity. (A list of sources on facts/scriptures, and related commentary is at the bottom of this section.)

GOD THE FATHER

I CO.1:1 *But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.*

MT.23:9 *And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven.*

ISA.64:8 *But now, O LORD, thou art our father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand.*

EPH.1:39 *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:*

GOD THE SON/JESUS CHRIST

COL. 2:9 *For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form,*

JN.1:1 *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*

JN.5:18 *Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, making Himself equal with God. but also said that God was His Father,*

JN.8:58 *Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM."*

GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT

Gen.1:2 *"The Spirit of God was hovering over the waters."*

Gen.1:26 *God says, "Let us make mankind in our image."*

Acts.5:3-4 *"Why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit? You have not lied to men; but to God."*

1 Co.2:11 *For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. For who among men knows the thoughts of a man*

except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God.

The Godhead or The Trinity by either name - is really another name for God. So like all the other names for God like, Elohim, Adonai, Jehovah, or YHWH, etc; the term "The Trinity" really serves to reveal more to us about the awesome and truly indescribable God that we serve and worship as Christians. We can rejoice that The Trinity; as a name and as a doctrine does in some way express the uniqueness and wonder of our God - God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

The God of Christianity is indeed beyond anything we can every comprehend or fully understand; but thankfully we can know Him through Jesus Christ - Who has revealed The Father to us; and now that He is in heaven - is revealing God to us through The Holy Spirit. Amen

Jn. 17:25-26 *"Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me. I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known ...*

Jn.15:6 *"But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me.*

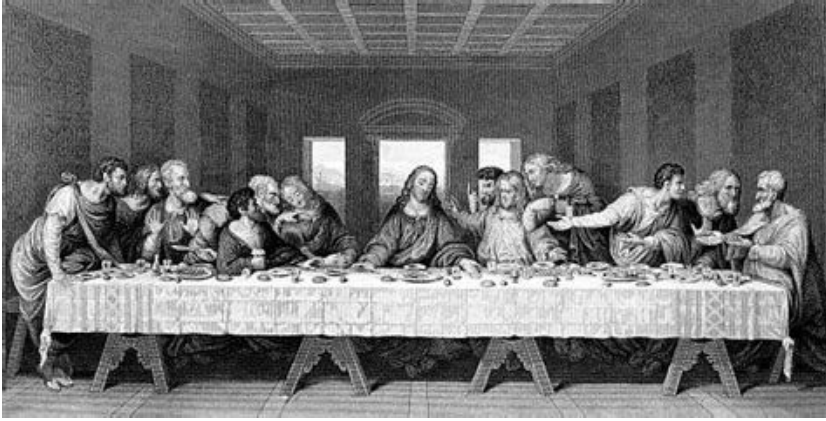
Before Christ's coming . . . the prominence of God the Father; during the days of Christ's earthly life . . . the prominence of God the Son; and since the ascension of the Son . . . the prominence of God the Holy Spirit.

Only Jesus Christ

Finally, it needs to be emphasized here, that Christianity does not believe all religions are good (though they may have some teachings and elements that are good), nor does it believe that all religions lead to God which some today are teaching contrary to sound doctrine and the very words of Jesus Christ Himself... Christianity is clear on this matter: JESUS CHRIST is the only way to God - to the Father. There can be no compromise on that truth. All the teachings of Christianity are based on faith in Jesus Christ - and no other.

Jn.14:6 *The Lord Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man comes to the Father, but by Me"*

Acts.4:12 *Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."*



THE BIG PICTURE

If you stand too close to a great work of art - say The Last Supper, by Michelangelo, it would be next to impossible to see all the intricate details that were in the masterful strokes of Michelangelo's paint brush that have been left for us all to take in and admire. Ah - but if you step back and gaze upon this amazing and beautiful painting from the right distance and in the right lighting - it comes alive!

And so it is with the scriptures when read out of context apart from the whole. We believe that it is absolutely necessary to take a closer look at what came before Christianity came into being, and examine how it came to be the world's largest religion in the world - at least presently. That requires that we

not only examine the Old Covenant which preceded the New Covenant that Jesus Christ has given us - The Body of Christ. But, that the historical setting at the time of Christ's ministry among the Jews and the small number of Gentiles He ministered to is studied in context with the whole of the Bible.

In the following lessons, we will be going over the Old & New Covenants that God gave to the Jewish people, and then later to the Gentiles throughout the world. This background will allow a person to fully appreciate the beauty and glory of The New Covenant that Christians are now privileged to enjoy and live under. Praise God! Understanding the wonder and blessings that are all part of The New Covenant, allows us be thankful to be alive under this dispensation of "grace" that we are now living in. That is something as a Christian to be truly thankful and excited about!

At the end of each section or part of these series of lessons, are questions that you can answer - or ask others if you are leading a Bible study in church or other situation. Our hope is that these lessons will provide a sure foundation for anyone who desires to be a follower of Jesus Christ to build their life upon.

Following the lessons on The Old & New Covenants; will be another series of lessons on The First Principles of Christ. These six foundational doctrines of the Christian Faith also

referred to as The Doctrine of Christ are mentioned in Heb.6:1-3

Heb 6:1-3 *Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, 2 of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. 3 And this we will do if God permits. (NKJV)*

That knowing these Christian doctrines is paramount to being mature in Christ is clear from the reading of the text above; the real question that has to be asked is how many Christians today know these basic truths of the Christian Faith? Many churches do not teach these doctrines today, at least not in an organized and clear way so new converts to Christianity can have a solid spiritual foundation to build their Christian lives upon.

We believe as did the early Apostles of the early church, that the Doctrine of Christ - another name for these Six Principles of Christ are in fact a matter of life and death. They are certainly not optional or minor doctrines that can be neglected or ignored. Sadly, not only are many of these central doctrines of the Christian faith not being taught, but there are some modern theologians and churches who are no longer abiding in the orthodox teachings found in the scriptures of the Bible.

2 Jn.1:9 *Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son.*

2 Tim. 4:3 *For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine,¹⁹ but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires,*



THE OLD & NEW COVENANTS

A BRIEF SUMMATION OF BOTH THE OLD AND NEW COVENANT

This is a brief overview/synopsis of both the Old & New Covenants, intended to give the reader a basic framework from which to understand the differences that exist between these two major covenants given by God to the Jewish people. Then, how the Gentiles were "allowed entrance into this 2nd Covenant/The New Covenant" by faith, and how the Jewish people were cut off through "unbelief" or disobedience.

It is not intended to be an exhaustive or conclusive/definitive summary; but rather a short overview of the Old & New Covenants history and transition from one to the other

We are convinced that lacking a basic understanding of these two covenants, is perhaps one of the reasons for the lack of understanding and confusion often found today among many

modern day Christians, or those who purport to be...

We offer this simple yet enlightening summation of both covenants to readers with the hope that they will come away with more light and understanding of what God has given us "The Church, The Body of Christ" in the New Covenant that Jesus bequeathed to us who are washed in His blood.

This teaching/presentation of both the Old & New Covenants is divided into seven short chapters or sections. The first four chapters deal with the Old Covenant, The Mosaic Law and Ten Commandments, and the numerous covenants given by God in ancient times prior to the New Covenant being given. In chapter 4, special attention is given to The Law & The Prophets.

In chapter 5, The Law's ending is explained, including the awkward and difficult transition from Law to Grace. Chapter six is solely concerned with the New Covenant, and the final chapter, seven - is a conclusion to what the significance of the New Covenant means to us as New Testament believers; and a short treatment of "The Better Promises" that the New Covenant is founded on...

PT.1

KNOWING BOTH COVENANTS



PT. 1

KNOWING BOTH COVENANTS IS KEY

Finding The Lost Treasure

Matt. 13:52 *Then he unto them, "Therefore every scribe instructed concerning the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out his treasure things new and old.*

The above scripture, clearly reveals that the wise Christian (referred to as a householder), is one who uses both the old and new, when drawing from the "treasure" God has given to us. Jesus is undoubtedly admonishing us to use both the Old and New Testaments (be instructed in), when applying the truths concerning the kingdom of heaven.

Put another way, we are to walk in the reality of the New Covenant, while at the same time not neglecting the

principals/shadows and lessons so richly found within the Old Testament scriptures. In a word: we need both! To attempt to understand the New Covenant without first studying the O.T., “Law”, and many valuable accounts of key bible figures such as Moses, Noah, and David, etc.; is a classic case of “Putting the cart ahead of the horse”.

In fact, trying to understand the Christian Faith without first understanding about Judaism (the root from which Christianity was birthed), is not only unwise and presumptuous, but impractical as well. It only makes sense that our faith will have more meaning and relevance when we have an accurate picture of the background and circumstances that led to the inception of Christianity. As New Testament believers, we are blessed with an awesome amount of spiritual wealth.

When it comes to the “Household of Faith”, no other generation in the history of the Church has been given so much, in terms of knowledge, tradition, and resources. Regrettably, the sad irony is that in spite of this enormous abundance of wealth and resources (we have more bibles, lexicons, and other such resources than ever before) the average Christian has little or no real working knowledge of what the New or Old Covenants are about! Adding to this, is the scriptural truth found in the New Testament the the Church has been given: as His d

2 Pet.1:3 *His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. (NIV) **emphasis mine***

Peter wrote this to the Church when they had no New Testament yet (written N.T.), no bible colleges, no computers, etc. which makes one wonder what God must think of the Body of Christ today. With all of our wealth of knowledge and technology, many Christians today still lack a basic understanding of the Old & New Covenants.

To anyone who doubts our assertion that most Christians do not understand either the Old or New Covenants properly; simply ask some Christian friends or loved ones to explain what the New or Old Covenant is? Don't be surprised if you draw a blank stare, accompanied by silence, or a reply like, I'm not sure, or "I don't know".

Or occasionally you might find someone who will say, "Oh you mean the Old and New Testament", and then point to their Bible. Such generalities reveal a genuine lack of understanding of either the Old or New Covenant, or both. If a Christian cannot explain what the Old or New Covenant is, in simple and coherent terms that anyone can understand, then they need to stop and take the time to study this document of documents.

To the reader who may think we are making too much of this, let us remind you that a failure to know and understand the Old and New Covenants is the equivalent of trying to please God without Faith!

Heb. 11:6 . *And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.*

We think it is fair to assert that seeking God earnestly surely would include taking the time to read & study both the Old Testament and New Testament scriptures. That should go without saying, but today there are many Christians who have not read through the Bible even once, this is especially true when it comes to reading the Old Testament; and as the old saying goes: "They are only hurting themselves."

The bottom line is simple: God commands us to study his word, all of it; (both Old and New Testament) this is made plain by the words of the Apostle Paul in: 2Tim. 2:15 Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. (This implies the ability to discern the Old from the New). Without belaboring the point any further, suffice to say that the evidence throughout the Body of Christ strongly suggests that a vast majority of Christians do not understand either the Old or New Covenants as they should.

This condition is of course shameful and without excuse! Without pointing fingers or assigning specific blame, let us instead focus our energy and direction on eliminating this widespread ignorance of these two essential covenants, by diligently studying both of these Covenants, and then sharing that knowledge and understanding with other Christians as we are given opportunity.

Only when we possess a clear understanding of the Old Covenant, the Law and the Prophets, can we truly appreciate what happened when Christ appeared to fulfill the Law. And also, why the Law had to be taken out of the way, and replaced with a “better covenant”, and why we as Christians cannot allow the Law to “mix” with the “grace” of the New Covenant. These, and other such questions can only be answered when we as Christians “first” know and understand the Old Covenant that gave birth to a “new and better” Covenant established on “better promises”...

Hebrews 8:6 *But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, in as much as He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises.*

PT. 2

COMING OUT OF THE SHADOWS



PT. 2

COMING OUT OF THE SHADOWS

"A MOUNTAIN OF LAWS"

Heb. 10:1 *For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices, which they offered year by year continually, make the comers thereunto perfect.*

The O.T. is filled with numerous "shadows", that all lead us back to the person and work of Jesus Christ. From Genesis to Malachi(2 Maccabees in the Catholic Bible), we discover that every book of the O.T. Points us to Christ; with each book revealing a different aspect of the character, nature, and purpose of God.

No shadow is so evident in the Old Testament as that of the "law" given to Moses... and while no man except Jesus Christ could bear the weight/burden of the law, it did in fact show us

all our need for a “SAVIOR”. Let us thank God that he had something “better prepared for us” who now live under the benefits and blessings of the New Covenant. Below you will find the exacting demands that the “law” placed upon mankind.

A SUMMARY OF THE LAW * (4)

It is important to note that the term "Ten Commandments", is known as the Covenant of God to Israel, and is found only three times in the scripture: Ex. 34:28, Dt.4:13,10:4 The 10 Commandments are a summary or basis of the whole Law of Moses. They are the only part of the Law of Moses spoken by God's audible voice, to Israel. Adam never knew them, and only 5 of the 10 Commandments were known to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and the other patriarchs of Israel before Sinai.

It is also important to note that the Law of Moses is comprised of 3434 commandments in total. To help the reader to break down the 3434 Laws of Moses we will break them up into four sections.

1. The 203 commands given to Moses, before the 10 *(4) Commandments were received.
2. The Ten Commandments, given on Mt. Sinai

3. The 155 commands derived from the Ten Commandments
4. The 3066 other commands "later" added to the Law of Moses

DIVINE LAWS

A. **GOD FIRST** - There are found in the Law of Moses, 23 commands dealing with God and His relationship to Israel: No other gods before Me, sacrifice to no other gods, bow not down to other gods, love Me with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength, do not profane My name, etc. Exodus 20:3
"You shall have no other gods before Me

B. **IDOLATRY** - There are 38 commands concerning idolatry in the Law of Moses: Make no graven images of any kind, bow not down to them, do not serve them, sacrifice no children to them, do not enquire about them. **Deuteronomy 7:25** *images of their gods shall ye burn with fire: thou shalt not desire the silver or gold that is on them, nor take it unto thee, lest thou be snared therein: for it is an abomination to the LORD thy God.*

C. **BLASPHEMY**- There are 12 commands about blasphemy in the Law of Moses: Do not take God's name in vain, do not swear by God's name, death for those found guilty of blasphemy.

Deuteronomy 5:11

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.

Memorial and Ritual Laws WEEKLY SABBATHS - 62

Commands in the Law of Moses: Remember to keep it holy, do not work, do not cook, abide at home, rest. YEAR LONG

SABBATHS - 34 Commands in the Law of Moses: Let the land rest the seventh year, release **the debtor of his debts**. 2 YEAR

SABBATHS - 35 Commands in the Law of Moses: Hallow the 50th year(which is the 7th sabbatical year, honored as a 2 yr sabbath), Proclaim liberty to all and begin another 50yr business cycle, releasing all debts, mortgages, and slaves! SPECIAL

YEARLY SABBATHS - 138 Commands: **Observe yearly, the great day of atonement(Oct.19), 1st and 8th days to be "Feast of Tabernacles"**.

SACRIFICE OFFERINGS - 21 Commands: Make altars of sacrifice, no leaven or honey in burnt offerings, oil and frankincense on meat offerings.

TABERNACLE LAWS - 329 Commands: Temple to be built by free-will offerings, specific placement of furniture, exact instructions on the building and erection of tabernacle, description of "how" the tabernacle service is to be carried out.

THE PRIESTHOOD LAWS - 628 commands: Priests chosen from the tribe of Levi, cleansing and consecration of priests, duties of priests and levites, keep free from defilement.

REWARDS of SERVICE - 64 Commands: Priests to receive a portion of all the sacrifices, tithes and offerings; of everything produced in Israel(the best of everything).

8 FEASTS OF JEHOVAH -Feast of Dedication, Feast of In-gathering, Feast of Lights, Feast of Purim, Feast of Tabernacles, Feast of the Lord, Feast of Unleavened Bread, Feast of Weeks.

National laws - 35 Commands

Segregation laws - 15 Commands

Unclean things - 153 Commands

Tithing laws - 43 Commands

Vow laws - 113 Commands

Obedience laws - 306 Commands

False religion laws - 33 Commands

Miscellaneous laws - 84 Commands, such as popular opinion, respect of persons, and love your enemies.

Moral and Civil laws - 1092 Commands, such as family

laws, murder laws, sex laws, stealing laws, lying laws, covetousness laws, humane laws, conquest laws, slave laws, property laws, business laws, justice laws.

Modes of punishment - 7 Commands for transgressing the Law: scourging--hand cut off--fines by death by fire, stoning, hanging sword

It should be pointed out that every citizen of Israel was required to know/memorize/ and observe all of the rigid requirements and demands of the Law.

Deut.6:4-9 *"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one! 5 You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. 6 "And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. 7 You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. 8 You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as front-lets between your eyes. 9 You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.*

Undoubtedly, the weight and exactness of the Law proved to be too much for not only the individual, but for the nations of

Israel and Judah as a whole. Time and time again, we observe the unfaithfulness and inability of Judah and Israel to "keep" the Law. And though occasionally, we do witness a "faithful" person throughout Israel's checkered past; as a whole it can be said that "no one" truly kept the Law, in every point! The following scriptures bear witness to this irrefutable fact:

Rom. 3:10 *As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no not one.*

It is clear to anyone who has taken the time to examine the minute details and requirements of the law – that living under it's impossible demands (for all but Jesus Christ) was a recipe for failure and frustration.

Thank God, that Jesus Christ took the law out of the way, and we now are privileged to live under the New Covenant; a stark contrast to say the least... Before we look closely at the transition from Law to Grace, from the Old Covenant to the New Covenant, let us take a close look at some of the "Old Testament Shadows" which are often misunderstood by many Christians today. Understanding what we have "come out of", will help us appreciate and walk in the blessings that are ours

under the New Covenant...

Old Testament Shadows

As New Testament Christians, we are blessed to live under the New Covenant, where we now find these O.T. shadows fulfilled in Christ. Before we begin our study of the New Covenant, we think it only fitting that we first examine some, of the O.T. shadows which all find their source of origin in Jesus Christ and His revelation to us. And though we will show that the Law cast the "darkest shadow" of all the O.T. Shadows; there are many other "types and shadows" which warrant our attention.

In Genesis(**Gen. 7:1**), we find Noah's ark casting a shadow that extends through time, from a crude wooden ship that "saved" Noah and his family, to a rough wooden cross that is the ark of salvation to all who will believe

(**1 Pet. 18-21**). Again, in faithful Abraham,(who was willing to sacrifice his own son Isaac), we follow his shadow through the pages of the Bible until we come to a place called Mount Calvary: here we see God offering up His own son for the sins of the world (**Jn. 3:16**).

In Numbers, we find the "portrait of Christ" in the bronze serpent on the stake(**Num. 21:4-9**); here we see a shadow that clearly speaks of Christ's crucifixion: "And as Moses lifted up the

serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up" Jn. 3:14. Also, the "rock" that quenched the thirst of the Israelites in the desert is another type/shadow, which represents a "kind of Christ": *"they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ" 1 Co. 10:4.*

In Nehemiah, we witness the "condescension" of Jesus in the shadow of Nehemiah's mission to Israel. Here we observe the prophet Nehemiah leaving an exalted position in order to identify with the suffering of his people. We find the New Testament bears witness to this truth in **Phil.2:5-7**: *Let this mind be in you , which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men.* (also, see **Jn. 1:9-11**)*note: Moses also left the riches of Egypt to suffer with his own people,(see **Heb. 11:24-27**)

In Lamentations, the weeping prophet Jeremiah foreshadows the coming of Christ as he weeps over Jerusalem; Christ would weep over Jerusalem six centuries later: **Lk. 19:41-44** *And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. ... because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.*

The book of Jonah gives us a clear picture of Christ's death, and burial(in a figure), in the three days in which Jonah was inside the belly of the whale(JON.1:17).The words of Jesus himself, bear witness to this fact: *"But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonah: For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. (Mt. 12:39-40)*

In Zechariah, beneath the "shadow of prophecy", we read of many different references to Christ as being many things: The Righteous Branch (3:8, 6:12-13), The King/Priest(6:3), The Cornerstone(10:4), The Good Shepherd (11:16), The Cleansing Fountain(13:1), and the Coming King(14:9)

So then, we learn that whether speaking of persons or things(such as feast days, ceremonial laws or sacrifices), all of these are "mere shadows" which all find their fulfillment in Jesus Christ. In truth, we find the long shadow of Christ extending through the entire Old Testament; and as stated previously, nowhere is it more evident or pronounced than in the "Law" and also in the person of Moses.

We say this not because the Law revealed the mercy, love, and grace of God(though the law is holy and righteous); but because the Law, like Christ was the very thing that God used to

expose and uncover the sins and iniquities of man! Under the O.T. we observe the Law being applied as the "standard" by which mankind (specifically the nation of Israel), was to be judged; while under the N.T. we find Jesus Christ being the "standard" by which all men will be judged. (actually, it is the "words" of Christ which will be used to judge all men, see

Jn.15:22, Jn. 12:48 *He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.*

Also, we find that both Moses and Jesus Christ were the mediators of the two most important covenants ever to be initiated by God to man. The difference between the two mediators (that is Moses and Jesus), is significant. While Moses the man, was indeed "faithful" in overseeing the implementation of the O.T. Covenant; Christ as "God" (as well as man), is worthy of more glory and honor because He literally "built" His own house.

In addition, we must acknowledge that Christ offered up Himself as the ultimate sacrifice for the sins of the world, while Moses merely offered up the sacrifices of animals and other inferior things. Please examine the following scriptures concerning the superiority of Christ over Moses: **Heb.3:3-5** *For this man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who builded the house hath more honor than the*

house. For every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God.

Heb. 8:4-6 For if he (speaking of Christ), were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law. Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shown to thee in the mount. But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises.

PT. 3

THE OLD COVENANT

PT. 3



THE OLD COVENANT

"A BOOK OF COVENANTS"

Before we examine the heart and soul of the Old Testament /The Law and The Prophets. Let us first set the record straight concerning the different ways in which the Old Testament is viewed. To begin with, the term "Old Testament" (also called the Old Covenant), is commonly used by individuals when speaking of the various books that make up the Old Testament "Canon".

The word canon refers to those books that have been officially recognized as "Holy Scriptures" by the Church. In the Catholic Church there are forty-nine books recognized as canon, beginning with Genesis and ending with the second book of

Maccabees. In the Protestant Church, thirty-nine books are recognized as canon, beginning with Genesis and ending with Malachi.

CANON (from Web. Dicta.) : Gk. Kanna-reed, Latin-standard, 1. A regulation or dogma decreed by a Church council, 3. An authoritative list of books accepted as Holy Scripture. Also, while the Old Testament (Covenant), is often viewed as “one covenant”, in reality it is a collection of covenants beginning with the Solaric Covenant in Genesis. These covenants were born out of varying circumstances and different times.

We must therefore approach the Old Testament with the understanding that we are actually looking at a wide assortment of “Covenants” spanning a period of some 4000 years, and involving numerous individuals that comprise the history of man (esp. the nation of Israel and Judah). And while the Sinaitic Covenant (the Law of Moses), is certainly the most significant covenant of the Old Testament (though one might argue that the Abrahamic Covenant is) the other covenants are all important, and demand our close attention.

We should point out that we are not saying the Mosaic Covenant (the Law), is the best covenant or superior covenant (even though Paul the Apostle did declare the law righteous), on the contrary, the “Law Covenant” might well be reckoned as the “Worst” covenant of all! After all, it was the Law that brought

the “curse” upon all mankind ! (Rom. 3:9-20, Gal. 3:10) It was in fact, the Abrahamic Covenant that guaranteed the “Blessing) through faith (Gal.3: 7-9, Rom. 4:13-18).

So then, when we refer to the Sinai-tic Covenant/Law of Moses, as being the most significant of the Old Testament, we simply mean: The Law’s overall influence and impact upon all of mankind (albeit negative). Has been the centerpiece of God’s plan for salvation up to the time of the “First Reformation”

Each covenant of the Old Testament reveals something of the character, nature, and purpose of God. We believe a close examination of each of these different covenants such as the Davidic and Levitical Covenants and many others. Will allow you to better understand and appreciate the “superiority” of the New Covenant we are so privileged to live under (**Heb. 8:6**).

Because our main focus is in presenting the “Law” (Sinaitic Covenant), we are only presenting a brief out line of the “Other Covenants” in the Old Testament, along with definitions to the word covenant and testament. It should be noted that these covenants are covenants between God and man only.

"Covenant" Defined

Vine’s Expository Dictionary

Covenant: (Noun), Greek - Diatheke. Primarily signifies a

disposition of property by will or otherwise. In its use in the Sept., it is the rendering of a Hebrew word meaning a covenant or agreement (from a verb signifying to cut or divide, in allusion to a sacrificial custom in connection with covenant-making e.g., **Gen. 15: 10**, "divided" **Jer. 34: 18-19**). In contradistinction to the English word "covenant" (lit. a coming together), which signifies a mutual undertaking between two parties or more, each binding himself to fulfill obligations.

In other words covenant from the Hebrew does not in itself contain the idea of joint obligation, it mostly signifies an obligation undertaken by a single person. For instance, in **Gal. 3: 17** - it is used as an alternative to a "promise" (vs. **16,17 and 18**). God enjoined upon Abraham the rite of circumcision, but His promise to Abraham, here called a covenant, was not conditional upon the observance of circumcision, through a penalty attached to its non-observance.

The N.T. uses of the word may be analyzed as follows: (a) A promise or undertaking, human or divine, **Gal. 3: 15**; (b) A promise or undertaking on the part of God, **Luke 1: 72, Acts 3:25, Rom. 9: 4, 11: 27**, etc. (c) A mutual undertaking, between God and Israel, see **Deut. 29 – 30** (described as a commandment, **Heb. 7: 8, 9:20**). (d) By metonymy, the token of the covenant, or promise, made to Abraham, **Acts 7: 8**. (e) By metonymy, the record of the covenant, **2Cor. 3: 14, Heb. 9:4** .

Rev. 11: 19. (f) The basis established by the death of Christ, on which the salvation of men is secured, (**Matt. 26: 28, Mk. 14: 24, Lk. 22: 20**, etc.)

This covenant is called the new, **Heb. 9: 15**, the second, **8: 7**, the better, **7: 22**. In **Heb. 9: 16 – 17** the translation is much disputed. There does not seem to be any sufficient reason for departing in these verses from the word used everywhere else. The English word "Testament" is taken from the titles prefixed to the Latin versions. See Testament below

Testament (from Webster's N.C. Dictionary): covenant with God, holy scripture, Fr. L, last will, Fr. testari to be a witness, call to witness, make a will, Fr. Testis, witness...

Without elaborating further, let us simply state that the word Testament and covenant are basically synonymous. With any distinction being that the word covenant connotes the idea of "an agreement based on promise". Whereas testament, connotes the idea of agreement based on the "will of the testator". Which in turn signifies a death "seal" or confirming the agreement.

Significantly, the New Testament/Covenant carries both ideas, which reinforces the integrity of the "Promises" contained in this agreement with mankind.

A Covenant should in reality be viewed as God's as God's

promise to “give” something to a select person, or group of individuals. *Note, the covenant may or may not be conditional.

The important thing to note from these meanings is that the word “Covenant” usually carries with the idea a promise that is dependent upon the initiator of the covenant. Thankfully, the initiator of both the Old and New Covenants is God. The idea of God making promises (some conditional, some not) is at the heart of what is meant when either word is being used. It is reasonable to say that both the Old and New Covenants were and are in truth: God’s promises backed up by Almighty God Himself!

The “OTHER COVENANTS”

Solaric: This covenant is the promise of eternal seasons of fruitfulness that would continue forever

Edenic – Adam: Genesis 2: 4 - in this verse we see the first indication that God is a covenant maker, for it is in this verse the name of Jehovah - Elohim is used to proclaim the God of Covenant relationship. **Genesis 2: 15-17** we see Jehovah- Elohim take Adam and place him in the garden to dress and keep it, this is known as the “Dominion Covenant” which contains ten articles.

1. Be fruitful, not sterile
2. Multiply
3. Replenish
4. Subdue the Earth
5. Rule all of God's works
6. Dress the garden and keep it
7. Protect from enemies (dominion)
8. Freely eat all, but the tree of knowledge
9. Refrain from the tree of knowledge
10. The penalty of eating from the tree of knowledge

Adamic: Again in Genesis 3: 15-17,21 the Adamic Covenant is completed when the promise of redemption is made through the seed of the women. And finally God sealed this Covenant by making coats of skin and dress them.

Cainic: Genesis 4: 11-15 this was a covenant to Cain on vengeance on anyone who killed him

Noahic: This covenant begins the dispensation of human government, which consisted of 7 points 1. God would not curse the ground, or living creatures. 2. That man should replenish the earth forever. 3. That man should rule the earth. 4. That animals should be eaten, but not the blood. 5. That there should be capital punishment for murders. 6. That the rainbow would be

the sign of this covenant. 7. That this covenant would be forever.

Abrahamic: This covenant is also known as the dispensation of promise, and consist of 7 parts.

GOD'S SEVEN FOLD PROMISE:

1. I will make thee a great nation
2. I will make thy name great
3. thou shall be a blessing
4. I will bless them that bless thee
5. I will bless thee
6. I will curse them that curse thee
7. In thee shall all the nations of the earth be blessed (circumcision, the sign of the covenant)

Hagatic: this was a covenant made with Hagar concerning her seed through Ishmael, Abraham's son. It concerned many generations and was in three parts 1. Commands, return and submit to Sarah, name your son Ishmael: meaning God shall hear. 2. Promises, your seed to multiply beyond number, Ishmael shall to be blessed and be a great nation, Ishmael shall to beget 12 princes. 3. Prophetical revelations, Ishmael shall be a wild man, his hand to be against every man, every man's hand

to be against him, Ishmael to dwell in the presence of his brethren.

Sarahic: This covenant made with Sarah promised certain blessings to her and Isaac, for many generations, and in two parts. 1. Commands, change her name from Sarai to Sarah, meaning princess, and call he son Isaac. 2. Promises to be blessed with a son, to be made the mother of nations, to become the mother of many kings, Abrahamic covenant to continue with Isaac, Abrahamic covenant to continue with Isaac seed forever.

Healing: This is made with Israel and all who chose to come under the covenant of God to Moses.

Levitic: Was given to Phinehas, the son of Levi, who was zealous for the Lord and executed judgment upon rebels. It consisted of two great promises: 1. Peace and blessing to Levi's house. 2. An everlasting priesthood. Then a new covenant was made in Mal. 2: God took away the promise of peace and blessing do to their departing out of the way; and causing many to stumble at the Law; they had corrupted the covenant of Levi found in Malachi.

Salt: A covenant made with Israel concerning sacrifices they were to offer forever. This covenant of salt pictured the everlasting friendship between God and His people

Davidic: this covenant was made with David and his house, and was conditioned upon obedience as all other covenants. It was to be an everlasting covenant containing 7 blessings.

1. A Davidic house forever
2. A Davidic throne forever
3. A Davidic kingdom forever
4. A sure land for Israel forever
5. No more affliction from the nations forever
6. The fatherly care of God forever
7. An eternal covenant

PT. 4

THE LAW & THE PROPHETS



PT. 4

THE LAW & THE PROPHETS

Mt. 22: 40 *“On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets”* **Jer. 26: 4, Dan. 9: 10, Mt. 5: 17, Mt. 11: 13, Lk. 16:16, Acts 13: 39**

The above scriptures all make reference to the “Law and the Prophets” (though not always together). In the New Testament we find Jesus using the expression: “The Law and the Prophets” together, with the idea being that these two words represent the “whole” of the Old Testament. Jesus goes on to declare that all of the Law and Prophets hang (are contained), on these two commandments:

Mt. 22: 37-39 ...*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.*

What Jesus is teaching us here is of paramount importance (a key spiritual truth), as we shall discover later in our study of the New Covenant. In fact, this truth may be considered the key to unlocking the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, **Mt. 13: 11, Lk. 8: 10, 1Cor. 4: 1**. For now, let us realize that the entire O.T. (The Law and the Prophets), can be reduced to the two scriptures mentioned above. This is quite remarkable when one considers the incredible body of laws, ordinances, and commandments contained in the Old Testament.

THE PROPHETS...

Jer. 26: 4-5 *And thou shalt say unto them, thus saith the Lord; if ye will not hearken to me, to walk in my law, which I have set before you, to hearken to the words of my servants the prophets, whom I sent unto you, both rising up early, and sending them, but ye have not hearkened.*

In **verse 5 of Jer. 26**, we read,...*to the words of my servants the prophets...*; here we find that the words of the Prophets, that is at the heart of the matter. When Christ speaks of the “Prophets”, He is really alluding to the “words of the Prophets”. More specifically, He is referring to all the words of the Prophets. The word Prophets then, as it is used in the term, “the Law and the Prophets”, is simply another way of saying: the words of all the Old Testament Prophets, (whether spoken, or written).

So then, we learn from the context of how the word Prophets is used throughout the scriptures, and safely conclude that any reference to the Prophets is essentially a reference to their “words”. At this point, it needs to be pointed out that while the “Law” (the Sinaitic Covenant of Moses), was also spoken and written down by the Prophets;

God has obviously determined that we are to differentiate between the two (hence, the term “Law and the Prophets”). Drawing this distinction, between the Law and the other words of the Prophets (such as end times prophecies, etc.), is important because it allows us to zero in on man’s number one problem: namely, SIN!

Let us remember, that while all of the words of the Prophets

demand our attention and careful consideration, it was the Law that God used to expose our sinful condition (**Rom. 7**), and it was the Law that declares all men Guilty before God (**Rom. 3: 19,20**). In addition, it was the Law that God used to bring us to Christ (**Gal. 3: 25**).

All the words of the Prophets (both the Law and all other), point to Christ; but it was the words of the Law that God specifically used to lead mankind to Jesus Christ. Simply put, it was the Law that showed man he needed a Savior!

While all of the other words of the Old Testament Prophets have merit, they did not have the force or weight necessary to bring us to Christ. It was for this reason and others, we will explain in the following chapter on the "Law", that we divide the Old Testament into two areas of revelation we refer to as: "The Law and the Prophets". everything to do with the way we approach God, and how we interpret His words to us. As we shall see later (in the chapter. Entitled: Grace, the New Covenant), our covenant, is also conditional; so let us take note of this small but all important word. Compare with ***Mt. 16: 24 ...If (Also Lk. 14: 26, Jn. 10: 9, Jn. 12: 47-48, 1Cor. 3: 11-15, Gal. 1: 8-9, 2Thess. 3: 14)**

The “Purpose” Revealed:

Ex. 19: 5-6 *Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine. And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.'*

In verses 5 and 6, we have the purpose and reasons for the Law being explicitly revealed by God Himself. Again, let the reader take note that God's purpose has not changed; under the New Covenant we will find that all of the “things” mentioned below are still applicable. (Any differences will be discussed more fully in the Chapter: Grace, the New Covenant.

A “Special Treasure”

In the above verses we see that God intended for Israel God's Chosen People, to be unique, peculiar, a special treasure that He would prize and value above all other nations and peoples of the earth. (See def. below). It is for this reason that we find God referring to Israel as “*the apple of My eye*” **Duet. 32: 9-11**, this expression captures the love and desire God has for His chosen people.

Sadly, the O.T. scriptures paint a bleak portrait of Israel; a

nation that consistently disobeyed and angered God! Our point being, that the idea of a clergy (a separate order of priests offering up sacrifices pleasing to God), fell far short of God's plan for the priesthood, and on the contrary clearly revealed the need for a "better priesthood", and a "better covenant"... (**See, Duet. 9: 6-8, Nee. 9:26, Judges 2: 19-20**)

Zodhiates Hebrew Dict. Peculiar: Gullah wealth-jewel, peculiar (treasure), and proper good, special...

Compare with:* **1Pet. 2: 9** ***But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.***

A Matter of "Tense"

The "tense" of a verb tells us whether an action is past, present, or future, as we look at the two passages of scripture above from the Old and New Testaments; this matter of tense reveals a critical difference between them. Please notice the (present tense) of the words: *But ye are...* in the opening of **1Pet. 2: 9** above, and contrast this to the words: *then you shall be* (Future tense), found in **verse 5 of Ex. 19**.

This difference in tense (though seemingly insignificant), is in fact critical to our understanding of how these two covenants differ. While both covenants (the scriptures above), deal with essentially the same things: God's people being a peculiar treasure/ peculiar people, a kingdom of priest/ royal priesthood a holy nation; there is one critical difference. In the Old Testament, God is telling the people of Israel that if they obey His voice and keep His covenant, "*Then they would be*" the things listed above.

The words, *...then ye shall be...* put in the context of the proceeding words, especially the word "if", makes it abundantly clear that the things God desired Israel to be, had not yet been realized. As we know from the O.T. scriptures, the people of Israel never did really obey or keep God's holy covenant. The point being that the Law, and the Prophets, never brought about the perfection and holiness that God desired for His people, Israel. It was all by design as we know now, that the Law with all of it's exacting demands, and the Prophets' words were simply pointing to the Messiah, the anointed one, the Mediator that would usher in the New Covenant.

Only then would Israel, and all of mankind be able to truly "please God" and be the Peculiar Treasure and Royal Priesthood that God desired all along...

Now, let us compare this to the words of the Apostle Peter

in the N.T.; in **1Pet. 2: 9** *But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people...* the present tense of the word are shows us that God now sees His people as being those things He has always desired for His people. Under the Old Covenant/ Law, God's people could never meet the necessary criteria (obeying God's voice and keeping His covenant), so they never became what God wanted them to be. (emphasis mine)

Thankfully, under the New Covenant (because of Christ), we are a special/peculiar people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation. We will address this more fully in the chapter titled "Grace" understanding the New Covenant; but for now simply be aware that the things God desired for His people under the Old Testament are now ours through Christ! Glory to God! AMEN. (See, **2Pet. 1 :3, Eph. 1: 6-9, Rom. 8: 2-3**)

A Kingdom of Priests

Verse 6 of Ex. 19, shows us that it was God's intent for Israel to be a spiritual kingdom; a nation that would be known for its service to God. To accomplish this, God gave His servant Moses, specific instructions on how His priests should serve Him. For God was looking for a kingdom of holy priests, in essence a

ministry unto God serving and glorifying Him. Again, we find that God still desires for His people to be a kingdom of priests; and though some of the aspects of the New Covenant may differ from that of the Old, one thing is certain: we are called to be a Royal Priesthood. (**See Rev. 1: 5-6, Rom 12: 1, 1Pet. 2: 9**)

Compare with: **1 Pet. 2: 5** *Ye also, as lively stones are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. (emphasis mine)*

Clergy / Laity ?

It needs to be pointed out that the Aaronic or Levitical priesthood, which was exclusive to only one tribe of Israel (the tribe of Levi); has been done away with under the New Covenant (**Heb. 7: 11-12, 19-28, 8: 1-6**). And while some churches and denominations have tried to revive the old Levitical Priesthood by establishing a CLERGY (a professional order of priests), that is separate and over the rest of the Church body (often referred to as the LAITY); they do so in direct violation of the New Covenant.

The problem is simple: Today's Christians have been conditioned to accept this practice and teaching as normal or acceptable, because of centuries of growing accustomed to the idea of a clergy and laity division within the body of Christ. Let

us assure you, the early first century Church did not teach or practice such a priesthood as is now commonly witnessed in some denominations within the Church today.

The N.T scriptures make it unmistakably clear that all believers are priests under the N.T. and qualified to offer up “spiritual sacrifices” unto God. Let us stress, that under the New Covenant, God never intended for there to be a priesthood - clergy that is separate from the rest of the Body of Christ, let alone be over it.

The truth is that the idea of a clergy and laity though now commonly accepted, has created a division between those in the Body of Christ/The Church; that has led to the misunderstanding and false belief that only a select group of ministers(the professional clergy) should be allowed to minister in the church in any official capacity. The lines that separate professional (usually full time ministers); from those who regularly attend church but do not have a formal degree or credentials from a Bible college or seminary are blurred and vary from one denomination to another.

While all believers in the Body of Christ are “called to be saints,” not everyone is called into ministry (professional – paid ministers within the church) – this is true.. The problem is when Christians assume because I’m not a professional minister (one who is formally part of the clergy); my role in serving God is

relegated to focus mainly on going to church services and living a godly life. That mode of thinking, often results in becoming an official “lay person”; one who has a “laid back” approach to serving God and living out their Christian faith. Such is the case today in many of modern mainstream churches.

The key to unraveling the confusion over who can serve in any official capacity and who cannot or rather – who should not; is all centered on the real question: Who has been called by God to serve in the church? And to what position – to what office?

Being called into Christian ministry is not easy to determine, and how people are called into ministry is as varied as the people themselves who are called into ministry. That being said, it should be pointed out that through the pages of The Bible; we find shepherds, farmers, Jews, Gentiles, women, men and a myriad of other individuals being called by God into service for His Kingdom... One thing everyone God has called into ministry, or will call into ministry have in common is this: The “call into ministry” will always be of His choosing.

Letting God lead an individual into his or her “calling” is the key to being where God wants us to serve. Whether we choose our place of service, or let God choose is as different as day and night! The key for all Christians is to discover one's own unique calling, (which often requires seeking God earnestly in prayer and with wise counsel;) and serve wherever God directs you.

Sadly, you may find like Paul the Apostle when God called him to preach the gospel, that those around you do not accept or recognize your calling; in fact they may openly oppose you.

Acts.9:26-30

The warning for all Christians is this: Do not choose your own ministry or calling – that is God's domain. While it is possible to have a successful ministry in terms of numbers or recognition, etc; if we do choose what we want to do for God, in the end the most important thing is to be doing what God wants us to do; which may not look like success by the world's standards. That I'm sure is what most Christians would agree with.

Paul the apostle, was beaten,, shipwrecked, stoned, thrown in prison more than once, and finally beheaded for the faith... a failure by this world's estimation; but surely in God's eyes – Paul was a most faithful servant and hero of the Christian faith to the end. All of the apostles with the exception of John the Beloved who died in exile on the island of Patmos, were martyred, along with the first Christian martyr, Stephen; but all of Christendom counts them all as among the greatest of Christian heroes of the Faith. They did not choose their callings – God did!

Let us again reemphasize the fact that under the N.T. all believers are priests, called to serve and offer up spiritual

sacrifices unto God. Amen! This matter of clergy/laity however, is not to be confused with the (Government of God), That God has ordained and established for His Church.

A Holy Nation

EX.19:6 *“And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.”*

Again, in verse 6, we see that God’s desire for Israel was of a spiritual nature. Undoubtedly, God intended for Israel to reflect His glory and Holy character to the rest of the nations of the world. And while Israel was indeed of necessity a political body, it was not God’s idea for Israel to have a king; this was in fact, the desire and ambition of Israel who wanted to be like the other nations that surrounded them. (**1Sam. 8: 4-9**) God wanted to be their King but they wanted a man to rule over them.

Without going into detail, suffice to say that the kings of Israel and Judah, were a sore disappointment; Saul, David, Solomon, and all of them fell short of the glory of God. Though God allowed Israel to reject Him as their King, the nation of Israel under the Law and their inferior kings; never achieved God’s desire for them to be a Holy Nation. Sadly, as the sordid history of Israel has shown us the glory and the light that God

wanted the nation of Israel to reflect to the rest of the world was never realized.

Not only did Israel fail to be a godly influence to the nations surrounding them; their sins and iniquity reached the point that Israel was a reproach to God, and a cause of ridicule to the other nations. (See, Jer. 23: 40, 24: 8-10) Once again, we find the weight of the Law was too much for the nation of Israel to bear. We will discuss later, why Israel's abysmal failure to keep God's commandments, and their trampling of His holy name throughout the nations; figured prominently in "why the New Covenant" was ordained by God. Thankfully God had something better prepare for us. Amen!

1Pet. 2: 9 But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light. (emphasis mine)

The Apostle Peter, declares boldly to the Christians of the first century - "... you are a holy nation." Not will be, were, or could be, etc... No. He makes it clear that the New Testament Church is in fact "A Holy Nation!" The verb "are" is in the present tense, and establishes for the recipients of this epistle the wonderful truth, the Church – The Body of Christ is in reality "a holy nation" in the eyes of God. That is quite remarkable.

THE GOVERNMENT OF GOD

Ephesians 4:11-16 (NKJV) *11 And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, 13 till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; 14 that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, 15 but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ— 16 from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love. (also see: **1.Co.12:28, Eph.2:20, Eph.3:5**)*

(See. **Eph. 4: 11-16**). And, while all N.T. believers are priests, we are not all Apostles, Prophets, or Teachers etc.; no, these administrative offices (gifts) are to be viewed as distinct and separate from the office of the priest, of which all believers are called to be.

One only need read the Book of Acts, or Paul's letter to the Ephesian church to see that the newly established government Christ had established was "a new five fold" government consisting of: Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors, and Teachers.

EPH.4:11-13 *So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, **12** to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up **13** until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.*

EPH.2:19-20 ***19** Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, **20** having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, **21** in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, **22** in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.*

The foundation the Apostle Paul is referring to above, is a reference to the "teachings and Doctrine of Christ" which were given to the Apostles and Prophets to proclaim to the world at large – and in particular the Church; those Christians who follow

Jesus and make up the Body of Christ in the earth. This doctrine, which is named in Hebrews chapter six, verses three through six.

These teachings are commonly called: The First Principles of Christ, or the Doctrine of Christ. The Gospel or “Good News” concerning Jesus Christ's atoning death on the cross for our sins, and His victorious resurrection from the dead; are embodied in these teachings. As a whole, they represent The Doctrine of Christ. (see the scriptures below)

The early church considered these teachings as essential for all Christians to know and experience. The first two Principles of Christ were considered absolutely necessary to know and experience if one was to be considered “saved” and ready for heaven. Today; many churches no longer teach these truths of Christianity; and many people who attend church regularly are wholly ignorant of them altogether. A sad state of affairs indeed!

HEB.6:1-3 *1. Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God,² of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. **3** And this we will do if God permits.*

2 JN.1:9 *Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the*

doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son.

Other Ministries in the Church

1 Corinthians 12:5

And there are varieties of ministries, and the same Lord.

1 CO.4:4-7 *4 There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. 5 There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. 6 And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all. 7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all:*

If you don't know if you are called to a particular office in the church (apostle/prophet/teacher/evangelist/pastor), which takes time do discern and discover as a Christian; you can readily still find many places to serve with a local church. Whether it's a greeter at the front door, an usher, or any number of places in the church; you can serve somewhere if you are open and available.

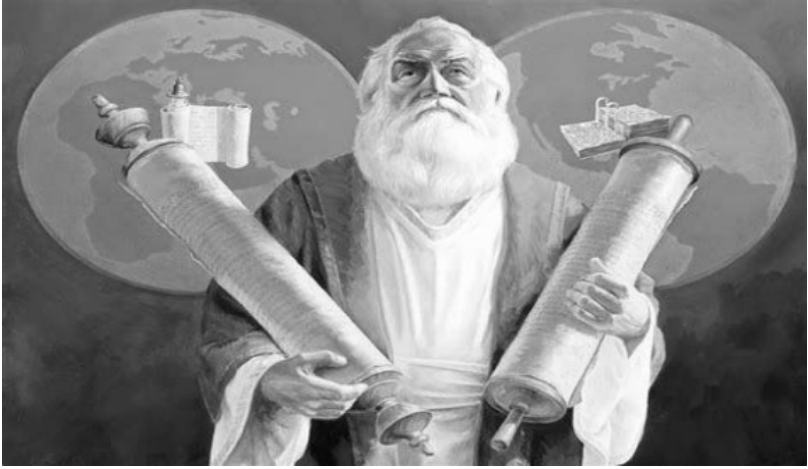
The bottom line for any Christian is to pray about what God wants you to do... Believe us when we tell you, God will hear your prayers and answer you. God has a place for everyone to

serve in His kingdom. You can pick and choose, but as we shared earlier; you will find it is much better to ask God before you commit to any type of ministry. Find out what God says first.

*Note – we will address this in great detail in our 2nd.Volume/The First Principles of Christ , which is the next part of this treatment of The Christian Faith. ***The authors***

PT. 5

THE LAW ENDS



PT. 5

THE LAW ENDS

"A Time Of Transition"

Rom.10:4 For Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness to everyone that believeth.

At this point, it needs to be made clear that this period where the Jews were required to observe both the Law and obey the Gospel, would only last up until the time of Jesus death.

Technically, the need to keep the Law ended (was fulfilled), when Christ died on the cross. At that time the Jews were released from the Law; and Christ became the "curse" for all mankind(past,present, and future), by hanging on the cross. With

the Law "taken out of the way", the Gospel would now take center-stage as the only way men could be saved, whether Jew or Gentile.

Gal. 3:13 *Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree. *note- Let the reader contrast the "tree in the garden" which brought death to all men, with the "tree on Mt. Calvary" which brought life to all men.*

In any event, we learn from our brief study of the scriptures concerning this awkward period of transition from Law to Grace, the following:

1. Jesus Christ came to "fulfill the Law", not destroy it.

2. During Jesus' earthly ministry, the Jews were expected to observe the Law of Moses, and also believe the Gospel, at the same time.

3. Jesus was misunderstood, and His radical approach of presenting both the "Law and the Gospel" at the same time, was often met with stiff opposition and rejection.

4. Having to "keep the Law" and also "obey the Gospel", came to an end upon the death of Jesus on the cross; after that time, just "believing/obeying the Gospel", became the standard by which the Jews would be judged.

**Note- Those Jews who persisted in clinging to the Law, would be judged according to the Law. see, Rom.2:12*

5. Jesus bore the "curse of the Law" for all humanity, when He hung upon the cross. In effect, Christ took our punishment upon Himself for every sin that has, or would ever be committed. **(Gal.3:13)**

WHAT GOSPEL DID JESUS PREACH?

Lk.4:18-19 The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor;... To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

It is quite remarkable to learn from the above scripture from the Gospel of Luke, where Jesus first announces His earthly ministry; that His first priority is that of "preaching the gospel to the poor". We have just examined the evidence from the scriptures which reveal that during the time of Christ's ministry, the Jews were expected to "keep the Law of Moses", and at the same time "believe the Gospel".

In light of this fact, it is reasonable to ask what gospel was Jesus preaching?; since we know that the Gospel centers

around the "death and resurrection of Christ", which had not yet taken place. If the gospel that Paul the apostle preached was built on the facts of Christ's death and resurrection(which from his perspective had already occurred); than what was the basis for Jesus' Gospel, when He had not yet died or risen from; the dead?

(1Co.15:1-4, Paul's Gospel) 1 Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, 2 by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you—unless you believed in vain. 3 For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures. (emphasis mine)

The answer, though profound is quite simple. Jesus preached the exact same Gospel as Paul, and the other 12 disciples. The only difference is that **Jesus "looked ahead"** to His death and resurrection (which He viewed as done by faith); while **Paul, and the others** since the death and resurrection of Christ; have **"looked back"** to the these two historical events. So when Jesus preached the Gospel, He spoke of what was to come, as already being; and when Paul or the others have preached the Gospel, they have spoken of what has already been. In both cases, we find a Gospel that centers around the

cross and resurrection of Christ.

The point of all this discussion, is to show that the "heart" of the New Covenant, which is the Gospel; was the "same", both before and after the Law was fulfilled (taken out of the way). We may rest assured that the Gospel Jesus preached, and the Gospel Paul preached, was in essence, one and the same.

The only difference is in the frame of reference or perspective of those preaching the Gospel. Jesus "looked ahead" to His inevitable death and resurrection, and considered them as accomplished through the "eye of faith". Paul on the other hand, "looked back" on these events as being settled, and exercised "faith" when preaching the Gospel.

The Gospel of Christ/Paul Compared...

JESUS: Mt.17:24 *Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.*

PAUL: 1Co.1:18 *For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish, foolishness;; but unto us which are saved, it is the power of God. also, Jn.3:14*

JESUS: Jn.11:25 *Jesus said unto her(speaking to Martha), I*

am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.

PAUL: 1Co.15:3-4 *For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: **Jn.2:19***

AFTER THE LAW WAS "FULFILLED"

Entering God's Rest

Heb.4:9-10 *There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his. (emphasis mine)*

Immediately following the death of Christ(*the law having been fulfilled*), we witness another awkward period of Church history. After centuries of being bound and confined to the harsh dictates of the Law, the Jews suddenly find themselves confronted with the task of learning to live under "Grace", and letting go of the Law. Coming out of the dark shadow of the Law, into the light of the New Covenant would prove to be one of the Church's most difficult periods.

Entering the "rest" described above in the book of

Hebrews, would be a massive undertaking that would require the Jews to "think and act" differently than they had while living under bondage to the Law and Old Covenant. In effect, they would have to "unlearn" much of what they had been taught to do; and begin to learn to depend on this man named Jesus as their sole source of life, salvation, etc. It would not be easy!

The desire to cling to the Law, and to trust in one's observance of it, was something that many Jews struggled with daily. Add to this, the fact that Jesus Himself, prior to His crucifixion had taught many of these same Jews to "keep the whole Law"; and now were being taught that the Law was not the way to be righteous before God. Imagine the confusion and difficulty the Jews experienced in trying to adapt to their new-found freedom under the New Covenant.

Now they had to learn to trust wholly in Jesus Christ for their righteousness (*in His works*), and not their own. (**Rom.4:5**) During this critical time of transition (*moving from the Law to Grace*), there were many problems, and arguments within the Church; and it took many years before a general consensus was reached on "how" a Jew was to live in relationship to the Law and Grace. The scriptures below reveal some of the facts concerning this difficult period of Church history.

Rom.7:6 *But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held: that we should serve in newness of*

spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.

Rom.3:28 *Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.*

Acts 15:10-11 *Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?(speaking of the Law) But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved even as they.*

Gal.2:16 *knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified. *emphasis mine*

THE GENTILES AND THE LAW

Eph.2:11-12 *Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, ... That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.*

Gentile: Web.Dict. 1. *a person of non-Jewish nation or of non-*

Jewish faith **Jew: Web.Dict. 1. a:** a member of the tribe of Judah
b: ISRAELITE

Strictly speaking, a Gentile is anyone who is not a Jew, that is to say, anyone who is not descended from one of the 12 tribes of Israel, who are all derived from one of the 12 sons of Jacob.(see: **GEN.46:1-27, 1 CHR. 1:1-37**)

Let the reader take note, that at the time of the 1st Reformation(the transition from Law to Grace); most of the known world was comprised of Gentiles, the same as it is today.

While the term Jew, technically refers to a person who is from the tribe of Judah, it is also used in a more general sense to denote anyone who is an Israelite. And, sometimes is used broadly to refer to anyone who practices the Jewish religion (even a converted Gentile).

Strangers & Aliens

As the scriptures above from Ephesians plainly state, the Gentiles(*before receiving the Gospel*), were "aliens" to the blessings and riches of Israel, and "strangers" to the covenants God had made with His chosen people. For the most part, with the exception of a few notable individuals(*such as: Rahab the*

Harlot, & Ruth), we find the Gentile nations lost, without God, and steeped in sin and a host of false religious practices. And though a few Gentiles "converted" to the Jewish faith, the Gentiles as a whole went their own spiritual path; which inevitably led them to various forms of idolatry and other spiritual wickedness. (**EX.12:12, DEUT.7:4, 1 KGS. 9:9**)

Because the Gentiles were not living "under the law", it is reasonable to ask the question: How would God judge them on Judgment Day? What criteria would be used to judge the Gentiles(*prior to the Dispensation of Grace*), if they were not living according to the Law, and if they were ignorant of it altogether? The apostle Paul, addresses these questions in his letter to the Romans.

The following scriptures from **Rom.chpt.2**, verses 6 through 15; answer these difficult questions, and allows us to see how the Gentiles will be judged who were not living "under the Law".

Rom.2:6-15 *Who will render to every man according to his deeds: ... For there is no respect of persons with God. For as many as have sinned without the law shall also perish without the law; and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law;*

Also, let us remember that not only were the Gentiles excluded from the "covenants" found within the Old Testament,

but were initially excluded from the New Covenant as well. It was not until the Jews had been given "first" opportunity to hear the Gospel(which most rejected); do we see God commissioning the Apostles to "go to the Gentiles"

Acts.13:46 *Then Paul and Barnabus waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. (emphasis mine)*

THE JEW "FIRST"

Rom.1:16 *For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. (**emphasis mine**)*

Rom. 2: 9-10 *"There will be tribulation and distress for every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek, but glory and honor and peace to everyone who does good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek."*

It is interesting to find in examining both the Old and New Testament scriptures a profound spiritual truth concerning

God's prescribed order, as it pertains to "who" is to be "first". By "first", we mean who God has chosen to be "first in line" to be given the opportunity to receive the New Covenant. It is evident from both Old and New Testament scriptures, that God has ordained that the "Jews/Israelites" be given "**first**" priority in being given the opportunity to accept His offer of a New Covenant.

It is only after the Jews have been "first" given this opportunity, that we see God allowing the Gentiles the privilege of hearing the Gospel and being partakers with the Jews in receiving the New Covenant. Please examine the following scriptures from both the Old and New Testaments, and witness the order of the "**Jew first, and than the Gentile**", which will help you to understand the "**Fellowship of the Mystery**", which will be addressed later.

Jer.31:31 *Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: (please note, there is no mention of the Gentiles in this prophecy)*

Mt.10:5-6 *These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.*

Rom.1:16 *For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek (Gentile) (emphasis mine)*

THE JEWS REJECT THEIR MESSIAH

The most tragic story in all of religious history is undoubtedly the rejection by the Jews of Jesus Christ, their Messiah. While many theories and opinions have circulated over the centuries as to "why" the Jews did not acknowledge Jesus as their Messiah, the answers are all to be found in the pages of the scriptures, both the Old and New Testaments.

*What is important for us to understand is that the Jews were given the "first" opportunity to hear, and receive the New Covenant (**with the Gospel at its center**); but as a whole, they rejected it along with its principle messenger, Jesus Christ Himself!*

Isa.53:1-3 *Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?... He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.*

Jn.1:11 *He came unto his own, and his own received him not.*

Acts.13:46 *Then Paul and Barnabus waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.*

THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE MYSTERY

(The Times Of The Gentiles)

Eph.3:4-9 *Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ, Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit. That the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel. ... that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, ...*

While the scriptures reveal that the Jews were to be "first" to be offered the New Covenant, we find that the Gentiles would eventually be invited into this "**divine fellowship**", but only after the Jews as a whole had rejected God's New Covenant. The scriptures below, from both the Old and New Testaments, allow us to see that God had planed for the Gentiles to be included in

His marvelous plan of salvation long before Paul began an earthly ministry to the non-Jews.

This window of opportunity, for the Gentiles to be included with the Jews, in God's wonderful plan of salvation is referred to in the scriptures as: "**The Fellowship Of The Mystery**", and is also described as the: "**Times of the Gentiles**" **see also:**
(**Isa.42:6,49:6/ Hos.1:10,2:23/ Amos 9:11-12**)

Acts 11:18 *When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.*

The scriptures above reveal that this "season" where the Gentiles would be granted access to the New Covenant, would be a "set period of time", having a distinct beginning and ending. Undoubtedly, we are now in the last stages of this period of Church history referred to as: The "Times of the Gentiles". This dispensation, began with Christ's commission to the apostles to "go to the Gentiles"; and will end when the "fullness of the Gentiles" has transpired.

Acts.13:47 *For so the Lord has commanded us: ' I have set you as a light to the Gentiles, That you should be for salvation to the ends of the earth.'* see also: (**Acts.9:15**)

Rom. 11:25-26 *For I would not, brethren, that ye should be*

ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits, that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. ... And so all Israel shall be saved: ...

While we are not given an exact time when this dispensation to the Gentiles will end, we are given a "hint" as to when the Jews eyes will be opened; when they will recognize Christ as their Messiah.

Rev. 1:7 *Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen. (emphasis mine)*

The scripture above, clearly speaks of the Jews (as they are the ones who are responsible for his crucifixion/being "pierced"), and lets us know that the Jews "eyes will be opened", when Christ appears at his 2nd Coming. The conclusion we may draw from this scripture is that when Jesus Christ appears again, God will allow the Jews eyes to be opened, and to "recognize" Jesus as their long awaited Messiah.

We may understand this event to be the formal "end" of the "Times of the Gentiles", and the period of Church history where the Jews are brought into the "Fellowship of the Mystery" that Paul speaks of in his writings to the Romans. **see: Rom. Chpt.**

11/entire chpt.

Note At this time, only a remnant of Jews(the elect), have turned to Jesus and obeyed the gospel; but after the "Times of the Gentiles" has been fulfilled, God will turn the heart of his people back to Himself. **Rom.11: 29** For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.*

PETER AND PAUL

"The Same Gospel"

Before we examine the contents of the New Covenant, let us address a common misunderstanding which exists concerning the ministries of Peter and Paul; two of the most prominent apostles of the first century. Regrettably, there are those who teach that Paul and Peter proclaimed two distinct "gospels". Paul, a "gospel" to the Gentiles; and Peter, a "gospel" to the Jews. And while it is true that Paul and Peter both "specialized" in reaching out to distinct groups: Peter, mainly to the "Jews", and Paul, mainly to the "Gentiles", both apostles in fact, preached the one and same gospel!

Gal. 2:7-9 *But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me(speaking of Paul), as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter; (For he that*

wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision(the Jews), the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles; ...

There is no scriptural or historical evidence that Paul or Peter ever preached two distinct gospels; on the contrary we find that both groups(*the Jews and Gentiles*), were required to believe and obey the "same" gospel. Both Jew and Gentile were presented with the "cross and resurrection", as the basis of their salvation.**(1 Co. 15:1-4, Rom. 1:16)** *For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek (Gentile)*

Let us make no mistake, both Paul and Peter preached the "same" gospel; and though their ministries differed in many respects, they only delivered "one gospel" to those they preached to. The following scriptures reveal how God used Paul and Peter to reach their respective groups (*Paul/ the Gentiles--Peter/ the Jews*); and yet always using the "same Gospel" to accomplish this task.

GAL.2:7-9 *But on the contrary, when they saw that the gospel for the uncircumcised had been committed to me, as the gospel for the circumcised was to Peter & (for He who worked effectually in Peter for the apostleship to the circumcised also*

worked effectively in me toward the Gentiles), 9 and when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that had been given to me, they gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.

see: Acts.9:15, 22:21, 2 Tim.1:10, Eph. 3:1-12

The Lord Jesus, Paul, and Peter and all the other apostles from the days of the of the early church have all preached the same gospel of “repentance, and faith in the message of the cross and resurrection of Jesus... the commission to “whom” and “where” has always been by divine appointment; but let us make no mistake.

The message of the gospel/New Covenant has remained the same except where we find false prophets/ministers perverting and twisting the original message that was once handed down to us... As Jude so aptly admonishes his readers (that includes us today).

JUDE 1:3 *Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. (***emphasis mine**)*

GAL. 1:6-9, *but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. 8 But even if we, or an angel from*

heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. 9 As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.

Next we will examine the “superiority of the New Covenant” over the Old Covenant, and how it is established upon “better promises”... As we shall see, living under this Dispensation of Grace is something which many died without seeing in their lives. We have been privileged and honored to be among those who have received the “promises” and “blessings” that are ours through the sacrifices paid by Jesus – and all those who have spent themselves for the cause of the gospel.

Heb. 11:13 *These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.*

PT.6

THE NEW COVENANT



PT.6

THE NEW COVENANT / THE NEW TESTAMENT

Why God Gave Mankind The New Covenant

"It's More Him Than Us"

It is surprising to learn just "why" God gave mankind the New Covenant... I say this only because most Christians, and the lost for that matter think it was pure altruism or sympathy on God's part as the basis for "why" we now live under a New Covenant, or a New Testament as it may also be called. Yes, John 3:16 reminds all of us that it is God's love for us that sent Jesus to die for our sins - that is a fact. Ah, but that is only part of the narrative of this beautiful love song of our God.

We find that while it was love that sent Jesus to die for all of us, it was something else that moved God to commission what we now call the: NEW COVENANT. This may come as a surprise to many people today, Christians and non -Christians alike. The New Covenant was really not centered on us (though we've been led to think that); but rather it's God's way of ensuring that His name would be honored and glorified in all of heaven and earth. By stopping the vicious power of evil through sin, Jesus Christ secured the right, the privilege, and ability for all of us to truly "honor" God's name.

HALLOWED BE THE NAME...

Matthew 6:9 In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name.

As we shall see, this being first and foremost in Jesus instructions on how we are to pray, is not to be taken lightly... it is the key to understanding why we were given the New Covenant. It's worth noting that Jesus our Lord began this prayer with clear instructions to: Reverence and honor our Heavenly Father's name! That dear friends, was intentional, and by design for us to take note of... as we dig deeper and deeper into God's holy word; we find that "honoring God's name" is at the heart of all Jesus did, and all we are to do as well.

hal·lowed adj \ˈhɑ-(,)lōd, ˈhɑ-ləd, in the Lord's Prayer often ˈhɑ-lə-wəd\

Definition of HALLOWED

1: holy, consecrated <the church stands on hallowed ground>
2: sacred, revered <the university's hallowed halls> <hallowed customs> See hallowed defined for English-language learners »

God's Name Profaned ...

The scriptures reveal clearly that the Jewish nation was simply not able to remain faithful to God under the Old Covenant. Time after time, again and again - we read how the Jewish people would abandon their devotion and worship of God -and turn to the worship of other gods - and even to the point of sacrificing their own children!

That God was patient with the wayward children of Israel is evident by anyone who has studied the Old Testament scriptures; but even God has a limit on what He will tolerate. The curses that God had spoken through the prophets about what would happen to them if they chose to disobey His commandments -did eventually come upon them.

The Renewal of Israel Ezekiel 36:16-21 (NKJV) 16 *Moreover*

the word of the Lord came to me, saying: 17 "Son of man, when the house of Israel dwelt in their own land, they defiled it by their own ways and deeds; to Me their way was like the uncleanness of a woman in her customary impurity. 18 Therefore I poured out My fury on them for the blood they had shed on the land, and for their idols with which they had defiled it. 19 So I scattered them among the nations, and they were dispersed throughout the countries; I judged them according to their ways and their deeds. 20 When they came to the nations, wherever they went, they profaned My holy name—when they said of them, 'These are the people of the Lord, and yet they have gone out of His land.' 21 But I had concern for My holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the nations wherever they went. (emphasis mine)

THE DISPENSATION OF GRACE

Jer.31:31-33 Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant *with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was a husband unto them, saith the LORD: But this*

shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more. (emphasis mine)

THE FIRST REFORMATION

(Heb. 9:1-10)

The scriptures above, from the book of Jeremiah clearly reveal that God had determined to establish a "New Covenant" with the house of Judah and Israel long before Jesus Christ would appear to "fulfill" the righteousness requirements of the Law. **(Gal.4:4-5)**

This prophecy out of the mouth of the prophet, Jeremiah concerns itself with a "change" or "shaking", that was to begin with the coming of the Messiah: Jesus Christ. This period of time is referred to by the writer of Hebrews, as the "time of reformation". **(Heb. 9:10)** *Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation.*

While most Christians today associate the idea of the "reformation" with Martin Luther and John Calvin, etc; the "first" reformation was actually initiated by God through the person of Jesus Christ. It was this "reformation" which was to turn the religion of the Jews and nation of Israel, upside down! In studying the life of Christ, and the early apostles, we discover that their work to "reform" Judaism from the Law/Old Covenant, to Grace under the New Covenant; was met with stiff opposition from both the Pharisees and Sadducees, as well as other groups within the whole of Judah and Israel.

Heb. 8:7-8 *For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah;...*

The Blood Covenant

(Heb. 9:20-22) *"This is the blood of the covenant which God has commanded you." 21 Then likewise he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry. 22 And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission. (emphasis mine)*

We may conclude from the scriptures above that God had determined a set time when the Old Covenant would be replaced by a new covenant. This time of reformation would begin with the Jews and nation of Israel, but would ultimately involve the Gentiles as well. The New Covenant began at the point Jesus Christ started His ministry, and was formally announced at the Last Supper, when Christ shared communion with His disciples. Finally, it was "sealed" when Jesus died upon the cross, where His blood became the "blood of the testament"; the means whereby all men could find access to God.

Heb.9:14-15 *How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.*
(Lk.3:23/4:16-21) (Mt.26:26-28), (Heb.9:11-12)

Before Jesus Christ finished the works He came to do, and by that we mean "fulfilling" all of the prophetic scriptures concerning exactly what the Messiah would do - Christ formally announced and instituted the New Covenant. We find Jesus declaring openly to His disciples just prior to His crucifixion and final hours of agony and suffering, the essence of this New

Covenant He would seal with the shedding of His own divine blood.

In the simplest of terms, Jesus set forth the real meaning of "what" His death would mean; though we can be quite certain the full gravity and significance of Jesus final words in the upper room would not register in their hearts and minds until Christ had arisen from the dead...

Mt. 26:26-28 *26 And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, "Take, eat; this is My body." 27 Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. 28 For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. **also see: Mk.14:22-25, Lk.22:19-20***

Before we examine the New Covenant in depth, let us look at a few scriptures which reveal to us when the Old Covenant/Law was taken out of the way, and what actually occurred at that time. Not surprisingly, the New Covenant was ushered in with great drama and intensity. IT IS FINISHED! Jesus was declaring more than anyone at that time could possibly know when He uttered those three words that would shake the very foundation of the earth - not to mention what was about to happen in the spiritual realm that human eyes could not see.

Jn.19:28-30 *After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst. When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished; and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.*

This verse from the Gospel of John informs us of "when" the dispensation of the Law came to an end. It could only occur "after" all things prophesied concerning the life, and cruel suffering of Christ had been fulfilled. When all these prophecies had been fulfilled, exactly, according to the scriptures then, and only then could the Law be fulfilled. In the words of Jesus: "It is finished", we see the demands and requirements of the Law kept; and at that point in time, the Law was being taken out of the way.

In effect, the Law was nailed to the cross in the person of Christ. Jesus could say, "It is finished", because He knew the Law's demands had been met and satisfied by His own suffering and obedience.

And though Jesus would still need to "die" and "rise" from the dead to fulfill all of the scriptures; Jesus knew that the Law had been kept, and His work was technically at an end. Simply put, the Dispensation of the Law was now coming to an end! What followed this announcement, was nothing short of cataclysmic to say the least. Please examine the following scriptures as they describe what happened immediately after

Christ uttered the words: ***"It is finished"***

Mk.15:37-38 *And Jesus cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost. And the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom.*

Mt. 27:51-53 *...and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent;...*

That this "First Reformation" began with such a shaking of the earth, and with the veil within the temple being torn in two, should not go unnoticed. God was making it clear that a great "change" was taking place. The Old Covenant was being replaced by a New and Better Covenant, and God wanted there to be no mistake, the old way of doing things was now coming to an end!

THE FINAL SACRIFICE

Simply put, the announcement by Christ, that *"It is finished"*, meant that His body could now be offered up to God as the ultimate sacrifice for the sins of all mankind. In Christ, the "righteous one", we find an "acceptable sacrifice"; one that God would find sufficient to atone for the sins of all humanity, once and for all time! Make no mistake, when Jesus said, "It is finished", it was over; the Law, all 3434 commands were now nailed to the cross.

(COL. 2:13-14) *And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, 14 having wiped out the handwriting requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. In effect, the Law was at that point in time: ENDED. AMEN!*

Heb. 10:1-10 *For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices, which they offered year by year continually, make the comers thereunto perfect. ...In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. ...Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.*

In "reforming" the Old Covenant, it is important to point out that merely altering a few things, or simply making "superficial" changes would never be adequate. It is clear from the words found in the prophecy of Jeremiah (see scriptures above), that God clearly intended on making "major" changes in His relationship to Judah and Israel.

These changes would necessitate the formation of a "New

Covenant"; the Old Covenant would not be adequate for the wonderful things God was preparing to do for those privileged to live under the "Dispensation of Grace". The initial phase of this dispensation is known as the "time of reformation", or the "early days of the Church".

Is The New Covenant Conditional?

(Heb. 8: 7-8) *7 For if that first covenant had been faultless, then no place would have been sought for a second. 8 Because finding fault with them, He says: "Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah—*

We have explained in great detail from the scriptures, why God gave mankind the New Covenant/The New Testament; and also discussed the awkward transition that occurred as the Jews moved from living under the Old Covenant to the New Covenant. We revealed how the Gentiles were allowed entrance into this "fellowship", after the Jewish nation had first been delivered the Gospel message.

After the majority of Jews had rejected their Messiah, the gospel was then offered to the gentiles - all in accordance with the God's eternal plan to offer salvation to all of mankind. The

Jews were first in line to be presented the New Covenant, and then only after they had rejected gospel message(though not all Jews), would the gospel of grace/The New Covenant be presented to the gentiles...

For Gentiles, this was not only a "New Covenant" - it was in fact - the "only covenant" they had ever been formally introduced to. It was for the Jews who received it, their "2nd Covenant" - a "Better Covenant"; which we will address more fully in the concluding chapter:

A BETTER COVENANT

Let us now look closely at what The New Covenant is in plain terms, and also how it is in many respects not unlike the Old Covenant with respect to God's demands for "obedience" and "compliance" to be our part in this contract with mankind.

While most would agree that we cannot do anything to "save ourselves" - that can only be accomplished through the "finished works" of Jesus Christ , that is His perfect and sinless life, His all sufficient sacrifice for our sins on the cross, and His resurrection from the dead...

It is also clear, to anyone who seriously examines the whole of scripture, and specifically the teachings and commands of Jesus and the apostles - that merely acknowledging and assenting mentally to biblical truth is not sufficient to satisfy the terms and conditions set forth by God in The New Testament.

We the authors, believe that "faith without works" is as James declares in his letter so succinctly: IS DEAD! **James 2:20** (NKJV) *20 But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?* see also: **James 2:26**

Without going into a lengthy defense of that point, let us simply state the obvious to anyone who has examined closely the terms and conditions God has set forth to anyone wishing to enter into this "covenant of grace". **Without obedience** or compliance to the commandments of Christ, and the apostolic teachings given in the New Testament scriptures; one should not expect or be surprised that God does not guarantee or honor promises when "the conditions" of The New Covenant have not been met... Without any doubt, it is clear that the New Covenant is in fact: conditional.

To the surprise and dismay of many modern day Christians(often simply churchgoers), finding out that God expects us, the followers of Jesus Christ to have to do something to receive benefits, flies in the face of many who teach an "easy gospel", where we are required to do little but say

"yes to Jesus" and then wait patiently until we draw our last breath. Nothing could be further from the truth. Again, while we can't buy grace, or earn our way into heaven, that does not mean God doesn't expect us to "obey and keep" His holy commands.

On the contrary, we shall clearly show that while grace is free, and salvation is a "gift" that no man or woman can bargain God for; there are "conditions" that are nonetheless required of all who enter in this covenant of grace... We aren't talking about "perfection" here, but we are talking about obeying God's commandments and not "hiding behind" a facade of religious pretense or worse yet, religious delusion.

NEW: Web. Dict: 1. Having existed or having been made but a short time: RECENT 5. Different from one of the same category that has existed previously

From the definitions above, we can see that this "New" Covenant was to be brought into existence or being, at a specific point in time; consequently, it would be at that time considered to be: "new" Let us realize that from our perspective, looking back through the window of time, the New Covenant(now around 2000 yrs old), does not seem that new.

However, to the Jews and nation of Israel, the Gospel of Grace and teachings of Christ and His apostles would have certainly been considered "new"! It is all really a matter of

perspective; so when the prophet Jeremiah spoke (centuries before Christ would initiate the New Covenant), it was in fact, a "New Covenant".

The next significant thing we learn is that the word "new" denotes something that is "*different from one of the same category that has existed previously*". (see 5, above) Clearly, as we shall discuss next, the New Covenant is different from the Old Covenant, but undoubtedly both covenants are from the "same category"; and without question, we know that the Old Covenant existed previously to the New Covenant. What we learn from this simple examination of the word "NEW" is this:

1. The New Covenant would be "different" from the Old Covenant

2. The New Covenant would be in the "same category" as the Old Covenant

note : by "same category", it should be noted that both the Old and New Covenants were "Agreements" in essence promises made by God to His people.

A "Conditional" Agreement

Before we examine the differences that exist between the New and Old Covenants; let us briefly look at one important feature that "both" covenants have in common. We find from our analysis of both covenants, that both the Old and New Covenants are in fact: **conditional**

That is to say that the "blessings and curses" and "rewards and punishments", found in both covenants; are directly tied to "**conditions and requirements**"; that first must be met before they can be experienced or realized by the individual (*regardless of what covenant we are speaking of*).

This truth is important because it points out that under both covenants; God still requires "obedience" in order to inherit the blessing, and "disobedience" before one is found deserving of being "punished". Under the dispensation of the Law, we find God rewarding or punishing individuals on the basis of their "obedience or disobedience" to the Law. And, under the dispensation of Grace we observe God still judging individuals on the basis of their "obedience or disobedience" to the New Covenant/Gospel.

The following scriptures from the Old and New Testaments, reveals that while the contents of both covenants may differ; the basis for God's ultimate judgment is essentially the same:

"obedience or disobedience" to his revealed will.

So we may conclude that while the contents of both covenants may differ(*as we shall see*), the requirement of the individual to "obey" has never changed! God always requires the individual to keep his commands(*regardless of which covenant one is under*), and He ultimately will judge a person on the basis of his or her compliance, or failure to keep His covenant.

The good news, or should we say "exceedingly good news" is that God knows we are incapable of consistently keeping His commandments, as we so clearly see illustrated through the nation of Israel's consistent failure to obey and keep God's ordinances and commandments.

That fact as we have shown from the scriptures(esp.in the book of Jeremiah),is why God instituted the New Covenant. As we shall see in the final chapter, keeping the demands of the New Testament is not only possible; but takes considerable effort and deliberate acts of disobedience to not keep!

In the end, we shall discover that though we have the Holy Spirit, the New Covenant, the Holy Scriptures,and the benefit of centuries of Christian theology, teaching and tradition at our disposal (all contained now in a single microchip); we still have the free will to "disobey" and "choose" to follow God or someone or something else...

God has rendered all post resurrection saints and hearers of the gospel "excuse-less"; or put another way: God can and will do no more to make the way to heaven, to Himself any easier. (This will be dealt with more fully in the closing chapter/BETTER PROMISES.)

A CLOSE LOOK AT THE WORD: " **if** " *Understanding the meaning of this word will unlock the key to understanding why both the Old & New Covenants are "conditional..."

THE DEFINITION OF: **if / Dictionary.com**

<http://www.dictionary.com/browse/if>

conjunction - 1. in case that; granting or supposing that; on condition that: Sing if you want to. Stay indoors if it rains. I'll go if you do. noun - a condition, requirement, or stipulation: There are too many ifs in his agreement.

*Note - when God uses the word "if" in stating the terms of both the Old and New Covenants, the idea conveyed is that any promises or curses mentioned, are always contingent or tied to the obedience or disobedience of those God is covenanting with.

THE OLD AND NEW COVENANTS CONTRASTED

1. THE OLD COVENANT: Eze.18:entire chpt. - verse 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 the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.* also see: **Num 15:30-31,**

BLESSINGS: Deut.28:1-14- *And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord the God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all nations ...(please see chpt.28, for entire text)*

CURSES: Deut.28:15-68, But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee. ... (please see chpt.28, for entire text) **also: Jn.12:48, Gal.3:10**

2. THE NEW COVENANT: Gal.6:7 *Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption*

(curses); but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.(blessing).

BLESSINGS: Rev.22:14 *Blessed are they that do his commandments,* *that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city*

also: **1 Pet.3:10-12, Jn.15:10-11, Rev. 2:7, 9-10,17, 25-28, Rev.3:10-12, 14:13, 19:7-9, 21:7-8, 22:7**

CURSES: 1 Co.6:9-10 *Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. also: **Rev. 21:8** *But the fearful, and unbelieving (disobedient), and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death. also: **Gal.5:19-21, 1 Tim.4:1, Jn.14:24****

Some Closing Thoughts...

The above scriptures show that both the Old and New Covenants use the criteria of "obedience or disobedience" as the basis for how an individual will be "rewarded/blessed", or "punished/cursed". Though this feature is common to both covenants (though the commands are different), there are some significant differences between the two covenants that need to be addressed.

Let us now turn our attention to those "things" which clearly distinguish the New Covenant as a "superior" covenant compared to the Old; and specifically, those features which provide for a "better covenant" established on "better promises".

In the final chapter, ON BETTER PROMISES; we will show the superiority of the New Covenant over the Old, and also show the superiority of Jesus Christ to all the prophets, and priests who came before and after Him. We rejoice in the fact that we have received in full, what many died hoping for - what many prophesied would happen in the future, though they did not know clearly the time or specifics...

While there are many promises that we the church of Jesus Christ are still waiting to see fulfilled in these last days; we do rejoice in the wonderful promises and blessings that are ours under The New Covenant that we have been privileged to have

and live under. amen

An *asterisk and number in parenthesis is used to denote material referenced in this writing...

Note - all use of italics is for emphasis - and not in the original texts.

PT. 7

BETTER PROMISES



PT. 7

BETTER PROMISES

Heb. 8:6 *But in fact the ministry Jesus has received is as superior to theirs as the covenant of which he is mediator is superior to the old one, since the new covenant is established on better promises.*

The Bible, both the Old and New Testaments - are filled with promises from God; and there are different estimates ranging from 1000 to 30,000 promises depending on what source you go to. One thing is certain, God has made numerous promises from the book of Genesis right on through to the book of Revelation. Many of these promises have already been fulfilled, and many more have yet to be; but we find that whatever God has promised; He will keep His word and it will come to pass.

Num.23:19 *God is not a man, that he should lie, nor a human*

being, that he should change his mind. Has he said, and will he not do it? Or has he spoken, and will he not make it happen?

Before we examine the superiority of the promises made under the New Covenant compared to those found under the Old Covenant - let us look at what we mean by the word: promise.

[Hebrew \(הבטחה\) An oath or affirmation; a vow.](#)²⁰

[Greek \(epangelma: a promise \)](#) [English / promise](#)

a : a declaration that one will do or refrain from doing something specified

b : a legally binding declaration that gives the person to whom it is made a right to expect or to claim the performance or forbearance of a specified act

God Keeps His Promises

Hebrews 6:13 *it says, "For when God made a promise to Abraham since he had no one greater by whom to swear, he swore by himself." (emphasis mine)*

When human beings make promises - regardless of how sincerely they may be presented or made; we always know that

there is no guarantee that the "promise" will be kept... that is just a simple fact of life that even a child soon learns when promises are broken that mothers and fathers are often not able to keep for a myriad of reasons. Thankfully, promises made by God are not so fragile or unpredictable; as the Bible clearly demonstrates: [When God makes a promise - He Keeps it!](#)²¹

In the preceding chapters, we discussed the numerous covenants that God has given through the ages (see Pt.3 The Old Covenant) which are filled with promises that are often contingent upon the "obedience of those God was covenanting" with. Of all the Old Covenant promises, none can be more exciting and remarkable to see fulfilled and kept by God; then the promises concerning the promised Messiah that would one day come to "save and deliver" the Jewish people.

356 prophecies have already been fulfilled in Christ according to the site: [According to the Scriptures.](#) Beginning with God's promise to Adam and Eve, that the "Seed" of the woman would bruise Satan's head, and the Serpent(the Devil) would bruise the heel of the Seed. **Gen.3:15 *And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel.***"

These specific promises concerning where the Messiah would be born, how He would be rejected by the Jewish nation,

and hundreds of other details that were really promises from God Himself were all fulfilled one by one in the person of Jesus Christ. (see accordingtothescriptures.com)²²

This awesome truth of God's faithfulness and supernatural ability to not only prophesy what would happen in the life of Jesus Christ right up to His death on the cross and His resurrection from the dead defies all possible explanations but one: GOD KEPT HIS PROMISES. The odds of even one prophecy being kept and fulfilled is astronomical, but 356 promises all being fulfilled in and through the life of one person; that would be incalculable - most would agree!

A number of years ago, Peter W. Stoner and Robert C. Newman wrote a book entitled *Science Speaks*. The book was based on the science of probability and vouched for by the American Scientific Affiliation. It set out the odds of any one man in all of history fulfilling even only eight of the 60 major prophecies (and 270 ramifications) fulfilled by the life of Christ.

The probability that Jesus of Nazareth could have fulfilled even eight such prophecies would be only 1 in 10^{17} . [That's 1 in 100,000,000,000,000,000.](#)²³ And that is only using 8 fulfilled prophecies as the basis for determining the possibility of them being actually fulfilled. That Jesus Christ fulfilled over 350 promises is irrefutable proof and evidence that He is indeed God! Amen

"Promises Made - Promises Kept"

Let us look at what the Bible and Jesus Himself had to say about His mission to keep and fulfill every single prophecy and promise made about His life, death, and resurrection and other details of His earthly life here on earth. Knowing that Jesus meticulously kept every single prophecy that had to be fulfilled if God's ultimate purpose was to be accomplished; not only did Jesus do that; but He also openly announced that fact on many occasions to make it clear what was happening was no accident.

It was all "promises made - and promises kept!" Scriptures being fulfilled throughout the Bible, are just evidence that God has been keeping His promises and will continue to until every promise has been kept...

Lk.4:21 *And He began to say to them, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."*

Mk.4:49 *Every day I was with you in the temple teaching, and you did not seize Me; but this has taken place to fulfill the Scriptures."*

Mt.8:17 *This was to fulfill what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet: "He Himself took our infirmities and carried away our diseases." (emphasis mine)*

We find that this principle of "scriptures being fulfilled" happens under both covenants, and it is important to point out that in some cases the promises were "conditional" and how they were fulfilled or kept - was often tied to the "obedience or disobedience" of the individual or nation as a whole that God was giving the promises too.

This is particularly true when it came to the subject of "blessings and curses" that could end well or end horribly; all dependent on if certain conditions set forth by God were either followed or disobeyed. (please see Pt.6/A Conditional Agreement)

As was too often the case, we find that Israel did not follow God's commandments faithfully, or keep the conditions laid out by God in The Old Covenant wholly. This breach in the covenant God had made with them, resulted in God keeping His promises to punish their sins and disobedience with the curses they were warned would happen if they did not keep His commandments. The point is that while we usually associate promises from God as being "positive"; the truth is God's promises went both ways.

Our heavenly Father rewards good behavior and punishes bad behavior, and His promises under both covenants left the final consequences a simple matter of whether a person or nation would choose to obey or not? In time God had a plan to

replace the Old Covenant with something better - with a covenant that would do what the Old Covenant could never do - "change the heart."

A Better Covenant & Better Promises

Heb. 8:7-13 *7 For if that first covenant had been faultless, then no place would have been sought for a second. 8 Because finding fault with them, He says: "Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah—9 not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they did not continue in My covenant, and I disregarded them, says the LORD. 10 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.*

11. None of them shall teach his neighbor, and none his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them. 12 For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more." 13 In that He says, "A new covenant,"

He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.

These scriptures in Hebrews are taken from [Jer. 31:31-34](#); and were fulfilled when Jesus Christ came to establish The New Covenant which was officially sealed when Jesus uttered His final words: IT IS FINISHED! ([Jn. 19:30](#)) At that time, Jesus had fulfilled all the righteous requirements of the Law, and the promises made centuries earlier through the words of the Prophet Jeremiah were now fulfilled. Below are the "key" promises in these scriptures and how they contrast with the O.T.

A Study in "Contrasts"

1. Heb.8:10 *I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts*

The Old Testament laws were written down on tablets of stone / The N.T. laws would be written in their minds and on their hearts!

This promise from God is the "key" to understanding why The New Covenant would never have to be replaced or improved upon. Having God's laws and commandments in our hearts and minds would ensure that following God and walking in His ways

would be much easier than attempting to memorize and walk under the weight of the O.T. Laws.

While reading the scriptures, reciting them, and memorizing them was a normal activity for traditional Jews growing up under The O.T.; we find here an amazing promise that hints at something beyond what we as humans can do with respect to knowing God's laws as we should. Knowing and studying the written word/ the logos would still be required and necessary; but God was going to give his people a "heavenly assist" by placing His laws and commands in our most inward parts - our heart and mind.

If you ponder the practical aspect of this divine intervention in helping people know God's laws, it is quite remarkable. The typical person has only so much time each day, each week, month, year and in their lifetime to spend reading and studying the word of God. That being said, we find in this promise God's desire to help us - to help people know what His laws and commands are.

This promise is God saying to all of us who are privileged to live under The New Covenant : MY LAWS WILL BE A PART OF YOU - THEY WILL BE IN YOUR INNERMOST BEING!

Now that basically leaves us without an excuse. It will be impossible for anyone who has been given God's laws into their

hearts and minds to plead ignorant...

2. Heb.8:11- *None of them shall teach his neighbor, and none his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for all shall know Me...*

The Old Covenant was specifically given to the Jewish people, the nation of Israel / Under the New Covenant all of humanity would be invited to be a part of The Body of Christ, His Church.

The words, "*for all shall know Me*" are profound in what they express, and point to the day when God would abolish the wall that had separated the Jews from the rest of the world - the Gentiles. This was surely a shock to the Jews who had enjoyed for centuries the privileged status of being "God's Chosen People."

The wall of separation that had divided the Jews/The Circumcised from the Gentiles/The Uncircumcised, was going to be torn down under the New Covenant; and in the process shake up the status quo of the religious establishment of that day.

This was no small matter, when we realize that the Jews called Gentiles "dogs" and other derogatory names that made the prospect for being united with them an unlikely proposition. This promise was not going to be received with open arms by many of the Jews who had long held the Gentiles at arms length

- and often with great disdain and abhorrence. ([see the Fellowship of the Mystery](#))²⁴

EPH. 2:11-15 *Don't forget that you Gentiles used to be outsiders. You were called "uncircumcised heathens" by the Jews, who were proud of their circumcision, even though it affected only their bodies and not their hearts. In those days you were living apart from Christ. You were excluded from citizenship among the people of Israel, and you did not know the covenant promises God had made to them. You lived in this world without God and without hope. But now you have been united with Christ Jesus... For Christ himself has brought peace to us. He united Jews and Gentiles into one people when, in his own body on the cross, he broke down the wall of hostility that separated us... He made peace between Jews and Gentiles by creating in himself one new people from the two groups. (NLT)*

The Indwelling of The Holy Spirit

Ezek.36: 26-27 *Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.*

It is exciting to read the promise God made to the children

of Israel - that He would actually put "His Spirit" (a clear reference to The Holy Spirit) inside of them. What the law could not do because it was powerless to affect any inward change in human beings; God would do Himself by coming and dwelling inside of His followers.

Under the O.T. we find the Spirit of God coming upon individuals like Samson, Elijah, and David, etc, which was a special anointing for a special task or work that God was doing with individuals; but we do not see individuals filled with The Holy Spirit as we do in the New Testament. The Holy Spirit would come upon persons, often prophets for a season or occasion of ministry; but we do not find scriptural evidence that believers in Yahweh were filled with the Spirit as we see in the New Testament times. The promise that God would literally come and dwell within His children - in His people was a new and exciting change that would differentiate The Old Covenant from The New Covenant.

JN.14:16-17 *"I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you.*

1 CO.6:19 *Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not*

your own,

Having God Himself - in the person of The Holy Spirit actually dwelling in each believer is astounding if you stop to think about it. What God was promising - that He would come and live in those that followed Him was God's divine plan to transform individuals from the "inside out." Being filled with God's Spirit was to become the "New Normal" for Christians living under the New Covenant; and as The Book of Acts demonstrates - it was a "Game Changer" - that has changed the world forever.

What the Law and myriad of commandments could not do - because it had no real power to change anyone; the Spirit of God living inside of each of God's children would do! Now overcoming sin, temptation, the world, and the Devil would be a reality for all Christians who have The Holy Spirit living inside of them. And while a Spirit filled Christian may still "commit sin," we find the power to witness, resist evil, and live a holy and sanctified life is "night & day" when compared to trying to live a godly life under the Law of the Old Covenant. Given a choice - I'm sure most people today would agree.

The advantages of have God(through the indwelling of The Holy Spirit) literally living in His people, leading, guiding, and communing with them when compared to living under the O.C.; where following God involved dependence on human effort and reliance mainly on the written word - cannot be put into words!

There simply is no comparison. This promise that God would give The Holy Spirit to the followers of Jesus, cannot be overstated, or underestimated - it is the main reason why the Old Covenant needed to be replaced with a new and better covenant.

Having God dwell inside His people - inside of His children is so wonderful and hard to fathom that trying to really grasp the significance of what that really means is a difficult task for anyone to truly put into words. For believers who have been baptized in the Holy Ghost - and filled with God's Spirit - one thing is for certain: THEY WILL NEVER BE THE SAME!

Now, under the New Covenant this gift of the Holy Spirit - this "baptism in the Holy Ghost" was being given to every believer - to every new convert to Christ. This gift - this unspeakable gift of God's Spirit being given to all who asked (after receiving Jesus as Savior); would prove to be the reason Christianity would literally explode - and become what is now today - the world's largest religion. It's amazing what one man and twelve disciples have accomplished! And, as the Book of Acts reveals - it was the Holy Spirit working in and through the early church that turned the world then and even now "upside down!"

MK.1:8 *I baptized you with water; but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."*

LK.11:13 *"If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to*

your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?

JN.14:15-17 *“If you love me, keep my commands. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever—the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.” (emphasis mine)*

The Work Of The Holy Spirit in the New Covenant

1. Dwells inside the believer

John 14:17: *Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it sees Him not, neither knows Him: but you know Him; for **He dwells with you, and shall be in you***

2. Teaches all things and reveals all truth

John 14:26: *But the Comforter, who is the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, **He shall teach you all things***

John 16:13: *However 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*

3. Convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment

John 16:8: *And when he is come, **he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:***

4. Tells us things to come.

John 16:13 *and he will show you things to come (also*

5. Testifies of Christ & glorifies Him

John 15:26: *But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, **He shall testify of me***

John 16:14: *He shall glorify me*

6. Brings to remembrance all things that Jesus has said

John 14:26: *But the Comforter, who 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*

7. Bestows spiritual gifts to believers

1 Co.12:4-11 *4 Now there are different gifts, but the same Spirit. 5 And there are different ministries, but the same Lord. 6 And there are different results, but the same God who produces all of them in everyone. 7 To each person the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the benefit of all. 8 For one person is given*

through the Spirit the message of wisdom, and another the message of knowledge according to the same Spirit, 9 to another faith by the same Spirit, and to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, 10 to another performance of miracles, to another prophecy, and to another discernment of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, and to another the interpretation of tongues. 11 It is one and the same Spirit, distributing as he decides to each person, who produces all these things.

8. Gives the believer "power" to witness for Jesus

Acts.1:8 *But you shall **receive power** when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."*

9. Produces "fruit" in the life of the believer: When the Holy Spirit controls our lives, He will produce three kinds of fruit in us: 1)inward qualities– love, joy, peace 2) outward qualities– patience, kindness, goodness 3) God-ward qualities– faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

Galatians 5:22-23 *22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love,joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, and self-control.*

10. The Holy Spirit "seals" the believer

Eph.1:13-14 *"In him you also, when you heard the word of*

truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, **were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit**, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory."

11. Transforms believers into the likeness of Christ (sanctifies and makes holy)

2 Co.3:18 *But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, **are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.***

Only The Holy Spirit Gives Life !

2.CO.3:16 *"He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant—not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life."*

Rom. 8:2 *For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.*

Under the Law - The Old Covenant, no one could be saved or freed from the power of sin; it was impossible as Paul the apostle declared: **Gal.2:16** *knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have*

believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.

Eph.2:8-10 *For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.*

Let us rejoice that we do not have to "work ourselves into Heaven", or try to live a legalistic life attempting to keep the laws,ceremonies, and rituals that were part and parcel of those who lived under the Old Covenant. We do have to something, we have to believe Jesus is the only one who can save us, the only one who can take away our sins. When we believe the Gospel - that Jesus died for our sins, that He was buried, and on the third day He rose triumphant from the dead; we will be saved!

JN.6:28-29 *Therefore they said to Him, "What shall we do, so that we may work the works of God?" Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent."*

3. Heb.8:12 *their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more."*

Under the Old Covenant, the blood of innocent animals had

to be shed to atone for sins daily and repeatedly; they could not cleanse the conscience or remove one's sins. /Under the New Covenant, the sacrifice of Jesus Christ as the "perfect sacrifice" for sin was sufficient to atone for everyone's sins -once and for all time!

The blood of animals could never take away sins - it was only a shadow of the Lamb of God who would sacrifice Himself for the sins of the world. **Heb.10:4** *For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins.* Only the blood of Jesus Christ takes away sins permanently! Sins repented of and forgiven under the New Covenant are forgotten by God - never to be remembered again. I've often wondered about all the innocent animals that no longer have to be killed and sacrificed for our sins; that in itself is a wonderful benefit for all of the animals that would still need to die if Jesus had not sacrificed Himself for the sins of the world!

Hebrews 9:24-26, *"For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now ONCE in the end of the world hath he appeared to*

put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.” (emphasis mine)

Eph.1:7 in whom we have our redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, (speaking of Christ)

Under the Law of the Old Covenant - a person could not be perfected, or have their guilty conscience cleansed, or have the memory of their sins erased. The animal sacrifices only served to remind them of their sins. Those under the New Covenant are promised their sins once forgiven, are remembered no more; they are removed as far as the east is to the west. The guilty conscience is cleansed by the blood of Christ, and the believers are made perfect in God's eyes through trusting in the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross for the sins of the world.

Heb.10:1-4 For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, *and* not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? For the worshipers, once purified, would have had no more consciousness of sins. But in those *sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year.* For *it is* not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins.

Heb. 9:13-14 *For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling them that have been defiled, sanctify*

unto the cleanness of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish unto God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

WORTH CONSIDERING ...

Hebrews 11:13 All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance, admitting that they were foreigners and strangers on earth.

Hebrews 11:40 God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us.

When we realize how many godly men and women died before they could live to see the glorious promises we now enjoy; it is humbling and amazing to know that God had something better prepared for us who are privileged to live under the New Covenant. We are told by the writer of Hebrews, that we are given a better hope, a better covenant, a better country, and a better resurrection...

We hope you agree that we are blessed and privileged to be living under The New Covenant! We don't get to choose when or where we are born, or for that matter many other things that are

beyond our human control here on earth; but we do get to choose the God(or gods) we will serve and worship.

The most important decision you or I, or anyone will ever make; is the God we will choose to give our lives and devotion to. Our prayer is that after careful and deliberate consideration, you will choose to give your life – everything - to the One True God and His Beloved son – Jesus Christ. Jn. 17:3

We the authors, can testify and declare that giving our lives and all we are our hope to be to Jesus Christ has been the best decisions of our lives! Below is a simple prayer that you can pray to God, and know that your sins are forgiven and that you are a child of God and on your way to Heaven. Please write us and let us know if you have decided to surrender your life and all you are to Christ.

A PRAYER FOR SALVATION

Heavenly Father, I come to you and acknowledge I am a sinner, and lost without you. I confess my sins to you and ask You to forgive me. I repent, and ask You to save me. I believe You sent Your son – Jesus Christ to die on the cross for my sins; and that Jesus rose from the dead victorious over death and the grave. I confess Jesus Christ as my Lord & Savior – and give my life wholly to You God now; and from this day forward. Lord, I forgive everyone who has hurt me or offended me just as You forgive me; and ask You to help me to live a godly life for you all the days of my life. I ask You now to fill me with Your Holy Spirit, and lead me into Your perfect will.

I thank You for hearing my prayer Lord, and praise You for saving me and taking away my sins.

In Jesus name I pray. Amen

ABOUT THE AUTHORS



Michael D'Aigle is a Christian author and singer/songwriter who lives with his wife Deborah in Michigan. They have two sons, and have been actively involved in multi-faceted Christian ministries for many years.

In 2009, they founded Light in the Dark Ministries, which is a worldwide ministry that partners with other Christian organizations and ministries from nations all over the earth. The emphasis is on providing prayer, guidance, and support in many different ways to those who are “friends & partners” with them. We have been able to build websites for free for many of those who needed that kind of help. The fellowship that results from these relationships has enriched all of those involved.

Michael & Deborah own **GODSONGS Music Studio**, in the U.S.; a Christian recording studio that is devoted to producing

Christian music & videos exclusively. They work with Christian singers/bands/songwriters from all over the world.

For the last few years before the COVID-19 pandemic hit America and the rest of the world; Michael and his wife were involved with ministry and outreach to the homeless, prisoners in jail and prison, and other evangelistic work mostly here in Michigan.

With those evangelistic doors being closed, they began to seek God for what our next steps would be in ministry... After purchasing camera equipment for our studio/GODSONGS here in the U.S. - doors been to open up for us to so live Zoom meetings online with people from other nations.

At the time of this writing, they are going to be doing live Zoom meetings with Christians from all over the world. We've had meetings in Africa, and now more invitations are coming to to have meetings in Pakistan/India and other places.

You can visit their GODSONGS studio website at:

<http://www.godsongsusa.com>

William Rivera

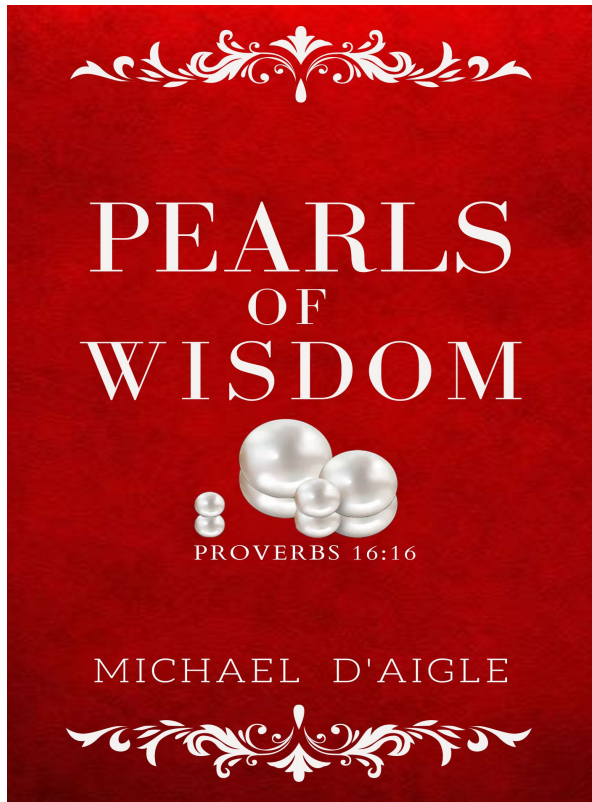
William Rivera, is married to his wife Debbie, and they have two children; who are now grown and on their own. They now reside in Michigan. Bill has been a Bible teacher and anointed speaker for over 40 years. Bill's years of extensive study of the scriptures and his unique gift for teaching and explaining the Bible, and Christian doctrine; made him the perfect person to assist me in writing this book.



William was the co-host along with Michael D'Aigle, on WSLN in Michigan doing a live radio broadcast: FACT or FABLE. Bill also served as the manager for A NEW DAY, a successful Christian band that was popular during the 80's. Bill has served in various positions in the local church, and currently is enjoying his retirement from General Motors where he worked for over 30 years. This allows Bill to focus on being a grandfather, and also working on other outreach ministries along with his passion for writing.

Other Books from Michael D'Aigle

PEARLS OF WISDOM



OUT OF THE DARKNESS

MICHAEL D'AIGLE



OUT OF THE DARKNESS

MY JOURNEY TO THE LIGHT

THE CHRISTIAN FAITH

NOW & THEN

The Christian Faith



MICHAEL D'AIGLE
WILLIAM RIVERA



Michael's newest book: THE CHRISTIAN FAITH, along with co-writer William River will be translated into many different languages and will be available on their website for free in pdf form for pastors and teachers/ministries to use to share the Christian Faith. All these books are/or will be available in print/digital formats at most online bookstores throughout the world. This is Volume 1, and will be followed by a close examination of The First Principles of Christ found in: Hebrews Chapter 6:1-3.

Besides writing books, Michael is a Christian artist/singer/songwriter. He has now released 15 albums worldwide, and over 27,000,000 people have visited his music sites from all over the world. Michael's music can be found at most digital stores or sites where music is listened to.
(fool4christ is Michael's name as an artist)

HERE ARE MY MUSICAL RECORDINGS STARTING WITH MY EARLIEST RELEASES UP TO THE PRESENT.

Michael D'Aigle / fool4christ

1. THE LAST DAYS

<https://music.apple.com/us/album/the-last-days/1271677452>

2. HE'S COMING BACK

<https://music.apple.com/us/album/hes-coming-back/1274532299>

3. THIS IS WAR

<https://music.apple.com/us/album/this-is-war/1269057854>

4. 1ST DAY IN HEAVEN

<https://music.apple.com/us/album/1st-day-in-heaven/1391889686>

5. DANCE IN YOUR LIGHT

<https://music.apple.com/us/album/dance-in-your-light/1258593977>

6. AN INVISIBLE WORLD

<https://music.apple.com/us/album/an-invisible-world/1266283426>

7. BEAUTIFUL DUST

<https://music.apple.com/us/album/beautiful-dust/1259830499>

8. THE DAY OF THE LORD

<https://music.apple.com/us/album/the-day-of-the-lord/1391807382>

9. FOOL FOR CHRIST

<https://music.apple.com/us/album/fool-for-christ/1475079541>

10. THE MYSTERY OF INIQUITY <https://music.apple.com/us/album/the-mystery-of-iniquity/1615754765>

11. AMERICA RETURN TO ME

<https://music.apple.com/us/album/america-return-to-me/1563596443>

12. I AM JESUS <https://music.apple.com/us/album/i-am-jesus/1588044489>

13. ADONAI [https://music.apple.com/us/album/the-devil-jesus/1660577097?
i=1660577100](https://music.apple.com/us/album/the-devil-jesus/1660577097?i=1660577100)

14. Rap it Up

<https://music.apple.com/us/album/rap-it-up/1717825603>

15. Beyond the Veil

<https://music.apple.com/us/album/beyond-the-veil/1714456195>

<https://fool4christ.com>

[FOOL4CHRIST - NumberOneMusic](https://www.reverbnation.com/fool4christ)

<https://www.reverbnation.com/fool4christ>

You can donate/contact their ministry at:
<http://www.lightinthedarkministries.com>

Please pray for Michael & Deborah as they continue to take the gospel to the ends of the earth through the power of the internet. If you would like to know more about how to become a “partner and friend” of Light in the Dark Ministries; just send us the following info:

1. Your name and your personal testimony of how you came to faith in Jesus Christian's
2. Your Ministry name – or the name of your church or organization.
3. Pictures of you and your wife/family & pictures of your ministry activities.
4. What your vision and mission statement is if you have one.
5. What your Doctrinal statement of faith is.



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Ten Books Every Believer Should Read

1. *Mere Christianity*, by C. S. Lewis
2. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VKtuhFIZmmU> by Jonathan Cahn
3. *The Cost of Discipleship*, by Dietrich Bonhoeffer
4. *The Pilgrim's Progress*, by John Bunyan
5. *The Imitation of Christ*, by Thomas a Kempis
6. *Knowing God*, by J. I. Packer
7. *The Hiding Place*, by Corrie ten Boom
8. *My Utmost For His Highest*, by Oswald Chambers
9. *The Spiritual Man*, by Watchman Nee
10. *Foxe's Book Of Martyrs*, by John Foxe

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