

Understanding Spiritual Warfare



Kenneth W. Fall

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by Kenneth W. Fall

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Preface

Understanding Spiritual Warfare began as an investigation of what does the LORD expect from me in the current spiritual conflict? It was written to answer my own questions with the thought someone else might be benefitted. The Table of Contents, Subject Index, and Scripture Index are all hyperlinked for increased utility. I highly recommend looking through the extensive Subject Index to explore ideas and discover topics of interest for your consideration. You will find under the first seven chapter headings six questions I proposed to myself. Chapter 4 concerns the Tower of Babel and its significant relationship to the remainder of history. The Whole Armor of God is addressed in the remaining chapters with a good deal of discussion on the Sword of the Spirit, the Divine Council impact upon Spiritual Warfare, and the capstone of prayer. The Synthesis towards the end draws conclusions, I hope may encourage your own thinking. I do not expect or wish your agreement with anything I have written without careful thought. I will not defend what I have written upon receiving better light. May God be pleased to use this book for His glory and grant you greater appreciation of Him.

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Bible Translations

ESV	English Standard Version
KJV	King James Version
LXX	Septuagint
NASB	New American Standard Bible
NET	New English Translation
NIV	New International Version

Acknowledgements

Special thanks to Dr. Chuck Missler (1934-2018) for his eclectic presentation of the Bible. His widely available series (Audible, Kindle, YouTube) of *Learn the Bible in 24 Hours* inspired my curiosity to further investigate the Biblical perspective of Spiritual Warfare.

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The dedication of Dr. Michael S. Heiser (1963-2023) to encourage going beyond reading to thinking through the Word of God has been much appreciated. In my investigation on the subject of Spiritual Warfare, I have developed *my interpretation* of the Divine Council understanding from Dr. Heiser, who was its most prominent advocate. His works — *The Unseen Realm* (more academic), *Supernatural* (more practical), and *Angels* (to name a few) — represent a genuine attempt at making an academic discussion available to the ordinary disciple.

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“Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them” (Revelation 14:13).

As with any author’s work, “Prove all things; hold fast that which is good” (1Thessalonians 5:21).

Foreword

“I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them” (Isaiah 42:16).

As we learn, we grow. Our understanding is our reality. What appears to work adjusts our understanding. As we age, we forget; but, our understanding remains, though our ability to access our understanding may become more fragmentary.

True Christian consistency is willingness to receive truth as often and as fast as we can obtain light, rather than refusing to improve lest we be guilty of change.

Paul framed our thinking about our understanding of truth. Our understanding relies upon our thoughts. Those who follow the way are admonished, “Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ” (2Corinthians 10:5).

We test our understanding of the Word of God by how well it represents the reality of our circumstances.

For instance:

How does Scripture's depiction of casting out demons affect me?

In the NT, Jesus and His disciples cast out demons (Matthew 17:18¹; Acts 8:7²). But, did casting out a demon mean the formerly demon possessed person necessarily became a follower of Jesus? In Philippi, Paul and Silas cast out a demon from a female slave, who “brought her masters much gain by soothsaying” (Acts 16:16).

Nothing was recorded, if she wanted to be delivered, or if she ever became a follower of Jesus.

Christ taught about an unclean spirit returning to the person from whom it was cast out, taking “with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation” (Matthew 12:45).

Demons can be cast out of people, whose final condition is worse than the first.

The seven sons of Sceva, hearing of Paul's success in casting out demons attempted their own exorcism. “Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them

¹ “Jesus rebuked the devil; and he departed out of him: and the child was cured from that very hour” (Matthew 17:18).

² “For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them: and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed” (Acts 8:7).

which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure [command] you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth” (Acts 19:13). Catastrophe resulted because they did not have the right motive for their attempt. “And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye? And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded” (19:15-16).

Did the disciples ever fail to cast out a demon? Yes. They attempted to cast out a demon from a young man, whose epileptic condition was evidently taken advantage of by the enemy. Jesus cast out the demon, cured the boy, and explained why they failed. “Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you. Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting” (Matthew 17:20-21). The enemy’s counteroffensive caught the disciples unprepared, for they already had access to greater help through “prayer” and more thorough self-preparation through “fasting” to fortify against any “unbelief,” resulting from unexpected resistance. We need to learn to trust our Lord’s overwhelming, beforehand understanding of all things, His superior knowledge, and staggering intelligence to outmaneuver and outperform the enemy. The Captain of Our Salvation would later assure His volunteers, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on

Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto My Father” (John 14:12).

Exorcism only works with the right motivation.

What is the proper motivation to cast out a demon?

Christians have always been taught, “Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you” (James 4:7). Only those who are truly submitted to God have the ability to make the devil flee from them. We may not normally call it casting out Satan, but it amounts to the same thing as casting out demons. Absolute and total submission to God is submitting to and serving only one master. “No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money” (Luke 16:13 NIV).

Are you submitted to God?

So, anyone truly submitted to God has the authority to cast out a demon? Yes, especially since this is one of the ways to identify a disciple, one who is obeying our Lord’s Great Commission.

“And He said to them, Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will accompany those who believe: in My name they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they

will pick up serpents with their hands [protection]; and if they drink any deadly poison, it will not hurt them [preservation]; they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover” (Mark 16:15-18 ESV).

Now are we ready to further challenge our thinking about Spiritual Warfare?

Let us then begin our investigation to see how the Captain of the LORD’s Host will enlarge our understanding.

“The people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits” (Daniel 11:32).

Introduction

“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places” (Ephesians 6:12).

Spiritual Warfare means more than the struggle to maintain our Christian walk. Of course, we sense our part of that spiritual conflict, when we are attacked by that Wicked One enticing us to sin. But, Spiritual Warfare is primarily being waged between God and “spiritual wickedness in high places” (Ephesians 6:12). On earth, we are both the prize and the battleground over which Christ and the forces of Antichrist dispute. Our defensive “whole armour of God” (6:11, 13) supports the offensive “sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God” (6:17). We will discuss more about this later. Coupled with “prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints” (Ephesians 6:18), is where we sense our utter dependence upon God.

Offensively, we are to achieve our main objective in Spiritual Warfare, which is “that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel” (Ephesians 6:18-19). This is with the understanding that the ‘nothing-I-can-contribute-to-my-salvation’ gospel of the grace of God can only be embraced by ***believing loyalty*** to Christ. We shall see from our examination of Isaiah that the sanctification of the people of God was Jehovah’s

principal motivation for the armor of God (Isaiah 59). And sanctified living continues to be a vastly underrated motivation for Spiritual Warfare, since victorious lives are the greatest testimony for the Gospel (Matthew 5:16³).

Defensively, the goal of Spiritual Warfare is not to defeat the enemy, for he is already mortally wounded and defeated by Christ's work on the Cross, but to resist the devil by opposing his attempt of robbing God of His glory by withholding confidence in the Almighty. "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4:7). And, defending against the corrupting influence of sin upon our souls robs the lesser gods of the vindication that their original rebellion had merit, where Lucifer asserted, "I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High" (Isaiah 14:14).

If Christ has already won the battle against the enemy by His work on the Cross, why do we need to engage in Spiritual Warfare? Because the All Wise God has given us the opportunity to magnify, justify, and glorify Him by maintaining a heart attitude of loving obedience, made possible only through intimate abiding in Christ. "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in Me" (John 15:4). ***Remember, this has been the point of failure for angels and man.*** And

³ "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 5:16).

under the New Covenant, we have the additional benefit of the Holy Spirit to teach us the secret of that abiding⁴, which will cause us to trust Christ more. “Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will shew you things to come. He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of Mine, and shall shew it unto you” (16:13-14).

Unwarranted confidence in our flesh, unsupportable trust in others, and a worldly concern for the good opinions of others about ourselves is sufficient to stumble us into sinning against God, without even the opposition of a satan. “For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world” (1John 2:16). But we need better to understand the nature of the main threat from our “adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, [that] walketh about, seeking whom he may devour” (1Peter 5:8).

The very presence of an enemy against our soul brings up many questions.

(1) How can any natural or supernatural being assume they can defeat the Almighty Creator of us all?

⁴ Abiding in Christ is resting in His merit, not attempting to demonstrate how fortunate He is to have us on His side.

- (2) What failure of Yahweh's fatherly, all wise benevolence could possibly motivate a need for rebellion?
- (3) When has God not been mercifully kind?
- (4) Why would an all knowing God allow rebellion?
- (5) Can an always-has-been and always-will-be God provide an everlasting salvation for sinners?
- (6) Is eternal sanctification and holiness possible on earth and in the heavenlies without removing the moral agency of God's image bearers?

As we shall see, ours is not to create an opponent and engage the support of the LORD in our conflict; but, to determine the nature of Yahweh's battle, then align ourselves with His spiritual cause. Whatever counsels the Most High keeps for Himself, our duties and functions center upon the "mystery of the gospel" (Ephesians 6:19).

Before proceeding further, two clarifications:

First, what are the marching orders of the Church? "Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation" (Mark 16:15 ESV). We are to rescue the perishing out of the world and bring them into the Kingdom of God. And how does converting souls, winning the lost, and making disciples for the Lord Jesus

Christ demand God's people to engage in Spiritual Warfare?
Depending on whom you ask, you will get an answer that will embrace a worldview of what God is attempting to accomplish with His Kingdom.

Second, time and space with man are completely different with God. For instance:

(1) 'Absent, present.' When our earthly existence is terminated, we are immediately in the presence of God in another dimension entirely. "We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord" (2Corinthians 5:8).

(2) 'Thousand years as one day.' This phrase is unlike a conversion or translation equivalency, but more as a relative comparison of how we consider a thousand years long. God considers it short, like a day. "One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day" (2Peter 3:8).

(3) 'Translated into the heavenlies.' More than transporting, we are changed to enter into God's heavenly presence. "By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God" (Hebrews 11:5).

Chapter 1 - God Cannot Lose

Q: How Can Any Natural or Supernatural Being Assume They Can Defeat the Almighty Creator of Us All?

The definition of unreasonable is “not reasonable or rational; acting at variance with or contrary to reason; not guided by reason or sound judgment; irrational.” Paul informs us that the wicked, who have not faith, are unreasonable. “And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all men have not faith” (2Thessalonians 3:2). In other words, neither Satan or wicked humanity are necessarily reasonable.

Sin and rebellion are unreasonable; and, our very capacity as imager’s of God is either the foundation for our ability to glorify Him through loving obedience or our ability to wickedly reject our Creator. “So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them” (Genesis 1:27). Yahweh gifted us with the ability to reflect and represent Him, which is our purpose in life, or to conceal His glory and fight Him. Our intention of glorifying God agrees with the purpose for our existence. “Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created” (Revelation 4:11).

Why would the Original Liar be any different from his wicked children? “You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to

carry out your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies” (John 8:44 NIV). So, when the adversary speaks a lie, he speaks it fluently.

Thoughtful moral agents, who are anyone who can discern between right and wrong, know it is impossible to defeat all power with limited power. When Jesus said, “All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth” (Matthew 28:18), He declared Himself to be omnipotent over all possible universes. He is God. Only unreasonable and wicked supernatural and natural moral agents would oppose Him.

Simply because the Almighty does not immediately render final judgment, does not mean anyone has defeated the omnipotent God. Rather, it means that the merciful God is patient. “The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2Peter 3:9).

Our tendency to assume any supernatural being greater than ourselves is, practically speaking, all powerful is not only wrong, but dishonoring to the Almighty. “Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world” (1John 4:4). We need a healthy respect for the godlike capabilities of the opposition;

but, if it feels true that the adversary is greater than all — do not be fooled — that is just what the enemy wants us to think.

Take note that the highest of God’s angels, Michael — a good example of humility — did not swagger about in name calling against Satan, but totally submitted himself to the Almighty’s power to oppose the enemy. “But even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not himself dare to condemn him for slander but said, The Lord rebuke you!” (Jude 1:9 NIV).

And don’t let Job’s tribulations give us the idea God is the bully or adversary, because the NT statement to the Corinthian disciples has always been true. “There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it” (1Corinthians 10:13). Yahweh’s omnipotence and sovereignty will be sold to us by the adversary as only petty bullying, when the satan himself is the original self-seeker. Seeking God’s highest good is consistent with love. We should be seeking God’s highest good because He seeks our highest good. “God is love” (1John 4:8, 16).

Chapter 2 - Rebellion Cannot Win

Q: What Failure of Yahweh's Fatherly, All Wise Benevolence Could Possibly Motivate a Need for Rebellion?

According to James, wars arise from desires from within, which we do not satisfy by asking our Heavenly Father to supply. “From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not” (James 4:1-2). Any sense of lacking on the part of Lucifer or Adam and Eve could have been forthrightly resolved by simply asking Yahweh for whatever was needed. A lack of trust would have prevented them from asking. But more importantly, a lack of love for God, or a greater love for self would instigate their sin. A lesson to us is to stay in love with God, or we will be ensnared in sin against Him. Don't just say you love Him, obey Him. “If ye love Me, keep My commandments” (John 14:15). Or just praise Him for what He has already done. “In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you” (1Thessalonians 5:18).

With heartfelt emotion, Jehovah rightly complained of Israel, “What could have been done more to My vineyard, that I have not done in it? wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?” (Isaiah 5:4). When we view the Scriptures concerning God's conduct with His

creation, we can be overcome with a sense of how much we have disappointed Him. Why would He allow such a circumstance? Since we are created in the “image of God” (Genesis 1:27), then His great endowment for us is our capacity to reflect Him, represent Him, and exercise our capacity to choose freely right from wrong. And if we allow that Jehovah has always done far more for us than anyone can reasonably expect, then we get a better picture of His relationship to us. Couple that thought with His omniscience, then we can only marvel at His wonderful characteristic of setting into motion the means for our reconciliation — from the beginning. “Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world” (Matthew 25:34). Who can object to the benevolence of a Loving Father, who prepares good things for us, while we were still in rebellion against Him? “But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8). Make no mistake, we have no right to expect such things from Him, while we are still sinning. But not enough good can be said about Him for sending Jesus Christ to die for us, when we were still ungodly!

What father is blessed by a rebellious son? Remember the NT tale of the prodigal son? He demanded his share of his father's estate, then squandered it in wild living in a distant country. “And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!” (Luke 15:17). His own sinful living brought him to his senses. Only when he humbled himself and

confessed his sin, did his father receive him back into the family. We do not give God enough credit for His love for us, because we have this idea that He was going to act that way regardless of our conduct. But truth be told, the Day of Salvation is a limited time offer. If there was not a time limit, then everyone would be saved. Everyone would eventually see that “the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Romans 6:23). Everyone would inevitably exercise their right to miss eternal death; but, God wisely warned us, “Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?” (Luke 12:20). God is a gracious God and loving Father; but, it “is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (Hebrews 10:31). Only unrepented sin can provoke God to act so dreadfully!

Perhaps the best known verse in the NT is John 3:16. “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). Why would anyone seek to rebel against such a God? If God were tyrannical, or He acted arbitrarily and inconsistently according to His own whim, then protests would rightly form across His kingdom demanding freedom. But God has always been known for His advocacy of our highest good, whatever we could understand or receive, framed in the cultural context of the times. For example, in God’s wisdom, He allowed a gradual conquest of the Promised Land. “And the LORD thy God will put out those nations before thee by little and little: thou mayest not consume them at once,

lest the beasts of the field increase upon thee” (Deuteronomy 7:22). That is love! Why would anyone object, unless they were jealous of the affection Yahweh would receive for such magnanimous conduct?

Pride drives us to destruction. “Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall” (Proverbs 16:18). Lucifer fell prey to pride or his own self-glory. “For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High” (Isaiah 14:13-14). Lucifer was desiring the glory that only rightfully belongs to Jehovah.

Rebellion in the heavenlies arose out of the heart of Lucifer. Humanity needs not to be born with a naturally sinful nature to commit sin. Once our original parents sinned, the running down process of their physical flesh was enough to draw them into further sin. That flesh passed onto successive generations is theologically mistaken for a sinful nature, inherited from our parents. A sinful nature is only an excuse for sinning, not a good explanation. *Prima facie* evidence that even our run down physical flesh is not sinful, and cannot be blamed for the transmission of sin, or a so-called sinful nature, is the birth of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, for history has already proven what the prophet foretold, “Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel” (Isaiah 7:14). Not only

sinless because He was peculiarly the Son of God, but He was God's proof that the physical offspring of a woman (Genesis 3:15⁵) would crush the Serpent's head. All of this predicts the motivation for the Serpent to corrupt the physical blood line of the woman with the hybrid offspring of Nephilim (Genesis 6).

But neither our inherited physical disposition nor God's conduct justifies rebellion against Him. Of the Seven Churches cited in Revelation chapters 2 and 3, all but two — Smyrna and Philadelphia — were rebuked for their conduct towards Christ. Most likely, this is a good representation of the Church's disposition to Christ — weak, confused, mixed, halting, persecuted, staunch. Regardless of our poor record with Him, is that justifiable grounds for rebellion? Because He allowed our bad behavior?

⁵ “And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise His heel” (Genesis 3:15).

Chapter 3 - Merciful Kindness of God

Q: When Has God Not Been Mercifully Kind?

God's goodness, merciful kindness, and love have always been on display to the universe, not just in the NT dispensation. "For His merciful kindness is great toward us: and the truth of the LORD endureth for ever. Praise ye the LORD" (Psalm 117:2). But still, sin seems to be the nearly universal rule for the moral agents of the LORD's creation — both natural and supernatural. "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). How then could God be a wise Creator? He is. Wisdom cries out, "Counsel is mine, and sound wisdom: I am understanding; I have strength" (Proverbs 8:14). But did all the angels rebel? No. Michael still fought for the LORD (Daniel 10:13, 21⁶). Jesus could have called upon "twelve legions of angels" (Matthew 26:53) to prevent His crucifixion, if He requested it. Sin must not further hinder Heaven, so the Almighty has worked out His plan to secure His Heavenly Kingdom forever. "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life" (Revelation 21:27).

⁶ "13 But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia. 21 But I will shew thee that which is noted in the scripture of truth: and there is none that holdeth with me in these things, but Michael your prince" (Daniel 10:13, 21).

God’s merciful kindness, such as that seen in the NT atonement of Christ for us (John 3:16⁷), is more than sufficiently able to correct the rebellion that has occurred before.

But sadly, rebellion has marred Yahweh’s Kingdom on three significant occasions, all noted in the Book of Genesis — chapters 3 (Garden of Eden), 6 (Flood of Noah), and 11 (Tower of Babel).

The first occasion of rebellion was the Garden of Eden, which marks the first rebellion of our original parents, Adam and Eve (Genesis 3), when Eve, then Adam ate of the forbidden fruit of the “tree of the knowledge of good and evil” (Genesis 2:17; 3:6). The OT text portrays the adversary “serpent” (Hebrew, *nâchâsh*) as “more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made” (3:1); but, the power of speech demands the “serpent” to be more than a natural snake, which would make it supernatural. Though some may refer to the sin of Adam and Eve as the Original Sin, we realize the original rebel was actually a supernatural created being identified by John in the NT as “Satan [Greek, *Satanas*]” (Revelation 12:9). It becomes more apparent that the Spiritual Warfare that erupted with “Lucifer [Hebrew, *hêylêl*, light-bearer, star]” (Isaiah 14:12) found its way into the sin that plagues humanity throughout history. *The pattern in Heaven is duplicated on Earth.* Thus, Jesus directed us to pray, “Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done

⁷ “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).

in earth, as it is in heaven” (Matthew 6:10). We had nothing to do with that heavenly rebellion, but we now comprehend *we are fighting a common enemy in different spheres*.

A Word of Encouragement

The Most High God is greater than the enemy. “Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world” (1John 4:4).

The second occasion was the Flood of Noah’s Ark, which represents the next significant rebellion (Genesis 6). Jehovah warned Noah that He would bring “a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven” (Genesis 6:17). The destruction of the entire world, except for eight preserved on the Ark, marked God’s judgment of the earth’s inhabitants because He saw the “wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually” (Genesis 6:5). As in the Garden of Eden, the “violence [Hebrew, *châmâs*]” (6:13) on planet Earth resulted from actions taken in the supernatural realm.

The events preceding the Flood inform us why Jehovah was compelled to destroy humanity (Genesis 6:2, 3, 4, 5-9):

(1) **Genesis 6:2.** Unholy union took place between the “sons of God” and the “daughters of humankind,” where “they took wives for themselves from any they chose” (Genesis 6:2 NET). Unlike merely the unequal joining of the human godly with the human ungodly, the OT English expression “sons of God [Hebrew, *bnei ha-Elohim*],” who had sexual union with the “daughters of humankind” (6:2 NET), refers to rebel angels with human females.

Concerning the “sons of God” (Genesis 6:2):

[A] The English OT expression “sons of God” — Hebrew equivalent *bnei ha-Elohim* — appears twice in Genesis (6:2, 4) and twice in Job (1:6; 2:11) in connection with an angelic audience including the satan in the presence of Yahweh. And, again in Job 38:7, the “sons of God” are identified pointedly with angels at Creation, i.e., “while the morning stars sang together and all the angels [‘sons of God’ KJV] shouted for joy” (Job 38:7 NIV).

[B] If this were merely the union of godly and ungodly humans, why are only the females designated “daughters of humankind” and not the males identified as sons of humankind?

[C] Why do the Nephilim [Hebrew for ‘giants’] appear in Genesis 6:4 immediately connecting them to the “sons of God”? “The Nephilim [‘giants’ KJV] were on the earth in those days —

and also afterward — when the sons of God went to the daughters of humans and had children by them” (Genesis 6:4 NIV).

[D] Why does it indicate that Nephilim also appear “afterward” (6:4), such as during the conquest of the Promised Land, i.e., the Rephaim (Deuteronomy 3:13⁸ NET), the Emim (Deuteronomy 2:10-11⁹ NASB), the Horim or Horites of Petra (Genesis 14:6 *Smith’s Bible Dictionary*¹⁰), the Zamzummim (Deuteronomy 2:20¹¹ ESV)?

[E] Why the impossibility of angels procreating with humankind, if Jesus was only indicating the lack of necessity for marriage in the heavenly realm? “For when they shall rise from the dead, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage; but are as the angels which are in heaven” (Mark 12:25).

[F] Why would the enemy seek to corrupt the physical bloodline of humanity, if this is only a spiritual conflict? To further ensure

⁸ “The rest of Gilead and all of Bashan, the kingdom of Og, I gave to half the tribe of Manasseh. (All the region of Argob, that is, all Bashan, is called the land of Rephaim” (Deuteronomy 3:13 NET).

⁹ “10 (The Emim lived there formerly, a people as great, numerous, and tall as the Anakim. 11 Like the Anakim, they are also regarded as Rephaim, but the Moabites call them Emim.” (Deuteronomy 2:10-11 NASB).

¹⁰ The aboriginal inhabitants of Mount Seir, “and the Horites in the hill country of Seir, as far as El Paran near the desert” (Genesis 14:6 NIV), and probably allied to the Emim and Raphaim. The name Horite, appears to have been derived from their habits as “cave-dwellers.” Their excavated dwellings are still found in hundreds, in the sandstone cliffs and mountains of Edom, and especially in Petra.

¹¹ “It is also counted as a land of Rephaim. Rephaim formerly lived there — but the Ammonites call them Zamzummim” (Deuteronomy 2:20 ESV).

the offspring of the woman would not “crush” him, but ally with him against Yahweh. The Serpent was already responding to the declaration of war of the Almighty against himself. “And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel” (Genesis 3:15 NIV). This protoevangelical statement prophesied the collision between the physical seed of the woman and the physical seed of the serpent. It certainly predicted the victory Jesus would have over the satan, while being wounded at the Cross at the same time.

An often neglected stanza from Charles Wesley’s Christmas carol, “Hark the Herald Angels Sing,” declares,

“Come, Desire of Nations, come, Fix in us Thy humble home.

Rise the woman’s conquering Seed, Bruise in us the serpent’s head.

Adam’s likeness now efface, Stamp Thine image in its place,

Second Adam from above, Reinstat us in Thy love,

Hark, the herald angels sing, Glory to the newborn King.”

The “offspring” of the woman, we understand to be the Lord Jesus Christ. “Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign;

Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel” (Isaiah 7:14).

Jesus said, “Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do” (John 8:44). If imitation of the devil is sufficient to ally with his cause, why would the satan need to physically insert his seed into the physical bloodline of female humanity? For the same reason the righteous seek children — *to produce children, who are like themselves*. “Did He not make them one, with a portion of the Spirit in their union? And what was the one God seeking? Godly offspring. So guard yourselves in your spirit, and let none of you be faithless to the wife of your youth” (Malachi 2:15 ESV).

Genesis 3:15 prophetically referenced the satan, who did “strike [Christ’s] heel” (3:15), and, at some future time, could very well be Nephilim, i.e., the Antichrist — an unholy product of Rebel Angel with an ungodly human female. “He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God’s temple, proclaiming himself [the Antichrist] to be God” (2Thessalonians 2:4 NIV).

(2) **Genesis 6:3**. Not just the unholy attempts of Fallen Angels procreating with human females to seize control of the physical bloodline of humanity, but humanity’s ungodly attempt to become supernatural through reproducing with Rebel Angels. All of this was the landscape preceding the Flood. The LORD stressed the point to man, “My Spirit shall not always strive with

man, for that he also is [merely] flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years” (Genesis 6:3).

An end of days was announced by Jehovah of 120 years (6:3). The LORD told Noah that the Flood would occur at the end of 120 years. God was mercifully allowing humanity time to repent; and, Noah was being given time to prepare the Ark of deliverance for his family, and for the future benefit of all the yet-to-be-born human race. The starkness of Yahweh needing to correct the world’s ungodliness by destroying everyone but eight godly people registers as extreme, especially to those disbelieving any such worldwide calamity ever took place. Why such physical extreme, if only a moral, spiritual principle of godliness is alone at stake? Nephilim represented the supernatural intrusion of Fallen Angels corrupting the physical bloodline of humanity, which was more than simple ungodliness, and required more than a moral adjustment of heart attitude. And, apparently, mankind’s perversity had become so drastic that almost no one seemed to be listening to God. The NT Book of Jude records a sermon from Enoch — Noah’s great grandfather — to his pre-Flood congregation. “And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him” (Jude 1:14-15). He gave them no comfort, and instead, only justified God in warning the accused

before their judgment was executed. Enoch knew that his son, Methuselah [Hebrew meaning, his death shall bring], would mark the end of the timeline, when God's judgment would fall on the world. This is not the typical model for Gospel preaching. It was also apparent to Noah 120 years before the Flood that only his family was to survive on the Ark. All the ungodly *with the Nephilim* perished in the Flood.

To illustrate God's good intentions towards humanity, even when most all were adamantly against Him, look at what God was saying through the Hebrew meanings of the genealogical names of the godly in Genesis 5. The following is an insight from Bible teacher, Chuck Missler (*The Book of Genesis Handbook*, Koinonia House, Inc., 2020, p. 153).

“Adam” signifies “Man (is)”

“Seth” signifies “Appointed”

“Enoch” signifies “Mortal”

“Kenan” signifies “Sorrow; (but)”

“Mahalalel” signifies “The Blessed God”

“Jared” signifies “shall come down”

“Enoch” signifies “Teaching (that)”

“Methuselah” signifies “His death shall bring”

“Lamech” signifies “The Despairing”

“Noah” signifies “Comfort, Rest”

Translated as a whole, the genealogy reads: “Man is appointed mortal sorrow; but the blessed God shall come down teaching that His death shall bring the despairing comfort and rest.”

Isn't that the Gospel?

And, didn't that *ultimately* result through Yahweh's actions from the cataclysmic Flood judgment?

(3) **Genesis 6:4**. Not only were the Nephilim present before the Flood, but “also after that” (Genesis 6:4). “The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men, and they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown” (Genesis 6:4 NASB).

Nephilim will not be converted, are irredeemable, and when disembodied, will only be resurrected to experience “their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh” (Isaiah 66:24), which is to be judged like their Rebel Angel parents. “God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell [Greek, *tartaroō*, the lowest abode of the damned], and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment” (2Peter 2:4). Again, Nephilim are the direct result “when the sons of God [Fallen Angels] came in to the daughters of men, and they bore children to them” (Genesis 6:4 NASB); and, this type of union could potentially happen again — “and also afterward” (6:4 NASB).

Since Satan is outnumbered two to one (Revelation 12:4), he's trying to build an army. Dr. Chuck Missler thoughtfully pointed out Satan's motivation for the production of Nephilim in modern times. But to continue, the dead Nephilim, who were destroyed by the Flood, killed by King David, and slain by others, would become disembodied spirits. These dead Nephilim, we have come to know as the demons or devils of the NT, seeking habitation in man or beast. "So the devils [demons] besought him, saying, If thou cast us out, suffer us to go away into the herd of swine" (Matthew 8:31).

Nephilim are a real, supernatural enemy. The Almighty is our "King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God" (1Timothy 1:17) — He is supernatural and supreme. Our "adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (1Peter 5:8) — a lesser god, but still, supernatural.

This means our response to Spiritual Warfare must comprehend its implications:

[A] In NT times, we are not called upon to physically destroy the Nephilim, but we cannot convert them (if we knew them). So, we must resist and overcome the Nephilim through faith. "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (1John 5:4).

[B] Nothing demands the unelect to necessarily be Nephilim. “That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness” (2Thessalonians 2:12).

[C] Unusual physically endowed humans do not necessarily imply Nephilim. King Saul was notably taller than his fellow Israelites — “from his shoulders and up he was taller than any of the people” (1Samuel 9:2 NASB) — but, he was afraid to fight Goliath of Gath, a Nephilim (Joshua 11:22¹²).

[D] Historical Nephilim may also be found outside of Scripture. “The same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown” (Genesis 6:4).

[E] Mythological gods and demigods may very well fit the description of Nephilim. In Greek mythology, Hercules was born of the union between Zeus, whom the Romans called Jupiter, and the human female, Alcmene. Small wonder the inhabitants of Lystra (in modern day Türkiye), identified Paul and Barnabas as gods, when they healed a lame man. “And when the people saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in the speech of Lycaonia, The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men. And they called Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul, Mercurius, because he was the chief speaker” (Acts 14:11-12).

¹² “There was none of the Anakims left in the land of the children of Israel: only in Gaza, in Gath, and in Ashdod, there remained” (Joshua 11:22).

[F] Unexplained phenomena may well be connected to Nephilim, i.e., Antichrist's miraculous head wound healing. "And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast" (Revelation 13:3).

A Word of Encouragement

The Most High's angels of the unseen realm far outnumber our opposition and stand ready to help. "And when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, an host compassed the city both with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master! how shall we do? And he answered, Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them. And Elisha prayed, and said, LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha" (2Kings 6:15-17).

(4) **Genesis 6:5-9**. Unparalleled and unbridled wickedness of man and angels required unprecedented executive action by Jehovah. "5 And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his

heart was only evil continually. 6 And it repented the LORD that He had made man on the earth, and it grieved Him at His heart. 7 And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth Me that I have made them. 8 But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD. 9 These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God” (Genesis 6:5-9).

The Flood represented God’s *emotions*, when He regretted creating man. And, that was a strong emotion driving a catastrophic Flood. It must have been an unimaginably wicked time! The thoroughness of the destruction ensured no physical blemish of Nephilim seed would survive. “These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect [Hebrew, *tâmîym*, perfect, blameless, without blemish] in his generations, and Noah walked with God” (Genesis 6:9). Noah was chosen because he was upright, a morally “just man [Hebrew, *tsaddîyq*, righteous]” (6:9). Neither had Noah’s family participated in the physical contagion of the Nephilim. He also was *tâmîym* or without blemish in “his generations [Hebrew, *dôr*]” (6:9). *Tâmîym* is used several dozen times in the Pentateuch to signify physically unblemished sacrifices. “Now this is what you shall do to them to consecrate them, that they may serve me as priests. Take one bull of the herd and two rams without blemish [Hebrew, *tâmîym*, perfect, blameless, without blemish]” (Exodus 29:1 ESV). Noah was both a morally upright man and a

physically unblemished human, not having participated in the physical cohabitation of the Nephilim. The sons and daughters of the Nephilim further spread the contamination to all. The pureness of Noah's wife and his sons' wives, not to be drawn into the sin of attempting to produce supernaturalness by cohabitating with Fallen Angels, made the godliness of Noah and his family, the right choice for the Ark.

Chapter 4 - Futility of Godless Unity

The Third Occasion Was the Tower of Babel, Which Represents Another Great Rebellion of the Human Family (Genesis 11).

For those following along this recital of creaturely rebellion and failure, the jaded response may escape, “And, how exactly did we rebel this time?” To this, I would caution, “Nay but, O man, who art thou that replest against God? Shall the thing formed say to Him that formed it, Why hast Thou made me thus?” (Romans 9:20). Every self-justifying explanation must fail utterly, while God’s character remains unsullied. “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!” (Romans 11:33).

The genesis of any story should set the stage for all its subsequent events. The Edenic Rebellion both of Lucifer, then our original human parents was followed by the pre-Flood corruption of the daughters of Adam with the angelic but fallen sons of God to move the Judge of All the Earth to destroy by Flood all but eight on an Ark — this all inside of the initial chapters of the Book of Genesis. Coupled to this is the account of the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11), the last major rebellion of which our Creator has faithfully made us aware. Our understanding of these rebellions is vital to our participation, anticipation, and coordination with Yahweh in His — and our — strategic Spiritual Warfare.

Here is the Scriptural setting for the global rebellion of the Tower of Babel:

(1) Following the worldwide Flood, Noah's family of eight would begin to repopulate the earth from their point of contact with dry earth, starting at Mt. Ararat (eastern Türkiye, elevation 17,000 feet). "And the ark rested in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, upon the mountains of Ararat" (Genesis 8:4).

(2) Overspreading and repopulating the earth was the mandate of Jehovah to Noah's extended family. "And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth. And you, be ye fruitful, and multiply; bring forth abundantly in the earth, and multiply therein" (Genesis 9:1, 7).

(3) A Table of Nations is portrayed in Genesis 10, so-called by Bible scholars because some seventy nations are accounted there, following the genealogies of the sons of Noah — Shem, Ham, and Japheth (Genesis 10:1¹³). This listing represented the then-known-world. The presumption that this list would spread to include the entire planet, is the obvious implication. Race, language, and culture would be the outgrowth and development of the Table of Nations into a more modern division of nations.

¹³ "Now these are the generations of the sons of Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth: and unto them were sons born after the flood" (Genesis 10:1).

Genesis 10 delineates events far after Jehovah's judgment of the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11), where multiple languages began to develop. "By these were the isles of the Gentiles [Hebrew, *gôy*, 'maritime peoples' NIV] divided in their lands; every one after his tongue, after their families, in their nations" (Genesis 10:5).

(4) Prior to the judgment surrounding the Tower of Babel, the whole earth spoke one language — presumably Hebrew. "And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech" (Genesis 11:1). This statement is consistent with Noah's family language still being spoken. If we are to understand Scripture, as God speaking to us, then we would expect God to be understood literally, unless we can be shown otherwise, just as we would anyone else. If the Creator actually destroyed the entire world with a Flood (sparing eight), then all those who survived would understandably be speaking "one language" (11:1) and would have "one speech" (11:1).

(5) Genesis 11 explains how Jehovah overcame man's reluctance and rebellion to overspread the earth. They said, "Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth" (Genesis 11:4). The LORD masterfully responded by confusing their language. "And the LORD said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. Go to, let

us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech" (Genesis 11:6-7).

(6) In retrospect

[A] Babel means "confusion" (Hebrew, *bâbel*).

[B] *Bab-el* referred to a gateway to God or a tower to Heaven on the Plain of Shinar, where "*Bab*" means gateway and "*el*" is a name for God.

[C] Nimrod "began to be a mighty one [Hebrew, *gibbôr*] in the earth" (1Chronicles 1:10 NASB). He was "a mighty hunter before the LORD" (Genesis 10:9), whose name means "rebellion" or "we will rebel" (Hebrew, *nimrôd*), making him the first world dictator, when we connect him (10:10¹⁴) with the building of the city and the Tower (11:4¹⁵) — further epitomizing his disdain, contempt, and utter disregard for Jehovah.

[D] Unadulterated, no holds barred rebellion is embodied in the resistance to obedience of Jehovah's command, "Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth" (Genesis 9:1 NIV), as seen in their quest, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower

¹⁴ "The first centers of his kingdom were Babylon, Uruk, Akkad and Kalneh, in Shinar" (Genesis 10:10 NIV).

¹⁵ "Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves; otherwise we will be scattered over the face of the whole earth" (Genesis 11:4 NIV).

that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves; otherwise we will be scattered over the face of the whole earth” (Genesis 11:4 NIV).

Now, we need to read the account of the Tower of Babel from the biblical perspective of the Divine Council.

(1) Yahweh’s response to the builders of the Tower of Babel was to “come down to see the city and the tower” (Genesis 11:5 NIV), then His Divine Council would act, “Come, let us go down and confuse [Hebrew, *bâlal*, confound] their language so they will not understand each other” (11:7 NIV). Recall the same plural “us” from Yahweh’s Divine Council in Creation, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness” (1:26 NIV), as well as, the LORD’s Divine Council assessing the fall of humanity in the Garden of Eden, “The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil” (3:22 NIV). Some Bible interpreters identified this as the royal “We,” an early evidence of the Trinity; however, Psalm 82 clarifies, “God [Hebrew, *elohim*] has taken His place in the divine council; in the midst of the gods [Hebrew, *elohim*] He holds judgment” (Psalms 82:1 ESV). Even our Lord Jesus Christ used Divine Council reasoning from Psalm 82 to defend His claim of divinity, which He cited in John 10:34, “I said, You are gods [Hebrew, *elohim*], sons of the Most High, all of you” (Psalm 82:6 ESV). Then Jesus added, “If He called them gods to whom the word of God came — and Scripture cannot be broken — do you say of Him whom the Father consecrated and sent into the world, You are

blaspheming, because I said, I am the Son of God?” (John 10:35, 36 ESV).

(2) Assigning angelic oversight to the Nations was part of God’s judgment for the Tower of Babel rebellion, by depriving humanity of His rulership through delegating superintendence of the Nations to subordinate celestial beings, and by withholding true knowledge about Himself, it was indeed punishment. Such conduct on His part was purposely concealing understanding of His actions to motivate us to search out an explanation. “It is the glory of God to conceal a thing: but the honour of kings is to search out a matter” (Proverbs 25:2). Creating human disorder to maintain cosmic order by confusing humanity’s language to prevent man from establishing himself as the unstoppable power of his own destiny was key to judging the Tower of Babel rebellion.

A pair of texts in Deuteronomy gives us insight about Jehovah’s assignment of angels over the nations — Deuteronomy 4:19 and 32:8 (ESV).

“And beware lest you raise your eyes to heaven, and when you see the sun and the moon and the stars, all the host of heaven, you be drawn away and bow down to them and serve them, things that the LORD your God has allotted to all the peoples under the whole heaven” (Deuteronomy 4:19 ESV). Here, we are given the understanding that Israel was not to worship the “host of heaven” (4:19), as did the surrounding nations. Today,

we view the planets of our solar system with names corresponding to ancient gods, and we understand the names were given to them by the ancients. This should not surprise us, since we know Scripture identifies the stars with the angels. “4 Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? 7 when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy?” (Job 38:4, 7 ESV). The “host of heaven” (Deuteronomy 4:19) were worshipped because “God has allotted [them] to all the peoples under the whole heaven” (4:19 ESV). Would Jehovah do such a thing? Evidently, yes. He assigned angels as each nation’s administrator, as punishment in judgment upon the people for their rebellion at the Tower of Babel. We are not told they were Fallen Angels assigned, since Fallen Angels would not have taken directions from the Almighty. But, this apportioning or allotting of different angels for different nations had evidently come to a bad conclusion, by the time the Almighty confronted them in Psalm 82. “How long will you judge unjustly and show partiality to the wicked?” (Psalms 82:2 ESV).

The judgment of the confusion of language at Babel (Genesis 11:7, 9¹⁶) produced a scattering of humankind “over the face of all the earth” (Genesis 11:9 ESV). Here, again, we see Yahweh acting consistently with our understanding of His Divine Council: “When the Most High gave to the nations their

¹⁶ “7 Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another’s speech. 9 Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the LORD did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the LORD scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth” (Genesis 11:7, 9).

inheritance, when He divided mankind, He fixed the borders of the peoples according to the number of the sons of God¹⁷” (Deuteronomy 32:8 ESV). Specifically, “the Lord’s portion is His people, Jacob [He set aside as] His allotted inheritance” (32:9 NIV) for Himself. We are further reminded the “sons of God,” who are the Angels, are here appointed charge over the Nations, just like we acknowledge Michael to have been appointed over the Nation of Israel (Daniel 10:21¹⁸; 12:1¹⁹).

Prior to the Tower of Babel rebellion, we know the Fallen Angels who procreated with human females to produce the hybrid offspring of the Nephilim (Genesis 6:4²⁰), who were destroyed in the Flood, they would become the disembodied spirits, better known as demons. The principle of seeking first the Kingdom of God implies God’s actions here below may not become significant unless viewed with a greater appreciation of what is taking place in the heavenlies. “They sacrificed to demons, not God, to gods they had not known; to new gods who had recently come along, gods your ancestors had not known about” (Deuteronomy 32:17 NET). So long as we maintain the

¹⁷ OT “sons of God” always refers to angels, i.e., Genesis 6:2, 4; Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7.

¹⁸ “But I will shew thee that which is noted in the scripture of truth: and there is none that holdeth with me in these things, but Michael your prince” (Daniel 10:21).

¹⁹ “And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book” (Daniel 12:1).

²⁰ “The Nephilim were on the earth in those days — and also afterward 11 when the sons of God went to the daughters of humans and had children by them. They were the heroes of old, men of renown” (Genesis 6:4 NIV).

boundaries of the Word of God, we will not transgress into the realm of the forbidden knowledge²¹ prohibited by our Creator in the Garden. Moses reminded Israel of the aftermath of the Tower of Babel. The LORD “divided mankind, He fixed the borders of the peoples according to the number of the sons of God” (Deuteronomy 32:8 ESV). In other words, He gave the angels the administration of the Nations, because the rebellious humans refused the Most High’s rule at the Tower of Babel, much like when Israel would later reject Yahweh’s rule through His judges. “And the LORD said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them” (1Samuel 8:7).

(3) What would pagan idol worship, the worship of heavenly bodies, and the Divine Council have to do with the judgment of the Tower of Babel?

Setting up anything of our own choosing or making to be worshipped other than the Living God is idolatry. Our fascination with ourselves and whatever our hands create explains some of the allurements to idolatry and idol worship. Our attempts to explain the unknown by any means creates idols for our heart, when it leads to the worship of anyone but the Living God. Our social and cultural circumstances may be responsible for directing our focus away from trusting the Most

²¹ “But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it” (Genesis 2:17) because knowledge unauthorized by Yahweh is eternally deadly.

High God to the abjectness of idolatry. What responsibility we have to get it right! We may react with great emotion and indignation against the thought of the idolatry of others, but we need to be circumscribed by the Scriptures or fall prey to the idolatry we despise. “The idols of the heathen are silver and gold, the work of men’s hands. They have mouths, but they speak not; eyes have they, but they see not; They have ears, but they hear not; neither is there any breath in their mouths. They that make them are like unto them: so is every one that trusteth in them” (Psalm 135:15-18). Certainly, a supernatural enemy would know how to exploit such aberrant behavior to their advantage.

The NT clarity of the Apostle Paul demonstrated the idols worshipped were demons. “What say I then? that the idol is any thing, or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is any thing? But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils” (1Corinthians 10:19-20). His understanding was consistent with OT interpretations of idolatry. “They worshiped their idols, which became a snare to them. They sacrificed their sons and daughters to demons. They shed innocent blood – the blood of their sons and daughters, whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan” (Psalm 106:36-38 NET).

Returning to Moses’ assessment of the worship of the heavenly bodies, we are not to worship them. “When you look up to the

sky and see the sun, moon, and stars – the whole heavenly creation – you must not be seduced to worship and serve them, for the LORD your God has assigned them to all the people of the world” (Deuteronomy 4:19 NET). Notice, God has “assigned [Hebrew, *châlaq*, divide, allot, apportion] them to all the people of the world” (4:19 NET). Is this just recognizing that the entire world can appreciate and view these celestial objects, or is this the language consistent with the Morning Stars of Yahweh’s Divine Council being apportioned to the world? Moses was recalling God’s actions at the Tower of Babel, where such apportioning was made, and specifically reserving Jacob for Himself. “For the LORD’s portion is His people; Jacob is the lot of His inheritance” (Deuteronomy 32:9). Sadly, Israel would later return to the idolatry Jehovah judged at the Tower of Babel – for which the Babylonian Captivity would be the cure. “They sacrificed to demons, not God, to gods they had not known; to new gods who had recently come along, gods your ancestors had not known about” (Deuteronomy 32:17 NET).

A Word of Encouragement

To Yahweh’s everlasting glory, our rebellion has been unexpectedly answered by His grace with the sobering realization — God’s help is greater than man’s sin. “Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound” (Romans 5:20).

Chapter 5 - Foolishness of God Allowing Rebellion

Q: Why Would An All Knowing God Allow Rebellion?

“The foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men” (1Corinthians 1:25).

Rebellion against God would not be possible unless we had the ability to freely choose to follow God. For this very reason, Scripture accurately records man and angels' sin and rebellion without the LORD modifying the account to preserve a better public image of Himself. “Know therefore that the LORD thy God, He is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love Him and keep His commandments to a thousand generations” (Deuteronomy 7:9). The act of creating man on the sixth day was announced from Yahweh's Divine Council with humanity's defining condition as an imager of God. “Then God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth” (Genesis 1:26 ESV). Science tells us we share 99% of our DNA with chimpanzees, but is that last 1% the image of God? No, to be created in God's image is to be endowed with a status. Simply to be human is to image God. But, even more than our innate status as an imager of God, it is God's intention that we are to accurately reflect and represent Him on Earth. To do a bad

job of representing God does not mean any less that we are still an imager of God. Of course, to correctly represent God would fulfill His purpose in creating us. “Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created” (Revelation 4:11).

Our status as an imager of God must be more important than we realize, for Yahweh to allow all of history with its great depth of evil to transpire, makes our correct representation of Him to be all the more valuable. “He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; He led him about, He instructed him, He kept him as the apple of His eye” (Deuteronomy 32:10). We ought to treasure God as much as He treasures us. To be created in God’s image is God’s appointment of us to represent Him on Earth. As much as we all have come from doctrinal positions peculiar to us, we need to focus more on the Scriptures that most precisely represent God. Our core job is to faithfully reflect and represent Yahweh. Neither an OT covenant with Israel nor a NT covenant with the Church should find contradiction with this. If our status as imagers of God does not include the freedom of the will — the capacity to choose to do the will of God or rebel — then why would God petition us in both the OT and NT to choose to obey Him and be willing to do His will? “And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house,

we will serve the LORD” (Joshua 24:15). “Anyone who chooses to do the will of God will find out whether My teaching comes from God or whether I speak on My own” (John 7:17 NIV). If freedom of the will is only an illusion, then we need not concern ourselves about anything — unless our sense of self-preservation nags at our subconsciousness that we must do something!

A Word of Encouragement

In the midst of this continual litany of offense, rebellion, and yet again failure of God’s moral agents, conceivably, Yahweh’s greatest accomplishment will be all the measures He has planned, executed, and will bring to pass justifying Himself for His creation of supernatural and natural imagers of Himself, who can glorify or rebel against Him, to secure their voluntary love and trust of Him, forever, world without end. “And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever” (Daniel 12:3).

Chapter 6 - Everlasting Salvation for Sinners

Q: Can An Always-Has-Been, Always-Will-Be, Everlasting God Provide An Everlasting Salvation for Sinners?

The fickleness of man is answered by the nobleness of God's grace. When the world is awash in the riptides of man's rebelliousness, it is in the ark of God's comfort that we find God changes not. "For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed" (Malachi 3:6). Repentance would be meaningless, if reclaiming us from our sin and failures was impossible. "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38). The record for the existence of humankind has shown us to be a miserable lot. But, when we have found our way to cry out for help, the LORD has treated us better than we deserved. "And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief" (Mark 9:24). When the tides have reversed in tsunamis of Satanic opposition, we again cry out in desperation, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him" (Job 13:15).

With Rebellion as mankind's most enduring theme, it comes with great relief that salvation would be an abiding topic of God's attention. If He decided to carry through with His emotion to eliminate humankind, most probably we would have had many more worldwide cataclysms like the Flood — but, He

specifically promised never again to destroy the world with a flood, as witnessed by His rainbow (Genesis 9:11²²). When Israel rebelled against Jehovah for fear of facing the Nephilim, they refused to enter into the Promised Land. God threatened, “I will smite them with the pestilence, and disinherit them, and will make of thee [Moses] a greater nation and mightier than they” (Numbers 14:12). Again, His words to Moses after Israel’s subsequent golden calf rebellion: “Let Me alone, that I may destroy them, and blot out their name from under heaven: and I will make of thee a nation mightier and greater than they” (Deuteronomy 9:14). And, we think we are the only ones to notice the wretched awfulness of the professed people of God! No doubt, more than one intercessor has risen up to stay His hand of execution on His avowed people. Moses graphically outlined the motivation for Yahweh’s actions — preserving the honor of the LORD. “Now if Thou shalt kill all this people as one man, then the nations which have heard the fame of Thee will speak, saying, Because the LORD was not able to bring this people into the land which He sware unto them, therefore He hath slain them in the wilderness” (Numbers 14:15-16 KJV).

Moses begged God to do what he knew God wanted to do — which are prayers God will answer — so Moses analyzed:

(1) God’s glory must be preserved.

²² “And I will establish My covenant with you, neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood; neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth” (Genesis 9:11).

- (2) God's strength must be displayed.
- (3) God's slowness to anger must be exalted.
- (4) God's love must be seen.
- (5) God's forgiveness must be made known.
- (6) God's punishment of sin cannot be ignored, and
- (7) God's judgment abides to the successive generations.

“And now, I beseech Thee, let the power of my Lord be great, according as Thou hast spoken, saying, The LORD is longsuffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression, and by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation. Pardon, I beseech Thee, the iniquity of this people according unto the greatness of Thy mercy, and as Thou hast forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now” (Numbers 14:17-19).

Salvation is a common theme of the OT, occurring especially in the Psalms and Isaiah. In the KJV, *Yeshû'âh* in the Hebrew OT is translated as “salvation” 65 times, “health” 3 times, “help” 3 times, “deliverance” twice, “saving” twice, “deliverances” once, and “save” once. “But as for me, my prayer is unto Thee, O LORD, in an acceptable time: O God, in the multitude of Thy

mercy hear me, in the truth of Thy salvation” (Psalm 69:13). In the KJV, *sōtēria* in the Greek NT is translated as “salvation” 40 times, “saved” twice, “health” once, and “saving” once. “How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him” (Hebrews 2:3).

Just as OT Israel’s great failure was their unbelief in the Messiah, our great failure in this Church Age has been our neglect in laying hold of the *promises* of God.

“3 According as His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue: 4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust” (2Peter 1:3-4).

Since the *exceeding great and precious promises* have been so readily available, it has been easy to marginalize them by a Church desiring the miraculous without the discipline of faith. Remember, “in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love” (Galatians 5:6).

Like reading the manufacturer’s label for instructions on the use of a product, God’s promises:

(1) They are provided by “His divine power” (2Peter 1:3), which means His promises are all powerful.

(2) They provide us “all things that pertain unto life and godliness” (2Peter 1:3), which gives us a *complete guide to godly living*.

(3) They function “through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue” (2Peter 1:3), which means the more we understand the promises, the better we understand God.

(4) They make it possible that “ye might be partakers of the divine nature” (2Peter 1:4), in other words, you will become more like Christ, and

(5) They enable you to escape the “corruption that is in the world through lust” (2Peter 1:4), in other words, the promises enable you to overcome your own evil desires.

Any wonder Satan would rather we *not* pay any attention to God’s promises? Or, to make them mean as little as possible?

A version of Samuel Clarke’s *Precious Bible Promises* can be freely found [online](#), or on the Kindle.

To name just one example of the Promises of God, an everlasting salvation is promised (verses found in Torrey’s [New Topical Textbook](#) under “Salvation”):

(1) Salvation is necessary because we have all sinned.

“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God”
(Romans 3:23).

(2) Salvation is necessary to deliver us from eternal death.

“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Romans 6:23).

(3) Salvation is necessary because God’s holiness demands He must judge our sin.

“And to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come” (1Thessalonians 1:10).

(4) Salvation is essential to bring us to a right understanding of the truth.

“Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth” (1Timothy 2:4).

(5) No one but the LORD saves.

“Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else” (Isaiah 45:22).

(6) Salvation is only through the Messiah.

“Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

(7) When God saves, it is everlasting.

“But Israel shall be saved in the LORD with an everlasting salvation: ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end” (Isaiah 45:17).

“Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath: for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner: but My salvation shall be for ever, and My righteousness shall not be abolished” (Isaiah 51:6).

“And being made perfect, He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him” (Hebrews 5:9).

(8) Salvation is complete through Christ.

“Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them” (Hebrews 7:25).

“Who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father” (Galatians 1:4).

(9) The Good News of salvation marks you with the seal of the Holy Spirit, when you believe.

“And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in Him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit” (Ephesians 1:13 NIV).

(10) Scripture makes you wise concerning salvation.

“And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus” (2Timothy 3:15).

Chapter 7 - Holiness on Earth and in Heaven

Q: Is Eternal Sanctification and Holiness Possible on Earth and in the Heavens Without Removing the Moral Agency of God's Image Bearers?

An omniscient God has the advantage of knowing what will work and what will not, when dealing with His moral creation of man and angels. He knows all our possible responses, and He is supremely confident we will arrive at His desired conclusion. “In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will” (Ephesians 1:11). Wicked men in the vanity of their minds object to God's plan because they reason anyone can prove anything based upon Scripture. This admits the possibility of God's plan; but, of course, they give their own thoughts more priority and probability, “because of the blindness of their heart” (Ephesians 4:18). Of greater consequence, how do we reasonably understand God's salvation? We know then that Yahweh can save with an “everlasting salvation,” as represented in Isaiah 45:17. The LORD's “salvation shall be for ever,” as seen in Isaiah 51:6. And, “He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him,” as demonstrated in Hebrews 5:9. Even if we admit His salvation to be eternal, does that mean it has the effect upon us only to change our ultimate destination from eternal death to eternal life, or does it also have the ability to change our behavior from sinful to holy? Can we be

participants in holy conduct now, and can that holy conduct continue in eternity? Even if this was possible while dwelling in human flesh, would we have any different success than Lucifer in heavenly places? Yahweh already has considered all of this.

As imagers of God, the Almighty has fashioned us to respond to the example and encouragement of others. For example, does our success and failure affect the morale of those who have passed into the heavenlies before us? Consider the Scripture, “Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into” (1Peter 1:12). Angels desire to look into the atonement, because it gives an exalted view of God’s character. The unfolding Gospel story is of great interest to the angels. Remember, angels do not have unlimited knowledge and understanding, though they know *much* more than us. The departed saints similarly have only the knowledge and understanding allowed them by their Heavenly Father. Glorified saints and angels both follow the progress of God’s plan of salvation here below. We can even now only appreciate a small portion of what the Most High is achieving all around us; but, in an indirect way, we are aiding in the sanctification of glorified saints and angels. When they are edified, they are encouraged; and, when they are encouraged, there will be no possibility for future rebellion to occur in Heaven, as with Lucifer, the original rebel. The Almighty knows what needs to transpire here below

to achieve the outcome that no glorified saint or angel would be discouraged and consider rebellion, and thus His kingdom would be forever secure in sinlessness.

What must have been the effect upon the universe of moral beings, when God judged the angels who sinned — “God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to hell [Greek, *tartaroō*, tartarus]” (2Peter 2:4; Jude 1:6) — by casting them into Tartarus without the slightest hope of redemption? No doubt Peter and Jude were referring to the Genesis 6:1-4 corruption of the angelic Sons of God cohabitating with the daughters of Adam to produce the hybrid Nephilim. The judgment of these sinning angels was an action affecting all possible universes, so sweeping, it must have hushed all onlookers, much the same way Heaven will be silent in the prophetic future after the Lamb opens the Seventh Seal (Revelation 8:1²³). When the Rebel Angels were judged (Genesis 6), no one could have doubted the holiness, power, and justice of God, but how could His kindness, mercy, and love now become known to humanity? “But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons” (Galatians 4:4-5). We vastly underestimate the Living God. In human affairs, marginally more power may be militarily defeated by lesser power and better tactics, but fighting against unlimited power and understanding is only a contest for the self-

²³ “And when He had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour” (Revelation 8:1).

deceived. We keep forgetting, omnipotence and omniscience will always win in the end. You can't beat God. The insanity of sin is to think otherwise. Of course, Lucifer has attempted to convince himself and the universe of that since the original rebellion. The Great Tempter continues the rebellion because he doesn't know how not to.

All glorified imagers of God — both man and angels — have the capacity to “grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (2Peter 3:18) throughout eternity. For this reason, God will never remove the moral agency of His glorified saints. Besides, Scripture pointedly asserts, “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is” (1John 3:2). In other words, we will continue to be His imagers with our moral capacity to choose Him. While Yahweh continues our growth and improvement, humanists, no doubt, would desire such action for the physical evolution of the species. But, Jehovah has already insured that possibility for the spiritual health and longevity of His kingdom. “But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day” (Proverbs 4:18). Removing the moral agency of glorified saints after entering the heavenlies would *not* glorify God, because: (1) It would indicate His original design was ill conceived, and God does “all things well” (Mark 7:37), i.e., “He is the Rock, His work is perfect: for all His ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is He” (Deuteronomy 32:4).

And, (2) It would mean their praise throughout eternity would be a *parrot-like-noise*, not the heartfelt gushing of someone who could choose to withhold praise, i.e., “11 And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; 13 And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever” (Revelation 5:11, 13).

I will cite a passage from a 19th century evangelist, theologian Charles G. Finney to give an historical perspective of how Christianity has viewed the ongoing edification and blessing of the citizens of Heaven with the limitless depth of the character and actions of Yahweh. Finney’s *Systematic Theology* made the following observation:

“He made the atonement for the benefit of the universe. All holy beings are, and must be, benefited by it, from its very nature, as it gives them a higher knowledge of God than ever they had before, or ever could have gained in any other way. The atonement is the greatest work that he could have wrought for them, the most blessed and excellent, and benevolent thing he could have done for them. For this reason, angels are described as desiring to look into the atonement. The inhabitants of Heaven are represented as being deeply interested in the work of

atonement, and those displays of the character of God that are made in it. The atonement is then no doubt one of the greatest blessings that ever God conferred upon the universe of holy beings.”

Scripture asserts both (1) God’s ability to cause us to obey without withdrawing our moral agency and (2) God’s ability to cause us not to sin, while we are still here below.

“And I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes, and ye shall keep My judgments, and do them” (Ezekiel 36:27).

“He will turn again, He will have compassion upon us; He will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea” (Micah 7:19).

If Jehovah can cause us to obey and prevent us from sinning, while we are still in the flesh, then He will not have to remove our moral agency to keep us in holiness in Heaven.

Chapter 8 - The Whole Armor of God

The Whole Armor of God is commonly understood to be for the Spiritual Warfare of the Saints. Paul outlined the armor in Ephesians 6:10-20. The language of battling for the LORD is primarily a spiritual conflict. “Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses” (1Timothy 6:12). “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith” (2Timothy 4:7).

This is the passage most identified with NT Spiritual Warfare:

“10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might. 11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. 13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. 14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; 15 And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; 16 Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. 17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: 18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and

watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; 19 And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, 20 For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak” (Ephesians 6:10-20).

Paul represented the conflict as Spiritual Warfare with the Devil in league with “the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms” (6:12 NIV). This is the language consistent with the Divine Council of Psalm 82. “God has taken His place in the divine council; in the midst of the gods He holds judgment” (Psalms 82:1 ESV). Yahweh objected to the wicked conduct of the divine rulers. “How long will you judge unjustly and show partiality to the wicked?” (82:2 ESV). The Almighty then pronounced judgment upon these lesser gods. “6 I said, You are gods, sons of the Most High, all of you; 7 nevertheless, like men you shall die, and fall like any prince” (82:6, 7 ESV). These are the “rulers,” “authorities,” “powers of this dark world,” “the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms” (Ephesians 6:12 ESV), who are the same as those condemned by Yahweh in Psalm 82.

This armor was used by Christ, and it is available to us. In the OT, the Apostle Paul’s description of the Whole Armor of God (Ephesians 6:14-17) was previously described by the prophet Isaiah. “He put on righteousness as a breastplate, and an helmet of salvation upon His head; and He put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloak”

(Isaiah 59:17). Isaiah portrayed the ultimate spiritual warrior as Jehovah Himself. The motivation for Isaiah's armor of Jehovah was the sin of Israel (59:2-8²⁴, esp. v. 2). "But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you, that He will not hear" (Isaiah 59:2). Because the Almighty could find neither man nor angel to deliver Israel from their sinning, He had to do it Himself. "And He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor: therefore His arm brought salvation unto Him; and His righteousness, it sustained Him" (Isaiah 59:16).

The LORD was continually battling the faithlessness of His chosen people. How would Isaiah's Armor of Jehovah deliver Israel from sin? The Almighty would offer His one and only Son as the quintessential spiritual warrior, who "shall save His people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21). What we in the New Covenant think of as the ongoing battle for the sanctification of the Christian is what Yahweh was solving for Israel. No form of human armor is able to defeat sin, only the armor of Jehovah. Christ put that armor on as the sinless Son of God, while on earth. Everything He achieved is testimony to the effectiveness

²⁴ "2 But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you, that He will not hear. 3 For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies, your tongue hath muttered perverseness. 4 None calleth for justice, nor any pleadeth for truth: they trust in vanity, and speak lies; they conceive mischief, and bring forth iniquity. 5 They hatch cockatrice [viper] eggs, and weave the spider's web: he that eateth of their eggs dieth, and that which is crushed breaketh out into a viper. 6 Their webs shall not become garments, neither shall they cover themselves with their works: their works are works of iniquity, and the act of violence is in their hands. 7 Their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed innocent blood: their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity; wasting and destruction are in their paths. 8 The way of peace they know not; and there is no judgment in their goings: they have made them crooked paths: whosoever goeth therein shall not know peace" (Isaiah 59:2-8).

of the armor of Jehovah. *The purpose of the Whole Armor of God is primarily for the sanctification of the people of God, and only secondarily against Satan and wickedness in high places, who resist the advance of the Gospel.*

As much as we would not feel our torture or death as a victory for the Kingdom of God, but for the Son of God, it was a victory of the highest magnitude. It was necessary for Him to sacrifice Himself to atone for rebellious humanity. His strategic understanding justified His shorter term pain. If the enemy truly understood God's plan, they never would have allowed Christ to go to the cross. "Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory" (1Corinthians 2:8). The Lord Jesus wore the Whole Armor of God during His earthly ministry to achieve the same result we desire for our spiritual warfare — He would subdue our iniquities and intercede for transgressors by bearing our sins Himself, thereby He would advance the Gospel. "He will turn again, He will have compassion upon us; He will subdue [Hebrew, *kabâsh*, subject, force, keep under, bring into bondage] our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea" (Micah 7:19). What better testimony for the attractiveness of the gospel than a sanctified disciple? "And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel" (Ephesians 6:19).

Chapter 9 - Belt of Truth

“Loins [waist] girt about [fastened] with truth” (Ephesians 6:14).

The Whole Armor of God described by the Apostle Paul in Ephesians 6 is the manual of arms for the Christian in the handling and use of spiritual weapons and equipment. The naming of each accessory or equipment of the spiritual warrior's outfit is key to understanding its role and use. The effect of truth upon ourselves as soldiers of Christ is the main purpose of the Belt of Truth. “Stand therefore, having your loins [waist] girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness” (Ephesians 6:14). A belt known as a *cintus* was worn around the waist under the armor of the Roman soldier. It was foundational, gathering the other garments out of the way, and allowing the soldier to run and fight. Likewise, our understanding of truth is foundational for our own sanctification, as well as our usefulness in helping others. If we cannot walk securely ourselves, we have little hope of being of any benefit to our fellow disciples, much less to any potential disciples. “And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also” (2Timothy 2:2).

Truth understood correctly will undergird our walk regardless of who else may believe. Thought warfare is allowing our thinking about everything to be systematically, Scripturally guided by the Holy Spirit. Instead of resisting the plainness of Scripture that

may seem to contradict our present framework of believing, we need to actively entertain those Scriptures to see how to integrate them into our thinking and behavior. “These [Berean Jews] were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so” (Acts 17:11). Whether or not we think of ourselves as systematic theologians, we imitate God when we attempt to organize our thinking about Scripture. “Let all things be done decently and in order” (1Corinthians 14:40).

Some thoughts about our pursuit of Biblical truth:

(1) When we engage in the pursuit of Biblical truth, we are engaging in spiritual warfare as soldiers and workers of God’s truth, because regardless of who we may persuade about the truth, God has persuaded and sanctified *us* with our understanding of His truth. “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2Timothy 2:15).

(2) Truth is the certainty of who God is; so, our pursuit of truth is our pursuit of God. “Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me” (John 14:6).

(3) Studying the truth about anything has some value, but Scripture is God's supernaturally revealed truth. "Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth" (John 17:17).

(4) As we reach a more advanced age, our memory, reflexes, physical abilities, and mental capacities diminish, but our understanding of the truth will remain. This is another way of saying, old age will strip away everything down to our wisdom or understanding of the truth. "Cast me not off in the time of old age; forsake me not when my strength faileth" (Psalm 71:9). "And even to your old age I am He; and even to hoar [gray] hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you" (Isaiah 46:4).

(5) Study the truth of Scripture, acknowledging it was written to an ancient mindset with which we may not be familiar — and may be only better understood through study of the text in the original languages, as well as, through the scholastic investigation of others — BUT, the truth of God's Word was *always* meant to be received and obeyed by all. "O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the LORD" (Jeremiah 22:29).

(6) We read or hear the Word of Truth to get an idea of what God is saying. We study His Word to better comprehend it. And, we meditate upon Scripture to allow the God of truth to have greater influence and control over us. "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and Thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of

mine heart: for I am called by Thy name, O LORD God of hosts” (Jeremiah 15:16).

(7) Praise and worship Yahweh based upon our discoveries of His truth, *and do it out loud*, when possible, so our non-omniscient enemy can overhear and be reminded of what they have rejected. “Let the redeemed of the LORD say so, whom He hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy” (Psalm 107:2).

Our Lord Jesus Christ fulfilled the OT predictions about the armor of Jehovah. “Righteousness shall be the belt of His waist, and faithfulness the belt of His loins” (Isaiah 11:5 ESV). The Septuagint (LXX) translated “faithfulness” (11:5) as *aletheia*, which is the same Greek word Paul used as “truth” in Ephesians 6:14, “belt of truth” (ESV). If we think of the inward effect of truth upon ourselves with the Belt of Truth, then we should examine the effect of truth upon the Lord Jesus during His earthly life. As a child, the effect of truth upon Jesus was that He walked with submission to Joseph and Mary, His human parents, which was a sign of His foundational understanding of the truth of His submission to His Heavenly Father. Know “ye not that I must be about My Father's business” (Luke 2:49). When tempted by Satan during the forty day preparation for His earthly ministry, Jesus responded to the Devil’s attempt to get Him to exalt Himself by turning stones into bread instead by submitting to His Father’s Word. “But He answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4). When

accused of blasphemy for making Himself equal to God, where He claimed, “I and my Father are one” (John 10:30), He defended that claim by reminding them of the truth, “Is it not written in your Law, I have said you are gods? If He called them gods, to whom the word of God came — and Scripture cannot be set aside — what about the one whom the Father set apart as His very own and sent into the world? Why then do you accuse Me of blasphemy because I said, I am God’s Son?” (10:34-36 NIV). Understanding the truth that there are lesser gods in the Almighty’s Divine Council (Psalm 82), prepared Him to respond to His adversaries.

To summarize the use of the Belt of Truth, read to acquaint, study to comprehend, and meditate to apply the Word of Truth to ourselves.

Chapter 10 - Breastplate of Righteousness

“The breastplate of righteousness” (Ephesians 6:14).

Upper torso protection, especially of the heart, keeps us acting, and for the right reasons. “Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place” (Ephesians 6:14 NIV). Righteousness is right choice producing morally right action, and right action accurately reflects God. “Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right” (Genesis 18:25). We acquaint the world with ourselves by our righteousness because our understanding of what is right drives our actions. “The tree is known by its fruit” (Matthew 12:33 ESV). But, the worst form of righteousness is self-righteousness, where we incorrectly represent God’s righteousness. “But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away” (Isaiah 64:6).

Righteousness is such an important concept, we would do well to review how the Christian is considered righteous. Original Sin is a very popular tradition that “In Adam’s fall, we sinned all,” thus, Adam’s sin is imputed to us. With that same reasoning, since we all are sinners by imputation, then we are accounted or imputed righteous through the righteousness of Christ. Yes and no. I will not pretend to exhaust the subject by my brief presentation, but I respect many of the godly disciples, who disagree with me, who may not abide my explanation.

(1) I would caution against using Romans 5:12 as proof of the Original Sin Argument. “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned” (Romans 5:12). For, if everyone is a sinner because of Adam, then the Universalists have an equally valid point, everyone — not just those who believe — is going to Heaven because of Christ. “Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life” (Romans 5:18). I believe in both Romans 5:12 and Romans 5:18, but neither teaches Original Sin nor Universal Salvation.

[A] The first sin by our Original Parents produced dying, decaying, deadly physical flesh (Genesis 2:17²⁵), which continues to get worse — ‘copy of a copy of a copy’ — and, when given in to, produces sin enough without resorting to an inherited sinful nature. Some have called this Physical Depravity, which is not the same thing as Moral Depravity. And, Moral Depravity is the act of sinning, not some theological condition or contamination, which makes us sinners without an act of our will.

[B] Christ “was made flesh” (John 1:14) without becoming a sinner. And, so can we be physically born into the world without

²⁵ “But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” (Genesis 2:17).

sin. The miracle of the Virgin Birth (Isaiah 7:14²⁶) is that the Son of God became a human without physical conception of Joseph through Mary, and not that God somehow annihilated the sin of the flesh believed by the adherents of Naturally Sinful Nature. Not being physically born with a Sinful Nature makes sin “exceeding sinful” (Romans 7:13).

[C] Since it is not true that Adam’s sin is imputed to us without our consent, neither would it be true that Christ’s righteousness is imputed to us without our consent. Universalists, who believe everyone will be saved, have found the Doctrine of Imputing the Righteousness of Christ to us without the consent of our repenting and believing the Gospel, a great refuge for their fatal, doctrinal error that all will be saved. Jesus plainly warned, “Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels” (Matthew 25:41).

(2) Adam’s sin affected us all, but to blame Adam for all of our sins gives him too much credit or culpability. John correctly credits the desires of the world, i.e., “the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life” (1John 2:16), as key to not doing the will of God, e.g., sinning.

If our right choices resulting in right moral action were the result of the mere strength of of our human will power, then we should congratulate ourselves for willing ourselves into Heaven. But, if

²⁶ “Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel” (Isaiah 7:14).

right choices resulting in right moral action are only the result of God's Spirit working in us, then God deserves the credit for our righteousness. "19 To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. 21 For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (2Corinthians 5:19, 21).

A person is correctly accounted or imputed with the Righteousness of Christ because of their faith in Christ, and not from anything else. "And he [Abraham] received circumcision as a sign, a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. So then, he is the father of all who believe but have not been circumcised, in order that righteousness might be credited to them" (Romans 4:11 NIV). ***Imputation is merely accounting or treating as if we had never sinned, when we repent and believe.*** If we cannot let go of the idea of being born as a sinner, we would need to misconstrue the idea of imputing Christ's righteousness, because we cannot see ourselves as anything but continually sinning. The devil will get great victories over us, when we are so beat down, because we perceive so much of what we do as sin. That's not really humility, because it inaccurately attributes sin, when there is no sin; and, incorrectly declares someone sinful, when they are holy. If the enemy can persuade Christianity of this false perception, then fewer people will be saved and sanctified,

because too much time is wasted battling the windmills of our own imagination.

Righteousness is the identifier that marks us as Christian. With our mouth, we confess Jesus as our Lord, but righteousness confesses Christ's lordship by our actions. We are accounted righteous by God through our faith in Him. "Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness" (Romans 4:3). But, there is no Living Faith, unless it is accompanied by right action. "In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead" (James 2:17 NIV). Right action does not precede or preempt faith, but right action must accompany faith, or there is no Living Faith. Again, righteousness or right action can only be present, where there is faith. And, True Faith can only be present where there is Right Action. This reflection only highlights that Righteousness is God's Power "which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Philippians 2:13).

Righteousness and us do not seem to fit in the same sentence. The depravity of man is so complete, we can understand Bildad, a friend of Job, saying, "How then can a mortal be righteous before God? How can one born of woman be pure?" (Job 25:4 NIV). Though I do not believe humanity was born with a naturally sinful nature, sin is so familiar and easy to all, I understand that faulty explanation being given for sinning. But, the Original Sinner, who was Lucifer, did not need a naturally sinful nature to commit the first sin. Once Adam and Eve

committed the first human sin, they incurred physical and spiritual death, for Yahweh promised, “But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” (Genesis 2:17). They died spiritually, until Yahweh covered their sin with what depicts the first blood sacrifice, though He was not sacrificing to Himself. “Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them” (Genesis 3:21). God kept His Word, and their physical bodies began to decline, decay, and die immediately after they sinned. When we give in to our flesh to do what our flesh wants, but not what God wants, that is when we sin. “Thou shalt not commit adultery” (Exodus 20:14). Righteousness is the right action of doing or not doing what God desires and commands.

The Lord Jesus Christ fulfilled the OT prophecy about the Breastplate of Righteousness. “For He put on righteousness as a breastplate, and an helmet of salvation upon His head; and He put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloak” (Isaiah 59:17). All of Christ’s life was a demonstration of righteousness, even letting John the Baptist baptize Him. “Jesus replied, Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness. Then John consented” (Matthew 3:15 NIV). His anger with the money changers in the Temple was righteousness. “And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves” (Matthew 21:12). When Jesus promoted

the Kingdom of God to the outcasts, He was demonstrating righteousness. “For John came to you to show you the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes did. And even after you saw this, you did not repent and believe him” (21:32 NIV). Whenever Christ made choices contrary to society’s understanding of righteousness, such as declaring those who obey the Father to be as important as family, He was practicing righteousness. “My mother and my brethren are these which hear the word of God, and do it” (Luke 8:21).

Since Jesus was the Righteous One (Acts 3:14²⁷; 7:52²⁸; 22:14²⁹ NIV), anyone who walks “even as He walked” (1John 2:6) will walk righteously:

(1) In humility, like Christ. “And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross” (Philippians 2:8).

(2) With restraint, like Christ. “Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He shall presently give Me more than twelve legions of angels?” (Matthew 26:53).

²⁷ “But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you” (Acts 3:14).

²⁸ “Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers” (Acts 7:52).

²⁹ “The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of His mouth” (Acts 22:14).

(3) In love, like Christ. “And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour” (Ephesians 5:2).

If righteousness is right choosing resulting in right moral action, with the understanding that only the Spirit of God can cause us to will and to act correctly, then righteousness is evidence of walking in step with the Holy Spirit. This is true of us, and it was demonstrated by Christ’s righteous life on earth, as He walked in the Spirit. To be “led by the Spirit” (Romans 8:14) is to “walk by the Spirit” (Galatians 5:16 NIV) or to “keep in step with the Spirit” (5:25 NIV). If we belong to Christ, we have His Spirit. “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission [forgiveness] of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:38). “And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in Him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit” (Ephesians 1:13 NIV).

To summarize the use of the Breastplate of Righteousness — remember — righteousness is right choosing, caused by the Holy Spirit’s leading, usually through Scripture, resulting in right moral action, where we are treated by God as if we had the Righteousness of Christ.

Chapter 11 - Foot Protection of the Preparation of the Gospel of Peace

“Feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace”
(Ephesians 6:15).

“How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!” (Isaiah 52:7). Any who understand the benefit of good shoes realize a soldier for Christ will accomplish more and tire less with appropriate footwear. “And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace” (Ephesians 6:15). The question is, do the shoes ready us to receive or give the Gospel of Peace? Evidently, Paul thought it was to give the Gospel. “4 For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. 14 How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? 15 And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things” (Romans 10:4, 14-15).

Isaiah indicates the Messiah’s feet are “beautiful” because they “bring good tidings [the Gospel], who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion,

Thy God reigneth!” (Isaiah 52:7). Was the Messiah supposed to start a new religion, a variant perceived departure from Judaism? Or, was it as Jeremiah prophesied, “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 an 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, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be My people” (Jeremiah 31:31-33). If the New Covenant was announced for Israel and Judah, exactly where do the Gentiles ‘fit in’ claiming it as their New Testament (NT)? In the Isaiah 52 passage, Isaiah asserts, “The LORD hath made bare His holy arm in the eyes of all the nations” (Isaiah 52:10a), which should indicate to thoughtful Israelites God’s intention of making Himself known to the world, not just to Israel. Only an Israelite mindset fixated on itself would insist Israel was the totality of Jehovah’s concern. After all, God promised Abraham to be “the father of a multitude of nations” (Genesis 17:4 ESV) long before there was an Israel. What Israel forgot, when they pursued other gods, Jehovah would not long tolerate their unfaithfulness before He would raise up the Gentiles, whose salvation “would make Israel jealous” (Romans 11:11 NET). Wasn’t that what the LORD told Moses? “They made Me jealous by what is no god and angered Me with their worthless idols. I will make them envious by those

who are not a people; I will make them angry by a nation that has no understanding” (Deuteronomy 32:21 NIV). Likewise, the NT Church would do well not to neglect its means of sanctification, e.g., the Spirit, the Word, and prayer, since we have already been warned by Jesus that the Millennium, the New Heavens, and the New Earth will be preceded by a time on earth like the “days of Noah” (Matthew 24:37 NIV), where “many will turn away from the faith” (24:10 NIV). ***Christianity that remains Christianity must always find the connection between doctrine and faith and practice, or it will cease to be True Christianity.*** Continue as Paul to “fight the good fight of faith” (1Timothy 6:12) until the LORD takes us Home. He will sort out the details. “Thou maintainest my lot” (Psalm 16:5).

How did Christianity transform from traditional Judaism?

(1) Was Christianity intended to be a new religion? No, Christianity was initially only the Pentecostal fulfillment of Yahweh’s promise to Israel: “I will put My Spirit in you and move you to follow My decrees and be careful to keep My laws” (Ezekiel 36:27 NIV). “Christian” was only a name, probably devised by non-Christian Greeks to describe those who followed Christ. R. C. H. Lenski’s *Interpretation of the Acts of the Apostles* (1934) cites the following concerning the Christian name: “‘Christian’ appears twice more in the New Testament

[outside of the cited Acts 11:26³⁰ passage], in [Acts] 26:28³¹, and in 1Peter 4:16³², each time as a name that was given to disciples by others. Since the name was derived from ‘Christ,’ the Greek word for ‘Messiah,’ it is certain that the disciples got this name in Antioch and not from the Jews who would never have connected the Messiah with the disciples either in a derogatory or in any other way. The Greeks invented this name.”

(2) Concerning the timing of the first use of the name “Christian” (Acts 11:26), Lenski thinks this was about 43-44 AD, so Christianity had already existed more than a decade without a sectarian name since the crucifixion of Christ (AD 32, Sir Robert Anderson’s *The Coming Prince*). Finally, in Antioch, the followers of “this way” (Acts 9:2) were openly identified as Christians. “And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch” (Acts 11:26). Lenski believes Saul of Tarsus, the future Paul the Apostle to the Gentiles, was converted about 35 AD and ended up in Antioch teaching the faith he once destroyed, about the time the name Christian was first used. So, ten years after the Crucifixion and Resurrection of Christ, and still, the movement did not have a distinctive name, until outsiders offered the name Christian.

³⁰ “And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch” (Acts 11:26).

³¹ “Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian” (Acts 26:28).

³² “Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf” (1Peter 4:16).

(3) After the Resurrection, the pattern was to start in Jerusalem, then proceed outward. “But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8). But, it was not clear to many minds among the disciples that you did not first have to become a Jew to then become a Christian.

(4) The Apostle Paul habitually connected with the local synagogue, when he began his missionary work in outlying regions. “And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God” (Acts 9:20).

(5) The conversion of Cornelius, the Roman centurion, sparked the movement and understanding of the broader outreach of the Early Church beyond Judaism. Here, Peter realizes the Gentiles would become part of the faithful. “Then Peter began to speak: I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts from every nation the one who fears Him and does what is right” (Acts 10:34-35 NIV).

(6) The Jews rejection of Paul’s preaching about the Messiah confirmed the need to reach out to the Gentiles beyond the synagogues; but, Paul never lost focus on the need to reach his fellow Israelite³³. “Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have

³³ “Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved” (Romans 10:1).

been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth” (Acts 13:46-47).

(7) Finally, what was clear to Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles, had to be agreed upon by the leaders at Jerusalem at the Jerusalem Council. The Judaizers had to be refuted, and the followers of the Way needed to understand they had irrevocably embraced the New Covenant³⁴, while the traditional Jews could not see beyond the Old Covenant. “And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved” (Acts 15:1). James, Jesus’ younger half-brother, spoke for the leadership of the disciples. “After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom My name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things. Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world [Amos 9:11-12 LXX]. Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God: But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood” (Acts 15:16-20). Thus,

³⁴ “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” (Jeremiah 31:31).

the movement now had a name, Christian; and, Christianity had no more connection with the OT ceremonial law. The Roman destruction of the Temple in 70 AD would further separate any discussion of OT ceremonial law from Christian practice. But, the issue of faith³⁵ and works is legitimately discussed today nearly 2,000 years later.

The current falling away from the churches of Professed Christianity in America (2023) indicates disciples who fill the pews of the vast array of churches do not have the heart nor understanding of the Early Church's message of the Gospel of Peace. We see especially the disillusionment of the younger people toward what they think is True Christianity, because they view the Christian Religion of those still attending church as dysfunctional, unreliable, and hypocritical. Certainly Professed Christianity does not necessarily possess a "faith which worketh by love" (Galatians 5:6). How can the so-called faith of the Bible be true, when confronted by the superior science of evolution, the superior understanding of sociology and psychology, the superior understanding of human sexuality, the superior understanding of economic and political equality? Why do we need the Bible, if we still have to adjust it to the superior understanding of man's knowledge?

Do you think the Church is under attack by the Wicked One?

³⁵ "8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Is this the type of struggle prophesied by Christ: “When the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?” (Luke 18:8).

If the Church does not rediscover the Truths of Christianity, it will forfeit its right to exist in a generation.

What is the Gospel of Peace? The Good News is God has graciously provided us the forgiveness of our sins and eternal life through **Believing Loyalty** in what Jesus Christ did on the Cross without the addition of any of our good works to persuade God to save us. “But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8).

“That which cannot be earned by moral perfection cannot be lost by moral imperfection” (Michael Heiser).

Believing Loyalty is faith which operates by love, a faith which works for God, since we have switched our allegiance to God’s side. And, can we now sin without remorse and with complete abandon? “What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life” (Romans 6:1-4).

However, I would add, we do lose something when we sin. We lose the fellowship of God's Spirit (1John 1:6³⁶), who testifies with our spirit that we are a child of God (Romans 8:16³⁷). Intellectually, I remember what I did; but, the Spirit withholds His assurance and testimony (John 15:6³⁸), while I abide in my sin. Remember, I may be intellectually self-assured about still being saved, while I am indulging in sin. But, that is not the same thing as the Holy Spirit assuring me of my sonship. "No one can serve two masters" (Matthew 6:24; Luke 16:13 NIV). When we do not understand and treat this carefully, we will end up devaluing holy living, in the name of grace, i.e., Antinomianism. Or, we will incorrectly overvalue our good works, as if they will still somehow recommend us to God.

To summarize the use of the Foot Protection of the Preparation of the Gospel of Peace, it is the readiness to make known the Gospel of Peace as a finished work of God made for the forgiveness of our sins without the addition of any of our good works and resulting in Eternal Life through Believing Loyalty to Jesus Christ to whom we have now sworn our allegiance.

³⁶ "If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth" (1John 1:6).

³⁷ "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God" (Romans 8:16).

³⁸ "If a man abide not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned." (John 15:6).

Listen to Michael Heiser's explanation of what is the true meaning of the Gospel (43:43).

Chapter 12 - Shield of Faith

“The shield of faith” (Ephesians 6:16).

“Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked” (Ephesians 6:16).

Defensive armor is the protection necessary to keep the enemy from maiming or destroying us. Faith is confidence in God, who protects us. “Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward” (Genesis 15:1). Jesus used His confidence in the Father to protect, shield, and preserve Himself from the enemy. Initially, we may look at the amazing escapes of Jesus from the Jews as, ‘Of course, He’s the Son of God, and He can accomplish those incredible getaways.’ But, we would be forgetting Christ’s absolute trust, confidence, and dependence upon the Father to accomplish everything, i.e., “I can of Mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and My judgment is just; because I seek not Mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent Me” (John 5:30). Satan confronts us that Christ was not protected from dying with great suffering on the Cross; but, we should remind ourselves, Jesus “set [His] face like flint” (Isaiah 50:7 NIV) resolutely to sacrifice Himself on the Cross to atone for the sins of all humanity — a masterful plan. If we were to take the same position of faith with the Father as Christ did, then we could employ the same defensive results Jesus did with the Shield of Faith, which was His faith or confidence that the Father would protect Him — the best defensive strategy possible

for Spiritual Warfare. “And He said, My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest” (Exodus 33:14).

Let us examine a handful of times in the deliverance of Christ, Jesus was delivered from His fellow Jews, which should instruct our behavior.

(1) Jesus began His earthly ministry at Nazareth with unspectacular results. They “rose up, and thrust Him out of the city, and led Him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast Him down headlong. But He passing through the midst of them went His way” (Luke 4:29-30). Their response to His first sermon — they tried to kill Him! And, in the deliverance of Christ, we are like Him — untouchable until the Father is ready to take us Home. This would repeat itself later, when they sought to lay hands on Him another time for indicating He was the Messiah. “Then they sought to take Him: but no man laid hands on Him, because His hour was not yet come” (John 7:30). You will notice in the context of Jesus’ sermon to His fellow citizens of Nazareth that He used the example of two Gentiles — the widow woman of Sarepta (Luke 4:26³⁹) and Naaman the Syrian (4:27⁴⁰) — both as examples of faith in God. He did what Moses prophesied, “I will make them angry by a nation [the Gentiles] that has no

³⁹ “But unto none of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow” (Luke 4:26).

⁴⁰ “And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian” (Luke 4:27).

understanding” (Deuteronomy 32:21 NIV). To what end did He risk His life pointing out God’s favoring these Gentiles with such a story? Paul understood it. “If somehow I could provoke my people to jealousy and save some of them” (Romans 11:14 NET). Jealousy was only a tool to get the attention of Israel; and, it would only be used to “save some of them.” But, even after all the times Paul was abused by his countrymen, Paul thought it worth it! “For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh” (Romans 9:3). The Shield of Confidence or Faith in God delivers us, but Jesus’ final appointment on the Cross testifies that we will not be delivered by the Shield of Faith, when it will accomplish more good for it not to be so — deliverance only when better alive than dead. “Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord” (Revelation 14:13).

(2) Testifying about Christ will require the Shield of Faith to deliver from the inevitable weapons of the wicked. And, those weapons may not always be metaphorical. Simple and innocent sharing about Jesus might not seem like Spiritual Warfare, but taking ground from the enemy by releasing captives is war. “When He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men” (Ephesians 4:8). Jesus repeatedly showed us the necessity for Divine Protection, when giving out the Gospel, for the enemy never is truly in favor of the Gospel Message. “Then took they up stones to cast at Him: but Jesus hid Himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by” (John 8:59). Jesus’ deliverance

was not accidental nor a special case because He is the Son of God. In the context of John 8, Jesus was claiming one of the special names of Yahweh — “I am” (John 8:58). That truth, which was necessary, was blasphemous to the Jews, and it would certainly provoke them to anger — which was unavoidable. Still, because of His pointing out unconventional truth, the future eventually gave us the conversion of Saul of Tarsus, which vindicates His strategy of preaching an unpopular message. The Way of Life was always understood to be for the few, though it is freely offered to the many. “Because strait [small] is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it” (Matthew 7:14).

(3) Jesus did not face persecution for His good works but for adding to His good works testimony about Himself. “For a good work we stone Thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that Thou, being a man, makest Thyself God” (John 10:33). The world will not oppose us for meeting their needs through good works, but for adding our testimony about Jesus. To be sure, we need help to perform the good work, but we need Divine Protection to add our witness for Jesus. “But if I do, though ye believe not Me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in Me, and I in Him. Therefore they sought again to take Him: but He escaped out of their hand” (John 10:38-39). The Skid Row Rescue Mission, the Half Way House, the Homeless Shelter, Orphan Homes, Christian Schools, or Missionary Medical Clinics, all protect the physical needs of their people, but all desire the lasting good of the greater

protection of the Immortal Soul. Only what is done in demonstration of the truthfulness of the Way of Love will have any true success for the world. “Every tree is known by his own fruit” (Luke 6:44).

Think of the Shield of Faith as the Divine Protection that preserves us until our life’s work is accomplished and our otherworldly testimony for Jesus is completed. Remember, the Shield of Faith only works, if the Holy Spirit has taught you from the Scriptures that it exists, and you use it to accomplish its purpose of protecting you until your life’s work is done.

As a possible example of protection until the end of our life’s work, Timothy Keller wrote *American Christianity Is Due For A Revival* in *The Atlantic* (February 5, 2023):

“Langdon Gilkey was a young man in China during World War II and was confined to an Japanese-run internment camp, as he recounts in *Shantung Compound* [name of Gilkey’s book]. Also imprisoned with him was Eric Liddell, the former Olympic star and missionary to China whose story inspired the film *Chariots of Fire*. Gilkey, who was not a Christian believer when he was interned, is honest about how the many missionaries in the cramped and difficult conditions of the camp not only behaved in selfish and ungenerous ways, but often added sanctimonious rationales for their behavior. Liddell, however, stood out. He poured himself out for others and was overflowing with humor,

kindness, and an unmistakable inner peace. When Liddell died suddenly of a brain tumor, all mourned.”

“A good name is more desirable than great riches; to be esteemed is better than silver or gold [Olympic Medals]” (Proverbs 22:1 NIV).

(4) Miraculous protection may accompany the use of the Shield of Faith, as it did for Jesus of Nazareth. No death until Christ completed His Crosswork was prophesied for the Messiah. “As soon then as He had said unto them, I am He, they went backward, and fell to the ground. Then asked He them again, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth” (John 18:6-7). Notice the power in the very name I AM (18:6) was protecting our Lord. Like our Messiah, we are preserved until the Father has completed His work through us until our departure from this earthly realm.

The Psalmist prophetically depicted the circumstances of the Messiah’s death.

“12 Many bulls have compassed me: strong bulls of Bashan [demons from the gates of hell] have beset me round [like the scene in *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* where Aslan is killed]. 13 They gaped upon me with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion. 14 I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels [within me]. 15 My strength is dried up like

a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death. 16 For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet. 17 I may tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me. 18 They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture” (Psalm 22:12-18).

The Shield of Faith protects:

(1) We are shielded by God’s power through faith. “Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time” (1Peter 1:5).

(2) We are shielded or preserved from sinning, if you can believe that. “And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1Thessalonians 5:23).

(3) We are protected and shielded from the evil one. How much worse would it be, if He did not? “But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil” (2Thessalonians 3:3).

(4) The LORD must be the one who is doing the guarding, protecting, and shielding, or we seek protection in vain. “Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it:

except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain” (Psalm 127:1).

(5) The Everlasting God is our Shield and Refuge. “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble” (Psalm 46:1).

(6) The Shield of Faith will never depart from us, unless we quit trusting the LORD. “There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee” (Joshua 1:5).

(7) Our Father will not even allow our foot to spiritually slip. The question is not what He is capable and willing to do, but how far are we willing to trust Him? “He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber” (Psalm 121:3).

For more on “Protection,” see Torrey’s *New Topical Textbook*. And remember, anytime we wrestle with the LORD, as Jacob did with Jehovah, when we hold God to His Word — which He loves — we are obtaining a promise from Him. “I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me” (Genesis 32:26).

To summarize the use of the Shield of Faith, it is protection from sin and the enemy, where God has promised to keep us until our journey ends, if we can receive it.

Chapter 13 - Helmet of Salvation

“The helmet of salvation” (Ephesians 6:17).

Paul understood the Helmet of Salvation as the understanding of our hope of salvation. “But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation” (1Thessalonians 5:8). Our Messiah, likewise, put the “helmet of salvation upon his head; and he put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloak” (Isaiah 59:17). All of this He did for us because He knew salvation comes only from the LORD. For us, a helmet represents our understanding of why, who, what, and how we are saved.

First, why do we need to be saved?

(1) Humanity only expresses a sense of needing to be saved from anything, when overwhelmed by something external or even from within. Externally, a thief or assailant could assault us; or, internally, we could have a formidable health issue. Spiritual Salvation is needed, when we sin against God and man. As much as our consciousness senses our deficiencies, God holds us accountable for our transgression of not seeking His interests foremost, then our failure to uphold the good of our neighbor as ourselves. “36 Master, which is the great commandment in the law? 37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul,

and with all thy mind. 38 This is the first and great commandment. 39 And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. 40 On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets” (Matthew 22:36-40).

(2) Failure to do or not do what God commands, when we are capable of doing so, is sin. “Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law” (1John 3:4). For this reason, Scripture informs us: “As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:10, 23). Man is completely capable of being labeled a sinner without the need of being born with a naturally sinful nature. Sin and not righteousness is more common upon the earth. “For there is not one truly righteous person on the earth who continually does good and never sins” (Ecclesiastes 7:20 NET). Jesus taught us daily to confess our sins for forgiveness, not that we *must* sin every day, but that we would daily seek to walk in a forgiven state. “3 Give us day by day our daily bread. 4 And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil” (Luke 11:3-4). Further, our prayer is — or, should be — ‘Father, place us not in tempting circumstances, where we might sin.’ Again, not that we will avoid all such tests and circumstances, but that we would reduce those testings to a greater likelihood of passing our tests. ***Temptation to sin may not always be impossible, but it must become more improbable.***

Second, who saves us?

(1) Before we find the answer to ‘who saves us,’ we must consider ‘Saves us from what consequence of sin?’ Death is the consequence of sin. If we do not exist, then we have no concerns or consequences. But, as René Descartes stated, “I think, therefore I am,” then our existence must deal with death as the consequence of sin. “For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Romans 6:23). Under the Old Covenant, death was mandated for the one who sins. “The soul that sinneth, it shall die” (Ezekiel 18:4). Human consciousness understands all will eventually die. Death is part of our existence. Death may be used to sell health care plans, cemetery plots, and life insurance; and, it may also be exploited to build religious empires for charlatans preying upon peoples’ fear of the unknown. Everyone has their own concerns about death, but we all will stand before God and give account for our lives. “But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment” (Matthew 12:36). We best give the response Paul gave. “So I strive always to keep my conscience clear before God and man” (Acts 24:16 NIV).

(2) Who can save us from our sins? If, as David implored of Yahweh concerning his adultery with Bathsheba and murder of her husband Uriah, “Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight: that Thou mightest be justified when Thou speakest, and be clear when Thou judgest” (Psalm 51:4),

then only God the Most High has the ability to save us from our sins. If sin is not arbitrarily anything God may not like at whim, then Jehovah must abide by the same precept He mandates for all. “That be far from Thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked: and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from Thee: Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?” (Genesis 18:25). In order to validate His Law, He cannot set it aside without fulfilling its righteous demands — “The soul that sinneth, it shall die” (Ezekiel 18:20). He did this by substituting the suffering of the Sinless Messiah on the Cross — “For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit” (1Peter 3:18). But, how could the Messiah make such a one for one substitution, if there is only one of Him, more than one of us, and “through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all” (Hebrews 10:10)?

Public Justice versus Retributive Justice explains how the Substitutionary Atonement of the Gospel works.

We have seen that our good works are incapable and unnecessary of saving us (Ephesians 2:8-9⁴¹; Titus 3:5⁴²). A Retributive Justice would allow only one atonement to be applied to one sinner. “Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for

⁴¹ “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast” (Ephesians 2:8-9).

⁴² “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost” (Titus 3:5).

hand, foot for foot” (Exodus 21:24). A Public Justice would allow God’s perfect law to be satisfied, not by a one-for-one punishment of an innocent for the guilty, but through the *suffering* of His Beloved Son to gain the justification of an untold number of sinners who believe, while still “He will magnify the law, and make it honourable” (Isaiah 42:21). With Retributive Justice, there is too much sin and not enough punishment for one atonement. But, with Public Justice, the Righteous LORD preserves respect for the punishment demanded by His law, while gaining the hearts and admiration of sinners for making such a magnanimous offer of forgiveness to those who repent and believe. “Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation [sacrifice of atonement] through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that He might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus” (Romans 3:25-26).

Charles G. Finney gives a much fuller 19th century explanation of Public Justice vs. Retributive Justice in the Atonement.

Third, what and how are we saved?

(1) Jesus. Jesus alone saves us. All said, who or what are we trusting to take us home to Heaven? Jesus. “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). God alone knows our heart. He knows our supreme heart

preference. Our intellect may be confused, and our understanding may be disorganized; but, God alone knows the “thoughts and intents of the heart” (Hebrews 4:12). That which increases our confidence in God is good because it saves us first of all, then sanctifies us. “But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him” (Hebrews 11:6). In the end, we stake our eternal destiny upon a relationship begun with our Savior delivering us from the penalty of sin and continuing with our Sanctifier aiding us in overcoming the effects of sin. “Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen Him, neither known Him” (1John 3:6).

(2) Works. Self-righteous works deceive us and cannot in any way save us. “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost” (Titus 3:5). However, the works of faith — that demonstrate we are trusting Him and nothing or no one else — not only saves us, but are absolutely necessary to be saved. “What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?” (James 2:14). The works of faith are any deeds consistent with trusting God. “Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect [complete]? And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and

it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only” (James 2:21-24). The only works that must be avoided at all cost are the faithless, self-justifying, selfish works because they represent a self-seeking, heart confidence in achieving our salvation. “But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:) Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved” (Romans 10:6-9). By the way, Penitent David in Psalm 51 represents an unselfish heart, not justifying his sinful actions, and seeking cleansing from a Righteous God against whom he had rebelled. That is the righteous works of repentance from sin. “Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow” (Psalm 51:7).

(3) Grace and Faith. *Grace saves us*. “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men” (Titus 2:11). **Grace is the all important help of God for everything we need, not just for salvation.** “Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need” (Hebrews 4:16). The complete nature of God giving man a second chance is a program of grace. “But

none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God” (Acts 20:24). Kindness to us from God is the wonderful evidence of His grace. Not so strangely, scoffers are unable to sense His kindness, since they adamantly refuse His help (grace). “That in the ages to come He might shew the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus” (Ephesians 2:7). Though we would never do anything to promote sin, it is good to know that God’s grace is far more abounding than the sum total of all the deepest, darkest sins put together that engulf the Earth! “Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound” (Romans 5:20). Grace is so easily given by God, it runs great risk of being abused by man. “For certain individuals whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord” (Jude 1:4 NIV). God’s grace will be most evident to the world at the time of His help and deliverance, when Christ returns. “Therefore, with minds that are alert and fully sober, set your hope on the grace to be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed at His coming” (1Peter 1:13 NIV). Just as “grace and truth” (John 1:14) were personified to the world by Christ at His First Coming, He will again demonstrate grace or help, when He delivers His embattled Saints at His Second Coming. “5 Which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye

also suffer: 6 Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; 7 And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, 8 In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: 9 Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power; 10 When He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day” (2Thessalonians 1:5-10).

Faith saves us. “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house” (Acts 16:31). “Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses” (Acts 13:38-39). But, you notice, faith in God is a recurrent theme throughout all Scripture. “The just shall live by his faith” (Habakkuk 2:4). It is quite understandable why faith is most often cited as the condition of salvation, because it is given so often in Scripture; but, you also notice, it can never be inconsistent with any other instruction to be saved. “38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. 39 For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the LORD our God shall call” (Acts 2:38-39). For this

reason, one of the most beloved Scriptures of the Gospel cites faith in Christ as key to the solution to our problem with Eternal Death. “For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16 NIV). Faith, in particular, in Christ produces Eternal Life. “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me hath everlasting life” (John 6:47).

NOTICE: *Whatever answer NT Scripture gives us about what saves us, it is something that involves Jesus. And, it always takes the focus off ourselves. Jesus is the essence of our deliverance, and self is the crux of our problem.* For this very reason, great caution should be used in *using faith only as the sole condition for salvation*, since it may indicate the soul winner is more giving a stock answer, instead of a thoughtful diagnosis of the sinner’s problem. Take for example, Jesus’ instruction to the rich, young man — who, evidently put great stock in his possessions — to sell his possessions and give to the poor. “21 Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow Me. 22 But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions” (Matthew 19:21-22). He valued his possessions more than his commitment to God. Jesus knew it because He is the Son of God.

It would be beneficial to discuss grace and faith together, because they are so intertwined in achieving our salvation. “For

by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast” (Ephesians 2:8-9). Grace and faith. God gives it, but you must exercise it. Like sleep, God “giveth His beloved sleep” (Psalm 127:2), but you must go to bed to get that sleep. The Father works, and I work (John 5:17⁴³). Any action of our will must be understood in light of God’s gracious handiwork. “For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure” (Philippians 2:13). We would say with C. H. Spurgeon, Salvation is *All of Grace*, for we are comprehending more and more God’s gracious role in salvation as so encompassing our past, present, and future, that there would not be even be the slightest thought of salvation without His grace. “If God be for us, who can be against us?” (Romans 8:31). And further agreeing with Spurgeon, *The Soul Winner* (Proverbs 11:30 KJV⁴⁴) is necessary because the sinner’s agreement must be won; therefore, God’s Providence and the working of His Spirit makes possible our faith and submission to Him. “Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else” (Isaiah 45:22). Simply put, faith is confidence in God. “Now faith is confidence [Greek, *hupostasis*, substance, evidence, confidence] in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see” (Hebrews 11:1 NIV). God’s grace stirs us to confidence in Him. Obviously, the actions of an Unlimited God in our salvation eclipse the necessary but

⁴³ “My Father worketh hitherto, and I work” (John 5:17).

⁴⁴ “The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise” (Proverbs 11:30).

paltry works of faith by man, and even those works are possible only through His Spirit working in us. “And I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes, and ye shall keep My judgments, and do them” (Ezekiel 36:27).

(4) Repentance. Repentance is often thought of as a radical change of mind, where the sinner takes sides with God against himself. John the Baptist indicated as much. “Produce fruit in keeping with repentance [Greek, *metanoia*, change of mind]” (Matthew 3:8 NIV). Only the Holy Spirit can accomplish such a change. The difference between a heaven sent change and a temporary change is seen by whether the change lasts to the end. “For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death” (2Corinthians 7:10). We should treat people according to their conduct, not simply by what they say. Jesus said, “Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them” (Matthew 7:20). Even those who declare themselves disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ are hypocrites, if “they do not practice what they preach” (Matthew 23:3 NIV). To de-emphasize repentance is to minimize the rebellion of sin against a Holy God. If holiness is our set apartness from sin and the world, then repentance of sin is the restoration of a holy relationship with God. “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature [creation]: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (2Corinthians 5:17).

(5) Confession and Baptism. *Confession saves us*. “That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved” (Romans 10:9). *Baptism saves us*. “The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ” (1Peter 3:21). Any doctrinal claim that baptism or confession saves us, which does not qualify its position with the understanding, of course, it is Jesus that does the saving (Acts 4:12⁴⁵), is invalid and unscriptural. Confession of the Lordship of Jesus Christ is most often given at the time of baptism of converted sinners. Baptism would be a *Loyalty Oath* of Allegiance to Christ. Why would we admit the necessity of faith, works (of faith), repentance, and confession (of Jesus as lord) as conditions of salvation; yet, would maintain baptism as recommended but optional? Church History witnesses the understanding of the Church that baptism was considered necessary for the salvation experience of the New Testament convert up to the time of the Reformation. Uhlrich Zwingli (1484-1531), the Protestant Reformation leader in Switzerland, hotly debated Martin Luther (1483-1546) about Christ’s presence in the Lord’s Supper — Luther contended Christ was present in the Eucharist [not so good for Luther] vs. Zwingli, who argued Christ was not present [good for Zwingli] — and, he differed with Luther on the lack of necessity of baptism to be

⁴⁵ “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

saved, i.e., too much like Catholicism. The Just Shall Live By Faith Luther championed the priority of faith over the sacerdotalism of the Roman Catholic Church for salvation, leading to the famous breakaway from Catholicism. Yet, *Luther maintained baptism was necessary for salvation, because baptism was not man's work but God's*. Today, Mainstream Evangelical Christianity agrees with Zwingli on the lack of necessity of baptism as a condition of salvation. The Restoration Movement of early 19th Century America restored baptism as a necessary condition of salvation, as seen typically in the *Church of Christ* at present. They view the point of salvation from sin as the moment of baptism, i.e., “For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ” (Galatians 3:27). Yet, they would admit faith had to come before baptism, for they would never baptize an unbeliever. Like most controversies within Professed Christendom, e.g., Historic Preterism⁴⁶ vs. Pre-Tribulational Rapture Eschatology⁴⁷, the question of when to interpret Scripture literally or figuratively, makes fertile ground for heated accusations of heresy, and yet another splitting away of disciple from disciple. “When the Son of man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?” (Luke 18:8). The Indulgences protested by Luther’s *Ninety-five Theses* (1517) against Roman Catholicism were appropriately argued against, since no amount

⁴⁶ Historic preterism considers the Last Days prophecies to be essentially fulfilled in the first century AD, especially upon the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 AD, and taking issue with an overly literal approach to interpreting the Scriptures.

⁴⁷ Pre-tribulational rapture eschatology views Daniel’s Seventieth Week (Daniel 9:27) as a future seven year period revealing the Antichrist, but preceded by the Rapture or harpazō of the Church — Christ’s betrothed Bride (1Thessalonians 4:17) — then banqueting at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb (Revelation 19:9), and completing with the Return or Second Coming of Christ (1:7; 22:20).

of money can buy God (Acts 8:20⁴⁸) or the full or partial remission of the punishment of sins. When Judaism could not be transformed, it — not Israel — would be superseded; hence, we now have the NT Christian Church. Likewise, Roman Catholicism, if it could not be reformed, it would be bypassed by Protestantism. And, if Protestantism cannot be revitalized, God will always find a way for His Will to be done “in earth, as it is in heaven” (Matthew 6:10).

To summarize the use of the Helmet of Salvation, it is the understanding of what, how, and why Jesus saves us from our sins that equips us to give out the Gospel, as well as prepares us for Heaven.

⁴⁸ “But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money” (Acts 8:20).

Chapter 14 - Sword of the Spirit — the Word of God

“The sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God” (Ephesians 6:17).

The effect of Truth upon others, especially those who will become converted, is the prime motivation for the Sword of the Spirit. Our Messiah speaks of His preparation by Jehovah. “And He hath made My mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of His hand hath He hid Me, and made Me a polished shaft; in His quiver hath He hid Me” (Isaiah 49:2). With all our armament, our main offensive weapon is the “Sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God” (Ephesians 6:17). *Regardless of whether or not anyone else realizes we are using Scripture, God knows, and the results will become manifest.*

Jesus is the Consummate Spiritual Warrior with the offensive weapon of the Sword of the Spirit. His very person was identified by John as the Word. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (John 1:1). Every action of His life was the expression of living Scripture rightly. Who should ever be offended by the Word of God, when it is lived rightly? To be offended by God’s Word is to take your position as an enemy of God. We must be careful, when handling God’s Word, because we can easily bring people into opposition to God, if we do not discover the best way to make it understandable. Though we strive not to offend, “it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence

cometh” (Matthew 18:7). And, Jesus offended a lot of people, including His disciples. “Many therefore of His disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it? When Jesus knew in Himself that His disciples murmured at it, He said unto them, Doth this offend you?” (John 6:60-61). The difference between Jesus offending (Matthew 18:7) and the one upon whom He pronounced a woe for offending (John 6) is He offended to deliver captives from the enemy, while the enemy offends to take captives. A weapon can be used for great ill, or the same weapon can be used for great good.

The First Coming of Jesus the Messiah was as the Word of God appearing as the Sacrificial Lamb of God to save the world. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 29 The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:1, 29). When Jesus the Messiah returns at His Second Coming, He will come again as the Word of God, but this time arrayed in the Armor of God ready to do battle and judge the fallen lesser gods of His Divine Council. “And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns; and He had a name written, that no man knew, but He Himself. And He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and His name is called The Word of God” (Revelation 19:11-13). The Sword of the Spirit will be the predominate feature of His Return, for He

comes to execute judgment on the nations. “And the armies which were in heaven followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations: and He shall rule them with a rod of iron: and He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God” (Revelation 19:14-15). He does not return, as a meek and lowly sacrifice, but as a Conquering Warrior Judge.

Why would we need an offensive weapon to advance the Gospel? Are we trying to defeat sinners or convert them? What is the nature of this war? What is the effect upon the enemy?

First, why would we need an offensive weapon to advance the Gospel?

Christianity is not a religion without opposition. Ancient Christianity faced the hostility of all the indigenous, pagan traditions, as well as, an antagonism from traditional Judaism. The Apostle Paul faced the outrage of the idol worshipping Ephesians of Asia Minor (modern day Türkiye). “For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, which made silver shrines for Diana, brought no small gain unto the craftsmen; Whom he called together with the workmen of like occupation, and said, Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth. Moreover ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they be no gods, which are made with hands: So that

not only this our craft is in danger to be set at nought; but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth. And when they heard these sayings, they were full of wrath, and cried out, saying, Great is Diana [in Roman culture, Artemis in Greek culture] of the Ephesians!” (Acts 19:24-28).

But, most often Paul was first caught by his fellow Jews, who were offended by their need to embrace Jesus as the long promised Messiah (Acts 17:1-5⁴⁹; 9:20⁵⁰; 13:5, 14⁵¹). “But the Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company, and set all the city on an uproar, and assaulted the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people” (Acts 17:5).

By opposition, we commonly think of angry, local inhabitants, which would be true, because local customs were at odds with the Gospel message, e.g., Ephesus, Demetrius, and Diana of the

⁴⁹ “1 Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews: 2 And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures, 3 Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ. 4 And some of them believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few. 5 But the Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company, and set all the city on an uproar, and assaulted the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people” (Acts 17:1-5).

⁵⁰ “And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God” (Acts 9:20).

⁵¹ “5 And when they were at Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews: and they had also John to their minister. 14 But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and sat down” (Acts 13:5, 14).

Ephesians (Acts 19). Even more, we would envisage Satan as the primary adversary, which certainly would be accurate, since he views all humans as part of his domain (Matthew 4:8-9⁵²).

Satanic opposition:

(1) Our adversary is not all powerful, but he is certainly godlike — the most accomplished adversary in existence, whose forte is lies, rebellion, and disobedience. “Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience” (Ephesians 2:2).

(2) Satan blinds us to the truth, for he must do so to prevent the more obvious understanding that the glory belongs to God alone, not him. “In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them” (2Corinthians 4:4).

(3) The Devil deceives the whole world with a false reality of his superiority and inevitability as the master of the universe. “And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast

⁵² “8 Again, the devil taketh Him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth Him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; 9 And saith unto Him, All these things will I give thee, if Thou wilt fall down and worship me” (Matthew 4:8-9).

out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him”
(Revelation 12:9).

(4) Even the Elect would be deceived, if it were possible, by the Deceiver, he is so accomplished at lying. “For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect” (Matthew 24:24).

To see demons as our opposition is agreeable to what missionaries throughout the ages have felt and understood about the perils and difficulties of their Gospel enterprises, because all demons understand their essential hostility to Yahweh, *since it is not a matter of if they will be judged, only when*. “And when He was come to the other side into the country of the Gergesenes, there met Him two possessed with devils, coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way. And, behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with Thee, Jesus, Thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time” (Matthew 8:28-29). This is Spiritual Warfare. When Jesus cast out the demons, He did it with His authority as the Living Word of God. When He commanded the demons in the two demon possessed men (8:28), “Go!” (8:32), they immediately left (8:32⁵³). Casting out demons without the authority of the Word of God results in the calamitous

⁵³ “And He said unto them, Go. And when they were come out, they went into the herd of swine: and, behold, the whole herd of swine ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and perished in the waters” (Matthew 8:32).

experience of the seven sons of Sceva (Acts 19:13⁵⁴), who mistook the uttering of the name of Jesus as a magical incantation rather than the conquering name to which all must submit (Philippians 2:10-11⁵⁵).

Casting out demons in the NT:

(1) Was practiced commonly by Messiah Jesus with healing, as well. “When the even [evening] was come, they brought unto Him many that were possessed with devils: and He cast out the spirits with His word, and healed all that were sick” (Matthew 8:16).

(2) Demons were understood by the Jews as evil spirits or devils. The Greek *daimonizomai* is translated “demon-possessed” (Matthew 4:24 NIV) or “possessed with devils” (4:24 KJV).

(3) Attempting to cast out demons, evidently, was practiced by the Jews during Christ’s time in Galilee. “And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out? therefore they shall be your judges” (Matthew 12:27). Jesus wisely objected to the Jews accusation of casting out demons in the name of Satan by reminding them of the same practice of

⁵⁴ “Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the LORD Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth” (Acts 19:13).

⁵⁵ “10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Philippians 2:10-11 NIV).

their Jewish exorcists (cp. 12:27). And, when those who may not fellowship at our particular churches or not sign off on our doctrinal statements, cast out demons, do not prevent them from doing so. “And John answered and said, Master, we saw one casting out devils in Thy name; and we forbad him, because he followeth not with us. And Jesus said unto him, Forbid him not: for he that is not against us is for us” (Luke 9:49-50).

(4) Christ authorized His disciples to cast out demons. “17 And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through Thy name. 18 And He said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. 19 Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you. 20 Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven” (Luke 10:17-20).

(5) The Great Commission incorporates the casting out of demons, if you can receive it. “And these signs shall follow them that believe; In My name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues” (Mark 16:17). Of interest, the sending out of the Seventy-Two in Luke 10 contains similar language as Mark 16, i.e., snakes, demons, nothing will harm you. If we receive Luke 10, why would we suspect Mark 16?

(6) The key concept of casting out demons is submission to the name of Christ, that is, submission to Christ. “And the seventy

returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through Thy name” (Luke 10:17). But, Jesus quickly warned them that heartfelt submission is the point — for *forced submission is not our objective*. “Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven” (Luke 10:20). In a war of conquest, submission is key to the purpose of conflict. Merely extending boundaries without underlying submission lays the foundation for further conflict. Even contemporary military commanders give lip service to the need of winning the hearts and minds of the populace. *Modern regional conflicts, like historic religious wars, only produce more and worse conflicts, unless accompanied by Gospel Submission to Christ*. “43 When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none. 44 Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. 45 Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation” (Matthew 12:43-45).

(7) Submission is so key to the casting out of demons, for we are taught our submission to God is the key for Satan, the Prince of the Demons, to flee from us. “Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you” (James 4:7). Satan, the Prince of this world and the strong man of his house, must be bound by the Word of Christ before Satan’s captives can

be delivered. “27 And if I cast out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your sons cast them out? For this reason they will be your judges. 28 But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has already overtaken you. 29 How else can someone enter a strong man’s house and steal his property, unless he first ties up the strong man? Then he can thoroughly plunder the house” (Matthew 12:27-29 NET). “Shall the prey be taken from the mighty, or the lawful captive delivered?” (Isaiah 49:24). In the end, only heartfelt submission to Christ will produce genuine peace. *Forced submission would miss the whole purpose of conversion.* “That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved” (Romans 10:9).

Second, Are we trying to defeat sinners or convert them?

Salvation means seeking the highest good of mankind, even when in rebellion against God. “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men” (Luke 2:14). Though we do seek the defeat of sin, we seek the change of heart and mind of the sinner, which can only be accomplished through the working of the Holy Spirit. “Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied” (1Peter 1:2).

God’s Spirit works predominantly through His Word, since He inspired it. “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is

profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (2Timothy 3:16). For this reason sinful humanity, who are unwittingly managed by their demonic handlers, seek to restrict the common use of Scripture in public, since the demons know it would give the Spirit of God too much influence. Scripture is mainly directed to the people of God, and whatever natural, unforced, Spirit-led way Saints employ God’s Word, i.e., His precepts, promises, warnings, and prophecies, it will give the world any intelligent idea of what God is doing. “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4). A realistic prayer of the Church would be that the world around them would be reminded of what little of the Word, which they might have heard. “So shall My word be that goeth forth out of My mouth: it shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it” (Isaiah 55:11). But mainly, Christians are the best presentation of the Word, as seen through the way they live their lives. “Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men” (2Corinthians 3:2).

Through the Sword of the Spirit, the Holy Spirit:

(1) Teaches “you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you” (John 14:26). The Holy Spirit is our teacher and reminder of what Christ said.

(2) “Will guide you into all truth” (John 16:13). The Paraklete, Comforter, or Advocate is also our guide, even into truth not found in the Scriptures.

(3) “Will shew [pronounced, shō] you things to come” (John 16:13). The Sword of the Spirit will be a valuable tool to teach those, who are uncertain about tomorrow, what God authoritatively prophesied for tomorrow. This is where most disciples become disenchanted about prophecy, since world event predictions have often been wrong by Bible prophecy teachers. ***A big conundrum for the disciple: Do we expect to usher in the Millennium, or do we hope to escape in a Rapture?*** In other words, Are things getting better or worse? And, if things are getting worse, Are we wasting time evangelizing the Lost? By the way, this question was one of the motivations for a more recent missions movement of late 19th century America with D. L. Moody. Using Matthew 24:14 — “And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come” (KJV) — they reasoned they would be “hasting” (KJV) or “hastening” (NET) the “coming of the day of God” (2Peter 3:12) by bringing in the last soul for Jesus at home or abroad, when the Gospel is preached to all nations. Excellent reasoning from their Bible studies!

(4) Will direct your prayer, as a Spiritual Warrior. “Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all

saints” (Ephesians 6:18). “Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered” (Romans 8:26).

Third, What is the nature of this war? From God’s perspective, “All souls are mine” (Ezekiel 18:4), meaning, He simply claims the right of dominion over all His creation. The problem is, the Wicked One claims everyone, too. If the Messiah would submit Himself to Satan, then the devil, who is the “prince of the power of the air” (Ephesians 2:2), would acknowledge Christ to be the king of the world. “Again, the devil taketh Him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth Him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; And saith unto Him, All these things will I give Thee, if Thou wilt fall down and worship me” (Matthew 4:8-9). What was Jesus’ response? “Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve” (Matthew 4:10). Notice, Christ did not question the integrity of the devil’s claim of rulership of the kingdoms of the earth, because sinful humanity’s submission to sin and sinning enthrones the Wicked One. “Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?” (Romans 6:16). Satan became the “god of this world” (2Corinthians 4:4) the moment the entire population of the planet — Adam and Eve — surrendered to his lies; thus, gaining control of the world. “We

know that we are children of God, and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one” (1John 5:19 NIV). Simply put, submission and obedience to Christ immediately places us in the Kingdom of God under the rulership of Christ. “Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son” (Colossians 1:13).

Thankfully, Christ did not bow down to Satan! And, prophetically, at the Seventh Trumpet blast, the “kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever” (Revelation 11:15). So, we are attempting to rescue captives from the Wicked One, but rescuing the perishing may be complicated, especially if they don’t want to be rescued.

To summarize the use of the Sword of the Spirit — the only offensive weapon of the Whole Armor of God — its effect is mainly upon others, especially those who will be converted, where the Spirit directs the application of the Word of God.

Chapter 15 - Divine Council Impact Upon Spiritual Warfare

Q: What is the effect upon the Enemy?

This is where the Divine Council perspective becomes uniquely insightful. What we are about to discuss is foundational on viewing how Spiritual Warfare is conducted in the heavenlies, and how it translates to what we experience here below.

According to the understanding provided by Psalm 82, the Most High God has a Divine Council of lesser gods of His own creation, which we have often identified as angels. “God [Hebrew, *elohim*] has taken His place in the divine council; in the midst of the gods [Hebrew, *elohim*] He holds judgment” (Psalms 82:1 ESV). We know it is correct to address Jehovah’s Divine Council members as “gods” because *elohim* is used twice in the same verse by the Psalmist to describe Yahweh and His lesser council members (82:1). Such a designation should instruct our reluctance of identifying anyone other than Jehovah with the title “god.” With the understanding that Almighty God is still the Creator of the lesser gods, and the only being who can be called Omnipotent, Omniscient, Omnipresent, Immutable, and Eternal, then any being, regardless of how powerful, cannot compare to the High and Lofty One That Inhabiteth Eternity (Isaiah 57:15⁵⁶).

⁵⁶ “For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones” (Isaiah 57:15).

Next in Psalm 82, God the Judge of All the Earth declares to some of His evidently wayward council members, “How long will you judge unjustly and show partiality to the wicked?” (Psalms 82:2 ESV). Then, He pronounces His judgment on them, “I said, You are gods, sons of the Most High, all of you; nevertheless, like men you shall die, and fall like any prince” (82:6-7 ESV). Jesus the Messiah underscored this understanding about the Divine Council, when He defended His claim of identifying Himself as *the* Son of God in John 10. When Jesus said, “I and My Father are one” (John 10:30), the Jews objected to the apparent blasphemy of Jesus making Himself equal to God. Listen to Jesus’ well reasoned reply. “Is it not written in your Law, I have said you are gods [Psalm 82:6]? If He called them gods, to whom the word of God came — and Scripture cannot be set aside — what about the one whom the Father set apart as His very own and sent into the world? Why then do you accuse Me of blasphemy because I said, I am God’s Son?” (10:34-36 NIV). If the Jews received the validity of the Psalmist’s statement in Psalm 82 — Yahweh declaring more than Himself as *elohim* in Scripture — then, why should they object to Jesus claiming to be God’s Son, especially after He validated His claim by “many good works from the Father” (John 10:32 NIV)? This only begins the conversation about the Divine Council.

Necessary to our discussion of the Divine Council, in its relationship to Spiritual Warfare, would be linking the Three Great Rebellions of Genesis — chapters 3 (Garden of Eden), 6

(Flood of Noah), and 11 (Tower of Babel) — which we have previously discussed at length in our third section — “When Has God Not Been Mercifully Kind?” [previous Chapter 3]. To recap the significance of the Rebellion in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3), the prior rebellion of Lucifer in the heavenlies — “For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High” (Isaiah 14:13-14) — found its repercussion in the successful temptation of Eve, then Adam in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3). As I said earlier, ‘We had nothing to do with that Heavenly Rebellion [by Lucifer], but we now comprehend we are fighting a common enemy in different spheres.’

We know the significance of the Flood of Noah (Genesis 6) was the corruption of man on the Earth. “And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually” (Genesis 6:5). To be sure, humanity earned God’s judgment. But, did the struggle in the heavenlies spill over to the Earth? As we examined earlier, Fallen Angels procreated with human females to produce the Nephilim hybrid offspring (Genesis 6:2, 4⁵⁷). Corrupting the physical seed of man to prevent the eventual birth of the Messiah was critical to the

⁵⁷ “2 The sons of God saw that the daughters of man were attractive. And they took as their wives any they chose. 4 The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of man and they bore children to them. These were the mighty men who were of old, the men of renown” (Genesis 6:2, 4 ESV).

Enemy's strategy against Yahweh. All physical, human offspring needed to be corrupted, setting the stage for the universal cleansing of the earth by means of a worldwide Flood. The godliness of Noah's family of eight was integral, but their physical purity from the contaminant of the Nephilim was also essential. Though this concept is foreign to much of Mainstream Christianity, *failure to comprehend it will produce an incomplete and puzzling picture of the spiritual landscape facing the Church*, resulting in brave attempts to encourage disciples to soldier on to the New Heavens and New Earth, or to brace for inevitably worse times with a fervent prayer for Rapture. The Flood was preceded by unparalleled, worldwide ungodliness, but that alone only partially depicts the direness of humankind's circumstances. The unprecedented intrusion of Fallen Angels intermarrying with human females (Genesis 6:2) brought forth a superhuman, crossbreed Nephilim (6:4 ESV, NIV; "giants" KJV). Why such extreme measures as to eradicate the human race, except for eight onboard the Ark (6:18⁵⁸)? The human race had only eight people left, who "found grace in the eyes of the LORD" (Genesis 6:8), both spiritually and physically. "Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations" (Genesis 6:9). The Hebrew word for perfect is *tâmîym*, signifying unblemished, as in an unblemished, physical sacrifice. The Flood was God's solution to the scourge of the Nephilim. Angelic rebellion translating to human corruption resulted in the Extinction Level Event of the worldwide flood of

⁵⁸ "But with thee will I establish My covenant; and thou shalt come into the ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee" (Genesis 6:18).

Noah (6:17⁵⁹). Yes, what takes place in Heaven affects life and death on Earth.

What happened to the dead Nephilim? These disembodied spirits are commonly referred to as devils or demons in the NT, seeking refuge in man or beast. “So the devils besought Him, saying, If thou cast us out, suffer us to go away into the herd of swine. And they that kept them fled, and went their ways into the city, and told every thing, and what was befallen to the possessed of the devils” (Matthew 8:31, 33). This will become more consequential in time as unexplained aerial phenomena may increasingly be attributable to supernatural marvels or wonders.

The consequences of God’s judgment at the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11) have a great deal of impact upon how we approach Spiritual Warfare. The judgment at the Tower of Babel produced an overspreading of the human race over the planet with a proliferation and multiplicity of languages, ethnicities, cultures, and gods. This took away the rebellion’s ability to concentrate its wickedness. But, it also gave the godly the challenge of Spiritual Warfare to trust Yahweh, first, for Personal Sanctification — you can’t deliver others from the sin that still plagues you — and, also to wisely provide God’s opportunity of Salvation, as a Unified Response to Humanity’s Sin Problem. Yes, evangelism is Spiritual Warfare to free captive sinners from

⁵⁹ “And, behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven; and every thing that is in the earth shall die” (Genesis 6:17).

the Wicked One. “Blessed be the LORD my strength which teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight” (Psalm 144:1). This lineage of faith would be traceable through the Patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob), the Nation of Israel, the birth of the Messiah, the giving of the Gospel, and the Church’s evangelizing of the world. And, as significant as all this is, God’s judgments are still, especially significant. Why so? God’s judgments display His righteousness. *The world will actually learn righteousness, when God’s judgments are in the Earth.* Judgments get everyone’s attention, especially those who will be saved. Though we have no direct control of how the Earth will experience the LORD’s judgments, listen to Isaiah. “With my soul have I desired Thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek Thee early: for when Thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness” (Isaiah 26:9). Does that mean all the world becomes saved? Not necessarily. “Let favour be shewed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness: in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the LORD” (26:10). But, it will be especially significant for those who repent because of those judgments, e.g., Rahab. Notice the way the Psalmist treats the afflictions coming from God’s judgments. His affliction resulted in heartfelt obedience. “Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept Thy word” (Psalm 119:67). And, yes, the afflictions of God’s judgments resulted in the learning of God’s righteous decrees. “It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn Thy statutes” (Psalm 119:71).

A prophetic example of learning righteousness through God's "judgments in the earth" (Isaiah 26:9) will be the Seven Vial or Bowl Judgments of God's Final Wrath (Revelation 16). These are the most horrendous judgments for God to ever assault the Earth without completely extinguishing all life. This makes me highly impressionable that most, if not all, will repent. Here is what John says, and notice especially this final declaration, "**All nations shall come and worship before Thee**; for Thy judgments are made manifest" (Revelation 15:4). In context, John prophetically witnessed the most devastating judgments the Almighty has planned prior to the Second Coming of Christ. "1 And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God. 2 And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. 3 And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of saints. 4 Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and glorify Thy name? for Thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before Thee; for Thy judgments are made manifest" (Revelation 15:1-4).

So, it is essential we pray that God's judgments will be in the Earth in order for His kingdom to come and for the fulfillment of Bible prophecy.

One more consideration, in this matter of Spiritual Warfare in light of the Divine Council, is this matter of angelic representation of Earth's Warring Nations.

The Book of Daniel gives us great insight into how God dealt with the matter. It is instructive that Daniel would have this kind of interaction with the Almighty.

(1) Daniel (Chaldean name of Belteshazzar), together with his three Hebrew friends, Hananiah (Shadrach), Mishael (Meshach), and Azariah (Abednego), though they were part of those carried off into captivity by Nebuchadnezzar of the Babylonians, they remained faithful to Jehovah, for they purposed not to defile themselves with the king's meat and wine (Daniel 1:8⁶⁰). Strange conduct for captives to refuse to eat and drink provisions from the conquering king's table. God must have thoroughly enjoyed it! They risked their lives to please God! God blessed them. "And in all matters of wisdom and understanding, that the king enquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in all his realm" (Daniel 1:20).

⁶⁰ "But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself" (Daniel 1:8).

(2) Daniel and his three friends, the very next year -- were called into special service to interpret King Nebuchadnezzar's dream -- "in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar" (Daniel 2:1). All the wise men of Babylon would perish, if the king did not receive a correct interpretation of his dream. Daniel urged his friends to "desire mercies of the God of heaven concerning this secret; that Daniel and his fellows should not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon" (Daniel 2:18). God answered with the interpretation of the dream, when the king purposely hid the details of the dream from all to protect himself from false interpretations. The interpretation of the dream demonstrates to all of God's children His desire for us to have an idea of how the affairs of mankind will progress, for "surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but He revealeth His secret unto His servants the prophets" (Amos 3:7). In the king's dream was a "great image [statue]" (Daniel 2:31), indicating the present and future kingdoms of the world, which exercise dominion over the Jews. The "head" (2:32) of gold was Nebuchadnezzar (Babylon). Persia was the "breast and his arms of silver" (2:32). Greece was the "belly and his thighs of brass" (2:32). The "legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay" (2:33) represent Rome and the Revived Roman Empire. And, a "stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces" (Daniel 2:34). That Rock is Christ. Jesus "is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner" (Acts 4:11). Remember, *the Jews neglected Bible Prophecy resulting in the*

rejection of Messiah at His First Coming; and, the Church, if it neglects Bible Prophecy, will reap the whirlwind of not being prepared for Christ's Second Coming!

(3) The narrative of the Book of Daniel progresses through the deliverance of Daniel's three friends from a "burning fiery furnace" (3:6) for refusing to worship a 90 foot high "image of gold" (Daniel 3:1). As a witness to Nebuchadnezzar, they testified that the God of Israel is able to deliver, but they would not worship regardless, if Jehovah did not deliver them. Nebuchadnezzar's second dream warned him of God's sovereignty over everything, culminating in Nebuchadnezzar's confession that everything the King of Heaven's "works are truth, and His ways judgment: and those that walk in pride He is able to abase" (Daniel 4:37). Belshazzar, a son or grandson of Nebuchadnezzar, forgot his parent's understanding of Jehovah, held a drunken feast to his pagan gods using the sacred vessels plundered from the Jewish Temple. Jehovah sent the famous Handwriting on the Wall, which Daniel interpreted as the king and kingdom's death sentence (5:28⁶¹). Moving forward, Daniel is thrown into a lion's den for refusing to cease praying to Jehovah, testifying to yet another king of the Most High God's ability to deliver from even the most powerful of earth's mighty kings (6:26). Daniel had further visions of the future progress of nations, who related to the nation of Israel (chapters 7 and 8).

⁶¹ "PERES; Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians" (Daniel 5:28).

God wants His people to know what He is doing in the affairs of man.

(4) The Seventy Weeks prophecy (Daniel 9:24-27⁶²) notably comes in conjunction with the near end of the Babylonian Captivity, since it was then 539 BC, 66 years after Daniel had been exiled to Babylon (from *Bible Knowledge Commentary* on Daniel 9:1-2⁶³). His Bible study of prophesy revealed from Jeremiah that Israel's Babylonian Captivity would last a total of 70 years — only four more years left (Jeremiah 25:11-12⁶⁴). Because of that understanding of Jeremiah's prophecy, Daniel turned “unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes” (Daniel 9:3). This is where Daniel confesses the sins of his nation with the word “we” (Daniel 9:5). It is thought Daniel was 16 years old when he

⁶² “24 Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. 25 Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. 26 And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for Himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. 27 And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate” (Daniel 9:24-27).

⁶³ “1 In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes, which was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans; 2 In the first year of his reign I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem” (Daniel 9:1-2).

⁶⁴ “11 And this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years. 12 And it shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished, that I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the LORD, for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it perpetual desolations” (Jeremiah 25:11-12).

was deported to Babylon. He prays not as a mediator or intercessor, but as a representative “we” of Israel. His confession of sin is genuine because he never points the finger to “they.” He personalizes his confession, “And whiles I was speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the LORD my God for the holy mountain of my God” (Daniel 9:20). He had just made a pointed plea to the LORD. “O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not, for Thine own sake, O my God: for Thy city and Thy people are called by Thy name” (Daniel 9:19).

The famed Seventy Weeks prophecy (9:24-27) is the answer to Daniel’s petition, “Now therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of Thy servant, and his supplications, and cause Thy face to shine upon Thy sanctuary that is desolate, for the Lord's sake” (Daniel 9:17). Yes, he prayed for pardoning of sins personal and national; but, he prayed for God to intervene on behalf of His “sanctuary that is desolate” (9:17). What we should see in the last four verses of Daniel 9 is a foretelling of what will happen to the Temple of the LORD in Jerusalem, in relation to the Messiah. Notice the two mentions of the Messiah (9:25, 26); and also, notice the two mentions concerning the Sanctuary (9:26, 27). The prophetic clock still runs according to the destiny of Israel. “24 Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and

prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. 25 Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. 26 And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. 27 And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate” (Daniel 9:24-27).

Sir Robert Anderson, in his classic interpretation of Daniel 9:24-27, *The Coming Prince* (1895), wrote:

“The Julian date of that 10th Nisan was Sunday the 6th April, A.D. 32. What then was the length of the period intervening between the issuing of the decree to rebuild Jerusalem and the public advent of 'Messiah the Prince,' -- between the 14th March, B.C. 445, and the 6th April, A.D. 32? THE INTERVAL CONTAINED EXACTLY AND TO THE VERY DAY 173,880 DAYS, OR SEVEN TIMES SIXTY-NINE PROPHETIC YEARS OF 360 DAYS, the first sixty-nine weeks of Gabriel's prophecy.”

(5) For the purposes of our discussion of Spiritual Warfare, all of the events of the Book of Daniel lead up to the exchange between the holy angelic being and Daniel in the tenth chapter of the Book of Daniel. In this discourse, angelic warfare is taking place in the heavenlies between the holy and the fallen angels.

Let us now evaluate Daniel 10.

(1) Daniel was given a “vision” (Daniel 10:1) — not a dream — where he saw the future. “If there be a prophet among you, I the LORD will make Myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream” (Numbers 12:6).

(2) The vision was about a “great war” (10:1 NIV, NET) or a “great conflict” (10:1 ESV), which could represent a series of wars. This is significant since the vision that follows in Daniel 11 is the account of political conquests, upheavals, wars, and conflicts from the time of Daniel until the time of the end for the people of God. Jesus reminded us to look to Him for peace and rest. “These things I have spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33).

(3) Unlike our studies of Bible Prophecy, Daniel was in mourning “three whole weeks” (Daniel 10:3). View his seeking out of understanding about the future welfare and warfare of the

people of God, as a warlike undertaking, like Uriah the Hittite, who refused even the pleasantries of family, while his comrades were engaged in battle. “And Uriah said unto David, The ark, and Israel, and Judah, abide in tents; and my lord Joab, and the servants of my lord, are encamped in the open fields; shall I then go into mine house, to eat and to drink, and to lie with my wife? as thou livest, and as thy soul liveth, I will not do this thing” (2Samuel 11:11).

(4) While standing “by the side of the great river, which is Hiddekel” (Daniel 10:4), Daniel saw a “man” (10:5); but, he was not a typical man. He was dressed in “linen” with a gold “belt” (10:4 NIV). He was not seen by Daniel’s companions, but they sensed his presence and fled. This indicates *others may hear what the prophet discovers, but they have not been prepared to make that discovery themselves.*

(5) What did Daniel see? “His body also was like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in colour to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude” (Daniel 10:6). His appearance was godlike, but we have seen angels declared by Yahweh as “gods” (Psalm 82:6).

(6) Alone, Daniel helplessly gazed at this vision (Daniel 10:8). Then, he fell into a “deep sleep” (10:9). A hand set him up on his hands and knees (10:10). He was told, “O Daniel, a man greatly

beloved, understand the words that I speak unto thee, and stand upright: for unto thee am I now sent” (Daniel 10:11).

(7) “Fear not, Daniel” (Daniel 10:12), for our study of prophecy cannot be through fear about tomorrow. Like Daniel, we have been given a special blessing for those who read, hear, and “take to heart” the contents of the Book of Revelation (Revelation 1:3 NIV).

(8) Here is where it gets interesting. “From the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words” (Daniel 10:12). That was three weeks earlier. God knows our mind. He is especially desirous of our gaining understanding of His Word and prophecies. We can never overpower God with requests to know Him, His Word, and prophecies better. The angel -- some believe him to be Gabriel -- came in response to Daniel’s quest to understand the future welfare of the people of God.

(9) The angelic messenger gave Daniel an explanation of why it took three weeks to get from the heavenlies to Daniel. “But the prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days. Then Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, because I was detained there with the king of Persia” (10:13 NIV).

The concept of evil angels battling holy angels may seem foreign to us, since warfare has the connotation of death. If evil angels are those, who previously rebelled with Lucifer, then their doom has already been assured.

[A] Those lesser gods know they are doomed. “What have we to do with Thee, Jesus, Thou Son of God? art Thou come hither to torment us before the time?” (Matthew 8:29).

[B] If you knew you were going to be judged, wouldn't you do anything to delay it? “For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment” (2Peter 2:4).

[C] They will be judged because they abandoned their appointed positions from Jehovah. “And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, He hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day” (Jude 1:6).

(10) Angels killing one another in Spiritual Warfare would not be the issue, since the doom of Fallen Angels is assured. Instead, *delaying* the judgment that is already certain would be the issue. Hence, the angel informed Daniel he had been delayed three weeks (Daniel 10:13⁶⁵).

⁶⁵ “But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia” (Daniel 10:13).

(11) Daniel also was told that the angel began to respond *when* God heard his humble searching for understanding (10:12⁶⁶), which is the essence of the godly making inquiry of God. Humble seeking of understanding and prayer to God is the foundation of Spiritual Warfare.

(12) Spiritual Warfare *is taking place* in the heavenlies, whenever the godly are prayerfully seeking God's face for understanding in bringing about the Kingdom of God. *The Saints are not seeking to delay Yahweh's Kingdom from coming, but to hasten its coming.* "Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:9-10). Remember, the last thing Jesus said to us in the Book of Revelation was, "Surely I come quickly" (Revelation 22:20).

(13) Michael's presence with the angel responding to Daniel in Daniel 10 indicates Spiritual Warfare in the heavenlies is benefitted by assistance from other holy angels, but *their action is keyed on responding to the godly on earth who are engaging in Spiritual Combat.* Whenever we are acting on behalf of Yahweh, we are Spiritual Warriors. We need understanding of our warfare to stay focused on the KING of Kings, and LORD of Lords. And, the fact the speaker needed help indicates he wasn't a manifestation of the Lord Jesus Christ, since God is the Help, not the one who is helped.

⁶⁶ "Fear not, Daniel: for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words" (Daniel 10:12).

(14) What is the significance of the reference to the “king of Persia” (Daniel 10:13)? This takes us back to our earlier discussion of the Table of Nations (Genesis 10) and the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11), where the people were divided into different nations with different languages and administered by different gods (Psalm 82). This King of Persia is the Fallen Angel in charge of the earthly domain of Persia. Our difficulty comprehending this testifies how important a concept it is. Jesus’ disciples wondered why He had to speak so cryptically in parables. “Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given” (Matthew 13:11). Again, why does God speak so cryptically? Because God intended for us to nobly and royally search out the matter.

[A] “These were more **noble** than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so” (Acts 17:11).

[B] “It is the glory of God to conceal a thing: but the honour of **kings** is to search out a matter” (Proverbs 25:2).

(15) Daniel was clearly concerned about the welfare of Israel, as the NT disciples should be concerned about the welfare of the Church. Even so, the angel explained, “Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days: for yet the vision is for many days” (Daniel 10:14). What kind of concern is this, since it would have nothing to do with

Daniel's present circumstances? Evidently, it is understood that disciples need an understanding of the times, since we are God's friends and part of His family. "Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of My Father I have made known unto you" (John 15:15).

(16) "The vision concerns a time yet to come" (Daniel 10:14 NIV). Who but a disciple would be given access to that understanding? This is but another reason we must study Bible prophecy — even in spite of failed interpretations. "We see not our signs: there is no more any prophet: neither is there among us any that knoweth how long" (Psalm 74:9).

(17) Pride is not a characteristic of those who are taught Bible prophecy by the Spirit of God. Daniel's sense of overwhelming powerlessness was an indication of the LORD's presence. "I am overcome with anguish because of the vision, my lord, and I feel very weak" (Daniel 10:16 NIV). Isaiah knew just what Daniel experienced. "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts" (Isaiah 6:5).

(18) God put strength within Daniel, when the angel touched him (Daniel 10:18⁶⁷), then spoke strength into him. "Fear not:

⁶⁷ "Then there came again and touched me one like the appearance of a man, and he strengthened me" (Daniel 10:18).

peace be unto thee, be strong, yea, be strong. And when he had spoken unto me, I was strengthened” (Daniel 10:19). The angel used the same method of strengthening employed by Moses to Joshua, the command method. “Be strong and of a good courage” (Deuteronomy 31:6). And, Joshua used the same strengthening method with the leaders of Israel. “Be ye therefore very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses, that ye turn not aside therefrom to the right hand or to the left” (Joshua 23:6).

(19) Daniel was the prime example of the OT Spiritual Warrior, where the Apostle Paul was the best example of the NT Spiritual Warrior. The angel gives Daniel further understanding of why he was speaking to Daniel. “Knowest thou wherefore [why] I come unto thee? and now will I return to fight with the prince of Persia: and when I am gone forth, lo, the prince of Grecia shall come” (Daniel 10:20). He made clear to Daniel he was in the midst of a spiritual battle with the lesser god (angel) of the “prince of Persia” (10:20). By explaining this to Daniel, it was encouragement that his seeking understanding and petitioning for the people of God was working and was the right thing to do. Notice, Daniel did not make specific mention of the “prince of Persia” (10:20), as the motivation for his beginning to enquire of the LORD twenty-one days earlier, but the angel made it clear Daniel was involved in that spiritual battle, whether he realized it or not. He even further gave Daniel understanding that he would further engage the “prince of Grecia [Greece]” (10:20), another lesser god. Wickedness will ally itself with wickedness,

when it serves its own purposes. Should not the godly seek as much alliance as conscience will afford? “My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in Me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as You are in Me and I am in You. May they also be in Us so that the world may believe that You have sent Me. I have given them the glory that You gave Me, that they may be one as We are one — I in them and You in Me — so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that You sent Me and have loved them even as You have loved Me” (John 17:20-23 NIV).

What are the NT implications of what the angel just revealed to Daniel? Paul summarized it: “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places” (Ephesians 6:12). We are not merely engaging in Spiritual Warfare against a spiritual enemy, the world, or our physically dilapidated flesh, but against anything that will replace our heartfelt allegiance to Yahweh. “That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Philippians 2:10-11). This philosophy would have served Lucifer well had he not abused his Moral Image of God Likeness by seeking the glory belonging only to the Most High God. “For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit

also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High” (Isaiah 14:13-14).

(20) Before revealing the contents of the last vision of the Book of Daniel (chapters 11 and 12), the angel asks, “Knowest thou wherefore [why] I come unto thee?” (Daniel 10:20). True, he came to reveal the future of the people of God; but, he wanted to teach another, deeper concept — *Spiritual Warfare on Earth mirrors the Spiritual Warfare in the heavenlies*, i.e., “in earth, as it is in heaven” (Matthew 6:10). He accordingly explains, “Soon I will return to fight against the prince of Persia, and when I go, the prince of Greece will come” (Daniel 10:20 NIV). Tranquility continually surrounds the throne of God like a “sea of glass like unto crystal” (Revelation 4:6) and benefits all of Heaven’s denizens (15:2). And, Spiritual Warfare did take place in Heaven, when Lucifer vaunted himself against the Almighty (Isaiah 14:3-4⁶⁸), and continued with the princes of Persia, Greece, and more.

(21) The angel proceeds to inform Daniel, “I will shew thee that which is noted in the scripture of truth” (Daniel 10:21). The truth of everything that will happen is recorded by God in a book, and that book is “God’s record of truth in general, of which the Bible is one expression” (John F. Walvoord, *Daniel*:

⁶⁸ “13 For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: 14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High” (Isaiah 14:13-14).

The Key to Prophetic Revelation, p. 250). Further, “No one supports me against them [the lesser gods, the Princes of Persia and Greece] except Michael, your prince” (Daniel 10:21 NIV). This again indicates the Most High appointed angels to administrate the nations, and Michael is the chosen angelic representative for Israel. What advocacy does Michael have for Israel? All we know is whenever we are seeking the good of Israel, we can be sure Michael is, too. Do we affect angelic actions in the heavenlies? We know that Heavenly Angels desire to see what Yahweh is accomplishing upon Earth in the salvation and sanctification of humankind. “It was revealed to them that they [the prophets] were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Even angels long to look into these things” (1Peter 1:12 NIV). Of course, those angels would be moved to act, if the prayers of God’s people were petitioning the Almighty to do what God said He was willing to do, when the LORD approved. “Then the heathen that are left round about you shall know that I the LORD build the ruined places, and plant that that was desolate: I the LORD have spoken it, and I will do it. Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will yet for this be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them; I will increase them with men like a flock” (Ezekiel 36:36-37).

(22) The last vision given to Daniel in this book is found mainly in Daniel 11 concerning the nations. This chapter contains such a detailed description of upcoming events in connection with the

nation of Israel that some have discounted it as a summary of history already completed rather than a divine prophecy of future events. Such was the case with Porphyry. In *Daniel: The Key to Prophetic Revelation* (1989), John F. Walvoord wrote: “Interestingly enough, it was the eleventh chapter of Daniel with its detailed prophecy of about two hundred years of history that prompted the heathen philosopher Porphyry (third century a.d.) to attack the book of Daniel as a forgery. In his study, Porphyry established the fact that history corresponded closely to the prophetic revelation of Daniel 11:1–35, and the correspondence was so precise that he was persuaded that no one could have prophesied these events in the future. Accordingly, he solved the problem by taking the position that the book of Daniel was written after the events occurred, that is, it was written in the second century B.C. This attack prompted Jerome to defend the book of Daniel and to issue his own commentary, which for over one thousand years thereafter was considered the standard commentary on the book of Daniel.” Walvoord’s scholarly analysis of history in light of the text of Daniel 11 and 12, agree with Jerome. And, for those without access to Walvoord’s *Daniel: The Key to Prophetic Revelation*, the *Treasury of Scripture Knowledge* is freely available online, and it contains many of the same conclusions about Daniel 11’s consistency with secular history.

(23) Daniel 12 closes the last vision of the Book of Daniel with deliverance for the people of God. ***Likewise, the sooner we get ourselves into the supernatural frame of mind, the better***

prepared we will be for the events that are about to come upon us. “And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book” (Daniel 12:1). Notice the interrelationship between angelic actions in Heaven and reactions upon earthly inhabitants. Michael protects earthly Israel, because God is not finished with elect Israel. “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: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is My covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins. As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the father's sakes. For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance [irrevocable NIV]” (Romans 11:25-29).

(24) Just as Jehovah will deliver elect Israel, He will both judge the godly and ungodly, subsequently, in their proper order, at the end. “Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt” (Daniel 12:2 NIV). This jumps past all events of the NT to the end and the Final Judgments of Humanity.

Suggested Chronological Order of the Final Judgments:

[A] Judgment of the Saints Follows the Catching Up [*Harpazō*] of the Church (1Thessalonians 4:17⁶⁹). *Harpazō* is generally associated with the idea of Rapture, which is a forceful snatching up⁷⁰. “Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man” (Luke 21:36).

[B] Bema Seat Judgment of the Saints for Rewards (Not Punishments) Follows the *Harpazō* of the Church. “You, then, why do you judge your brother or sister? Or why do you treat them with contempt? For we will all stand before God’s judgment seat [Greek, *bēma*]” (Romans 14:10 NIV).

[C] White Throne Judgment After the End of the Millennium. “And I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them” (Revelation 20:11).

[D] Judgment of the Fallen Angels Some Time After the Bema Seat Judgment, Since the Saints Will Judge Angels. “Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?” (1Corinthians 6:3).

⁶⁹ “Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up [*harpazō*] together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord” (1Thessalonians 4:17).

⁷⁰ *Harpazō* is a forceful snatching up, as revealed by the inability of anyone to “pluck [*harpazō*] them [us] out of My Father’s hand” (John 10:29), and negatively, “then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth [*harpazō*] away that which was sown in his heart” (Matthew 13:19).

*Truth is the most potent weapon we must use upon the enemy,
whether they repent or resist.*

Chapter 16 - Prayer — Our Utter Dependence Upon God

“Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; And for me that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel” (Ephesians 6:17-18).

Crowning the whole armor of God is prayer, which reveals our utter dependence upon God. Prayer is not typically defensive armor nor offensive weaponry, yet it can be both. Unlike everything else, prayer reveals our complete dependence upon God for everything. “Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak” (Ephesians 6:18-20).

(1) Why would Paul end his presentation about the Whole Armor of God with remarks about praying? “Be careful [anxious] for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God” (Philippians 4:6). Paul told the Philippian disciples the same thing as the Ephesians, without the context of Spiritual Warfare. It is appropriate to pray in both circumstances. Before we begin a task, we pray before our mind directs our body in an intricate series of motions, where we have the further

complication of uncertainty how to complete the task. Whenever we are uncertain, pray. ***God has no limitation on praying too much.*** The only penalty for the frequency of prayer is “Ye have not, because ye ask not” (James 4:2).

(2) Our dependence upon God is revealed by how little or how much we pray. We may pray formulaic, sacerdotal prayers, which impress someone other than God; but, true prayer is true dependence upon God, which God always hears. Paul told the Philippian Christians, “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me” (Philippians 4:13). Paul depended on God for all things. He set a good example. We need to follow and set a good example for others.

Desmond Doss was a combat medic during WW2 in the Pacific. As a devout Seventh Day Adventist and Conscientious Objector, he vowed not to kill, but he would save lives. On Hacksaw Ridge in Okinawa (1945), Doss saved 71 lives, while under intense enemy fire from thousands of Japanese soldiers. He was wounded several times, but saved the lives of comrades, who had previously bullied him for being unfit to serve in the US Army. He was awarded the Medal of Honor for gallantry. Desmond kept praying, “Lord, please help me get [rescue] one more.” In the Mel Gibson movie about Hacksaw Ridge (2:15), Desmond had already won the respect of his comrades and captain, and was praying as they renewed their assault on Hacksaw Ridge. An exchange took place between Desmond’s captain and the Company Commander:

Company Commander: “You were supposed to begin that assault 10 minutes ago.”

Captain: “We’re waiting, sir.”

Company Commander: “Waiting for what?”

Captain: “For Private Doss to finish praying for us, sir.”

(3) Why don’t we pray more? Why do we pray less? Our circumstances make a difference in our prayer life. The Almighty, our Good Shepherd, has so arranged our circumstances that the obvious, natural objects we are trying to obtain are only the superficial reason for our activity. For instance, a student is attempting to prepare for a test, because education is valuable to obtain employment, as we strive for self-sufficiency. However, we encounter difficulties along the way to complicate our learning, e.g., study time, concentration, financial, physical, circumstantial, learning disabilities, anything, and everything. Of course, we should valiantly attempt to remove those obstacles. But, we should be aware that God is working in our circumstances to increase our dependence upon Him. ***Greater dependence upon God is greater faith in God.*** “But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him” (Hebrews 11:6). And, prayerfully claiming His promises cause us to depend upon Him

more. “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me” (Philippians 4:13).

(4) What happens, when repeated attempts to accomplish our worthy goal of advancing His Kingdom fail? Pray for wisdom to overcome our circumstances, then persevere until you achieve your goal. “If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord” (James 1:5-7 NIV). Unless there is a natural time limitation upon our prayer request, pray on until the prayer is answered. For example, David prayed for the recovery of his son by Bathsheba until the son died, then he went about his daily business. “And he said, While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept: for I said, Who can tell whether GOD will be gracious to me, that the child may live? But now he is dead, wherefore [why] should I fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me” (2Samuel 12:22-23). And, should we face the ultimate failure of our prayer for deliverance, which results in our martyrdom, may we say with our Spiritual Brothers, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. “17 If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. 18 But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up” (Daniel 3:17-18).

(5) Should we treat all prayer as part of Spiritual Warfare? Yes, everything we are attempting to accomplish for the Kingdom of God is in opposition to the Enemy, which is Satan and his allied minions. “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour” (1Peter 5:8). *As noted many times throughout history, the massive hordes of the enemy are easily overcome by the LORD.*

King Jehoshaphat of Judah is a good example of how NT disciples should view prayer in Spiritual Warfare in light of Jehovah’s Divine Council.

[A] *The battle is the LORD’s, so we should pray.* Jehoshaphat knew the concept of warfare — the “battle is not yours, but God’s” (2Chronicles 20:15), for his own father, King Asa of Judah, faced off against an army of one million soldiers and won (14:9, 12⁷¹). Both depended upon God for deliverance. Asa prayed: “Lord, there is no one like You to help the powerless against the mighty. Help us, Lord our God, for we rely on You, and in Your name we have come against this vast army. Lord, You are our God; do not let mere mortals prevail against You” (14:11 NIV). Jehoshaphat prayed: “Our God, will You not judge them? For we have no power to face this vast army that is

⁷¹ “9 And there came out against them Zerah the Ethiopian with an host of a thousand thousand, and three hundred chariots; and came unto Mareshah. 12 So the LORD smote the Ethiopians before Asa, and before Judah; and the Ethiopians fled” (2Chronicles 14:9, 12).

attacking us. We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on You” (20:12 NIV).

[B] *Without attempting to conquer the world with a physical sword, we pray to extend the influence of the Almighty upon the entire world, as well as the peace and prosperity of wherever the LORD has placed us.* Jehoshaphat looked to extend the influence of Jehovah over the neighboring nations, as well as promote the the prosperity and tranquillity of his own nation. “And the fear of the LORD fell upon all the kingdoms of the lands that were round about Judah, so that they made no war against Jehoshaphat. Also some of the Philistines brought Jehoshaphat presents, and tribute silver; and the Arabians brought him flocks, seven thousand and seven hundred rams, and seven thousand and seven hundred he goats. And Jehoshaphat waxed great exceedingly; and he built in Judah castles, and cities of store” (2Chronicles 17:10-12). Even when the people of God fell away, were chastened, and carried into exile, God’s prophets advised, “Seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captives, and pray unto the LORD for it: for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace” (Jeremiah 29:7). The Gospel of the Kingdom of God is the message NT disciples bring to the world. “And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come” (Matthew 24:14).

[C] *The Divine Council understanding is an important part of the narrative of the Most High’s actions toward man.* Because

of the nature of the heavenlies, our sympathies in prayer reveal our understanding of Yahweh's Divine Council. In the NT, the Divine Council is best represented by this passage from Paul to the Ephesians about Spiritual Warfare in Ephesians 6:10-20, especially verse 12. "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Ephesians 6:12).

Jehoshaphat's story in 2Chronicles 18 most forcefully outlines the Divine Council understanding.

[i] ***Never forget that we are in a perpetual state of Spiritual Warfare until the Almighty has finally judged the Serpent.***

"And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel" (Genesis 3:15). Jehoshaphat forgot and allied himself with Ahab. "Now Jehoshaphat had riches and honour in abundance, and joined affinity with Ahab" (2Chronicles 18:1).

[ii] ***Never commit Spiritual Treason by allowing yourself to be spiritually disarmed and lulled into supporting the goals of dishonest and wicked people.*** "My son, if sinful men entice you, do not give in to them. If they say, Come along with us; let's lie in wait for innocent blood, let's ambush some harmless soul; let's swallow them alive, like the grave, and whole, like those who go down to the pit; we will get all sorts of valuable things and fill

our houses with plunder; cast lots with us; we will all share the loot” (Proverbs 1:10-14 NIV). Weren’t we told to pray to God for what we needed, not to seize and steal it? “Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not” (James 4:2).

Jehoshaphat went to war alongside Ahab. “And Ahab king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat king of Judah, Wilt thou go with me to Ramothgilead? And he answered him, I am as thou art, and my people as thy people; and we will be with thee in the war” (2Chronicles 18:3).

[iii] ***Understand that the Devil does possess control of the kingdoms of the world, making True Disciples strangers and pilgrims, and making godly nations, the exception, not the rule.*** “Again, the devil taketh Him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth Him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; And saith unto Him, All these things will I give Thee, if Thou wilt fall down and worship me” (Matthew 4:8-9). Jesus rebuked not the Devil for making a false claim of sovereignty, but he simply refused him the submission of worship. In the judgment at the Tower of Babel, Jehovah allotted authority over the new nations to the Angelic Sons of God. “When the Most High gave to the nations their inheritance, when He divided mankind, He fixed the borders of the peoples according to the number of the sons of God [angels]”

(Deuteronomy 32:8 ESV)⁷². The nations that were attacking Jehoshaphat were governed by these lesser gods, not ruled by Jehovah. “It came to pass after this also, that the children of Moab, and the children of Ammon, and with them other beside the Ammonites, came against Jehoshaphat to battle” (2Chronicles 20:1). These nations were represented by “some of the gods of the peoples who are around you, whether near you or far off from you, from the one end of the earth to the other” (Deuteronomy 13:7 ESV). Again, these lesser gods are real — just as Satan and demons are real — though they are often only represented by human made idols of wood and stone.

[iv] ***Understand that Spiritual Deception is employed against the godly in the form of outright lies, false doctrine, and general disinformation.*** Ahab’s sycophant prophets, of course, prophesied lies. “Therefore the king of Israel gathered together of prophets four hundred men, and said unto them, Shall we go to Ramothgilead to battle, or shall I forbear? And they said, Go up; for God will deliver it into the king’s hand” (2Chronicles 18:5). When Jehoshaphat asked Ahab for a prophet of God, who would represent Jehovah’s position, Micaiah was sent for. “Go ye up, and prosper, and they shall be delivered into your hand” (18:14), Micaiah prophesied; but, Ahab already knew God did

⁷² By inspiration, Moses establishes the fact that nations were established with angelic administrators, which occurred before God’s judgment upon the builders of the Tower of Babel (Genesis 10 cp. Deuteronomy 32:8); however, after the Judgment of the Tower of Babel, new nations were imposed upon all of humanity by virtue of grouping people according to their ability to understand each other’s language. By this time, the rebellion of the people was a reflection of their angelic administrators; and, Jehovah rightly accused the Rebel Angel administrators of malfeasance in executing the duties of their office. “How long will ye judge unjustly, and accept the persons of the wicked?” (Psalm 82:2).

not approve of the war, especially when Micaiah agreed with the 400 false prophets. “And the king said to him, How many times shall I adjure thee that thou say nothing but the truth to me in the name of the LORD?” (18:15). Spiritual Deception is liars lying to liars.

Micaiah then pulls back the curtains for us to see what took place in the heavenlies:

Jehovah’s Divine Council was assembled (Psalm 82 ESV), where He is Sovereign over all possible universes. Job said it correctly, “I know that You can do all things; no purpose of Yours can be thwarted” (Job 42:2 NIV). Nothing happens without the LORD’s permission. “And Micaiah said, Therefore hear the word of the LORD: I saw the LORD sitting on His throne, and all the host of heaven standing on His right hand and on His left” (2Chronicles 18:18 ESV).

Yahweh allowed Ahab to be enticed into going to war at Ramoth Gilead, for He depicted Himself recruiting an Evil Angel or a “lying spirit” (2Chronicles 18:21) to do just that. This is consistent with what He told Isaiah. “It is I who have created the destroyer to wreak havoc” (Isaiah 54:16 NIV). And, He spoke similarly to Amos. “Shall there be evil in a city, and the LORD hath not done it?” (Amos 3:6). Cursed is the man whom God has given over to destruction. “The soul who sins shall die” (Ezekiel 18:4 ESV). God’s choosing us for destruction is understandable; but, choosing us to live, when we’ve earned death, is hard to

explain and difficult to believe. Justice cannot account for it, only love (John 3:16⁷³; Romans 5:8⁷⁴).

Micaiah explained the Most High's capacity to direct outcomes through the instrumentality of the Enemy. "The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: He turneth it whithersoever He will" (Proverbs 21:1). We acknowledge the truth of this assertion from Scripture, but we understand not how God can accomplish it. A Divine Council and the Almighty directing a lesser god to deceive Ahab may make us uncomfortable; but, Scripture is not for our convenience. After all, we are to "endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ" (2Timothy 2:3), because this is a war to the finish against the Wicked One.

All Ahab's false prophets had to do was to tell him the lie they knew he wanted to hear. "The messenger who had gone to summon Micaiah said to him, Look, the other prophets without exception are predicting success for the king. Let your word agree with theirs, and speak favorably" (2Chronicles 18:12 NIV). This is exactly what Jehovah had already instructed the lying spirits to do. "Finally, a spirit came forward, stood before the Lord and said, I will entice him. By what means? the Lord asked. I will go and be a deceiving spirit in the mouths of all his

⁷³ "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

⁷⁴ "But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).

prophets, he said. You will succeed in enticing him, said the Lord. Go and do it” (18:20-21 NIV).

Deception was the favored weapon of Ahab’s false prophets, as the Sword of the Spirit is the preference of the godly (Ephesians 6:17⁷⁵). If the Spirit of God is not our teacher, when truth is received, we become intellectually more clever with no spiritual benefit. “Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it” (Psalm 127:1). We are hypocritical and self-deceived, if we consider ourselves spiritual, while disobeying God. “If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridled not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man’s religion is vain” (James 1:26). The spirit of these Last Days is the spirit of deception. “For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect” (Matthew 24:24). Yahweh has appointed the demons to deceive the nations to ultimately draw them to the epic battle, where the KING of Kings and LORD of Lords will execute judgment upon the Unholy Trinity of Satan, the Antichrist, and the False Prophet at Armageddon. “14 For they are the spirits of devils [demons], working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon” (Revelation 16:14, 16).

⁷⁵ “And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God” (Ephesians 6:17).

[v] *Things will become worse before they get better.* Actually, this is easy to demonstrate. If the New Heavens and New Earth are the “better” at the End; then, unless everything is constantly getting better in the meantime, cyclically, it will get worse. Even good King Jehoshaphat was lulled into spiritual ineptitude, when he made an alliance with evil King Ahab (2Chronicles 18:1⁷⁶). This is easy for us to say framed by our retrospective narrative of Scriptural History, but it was demanding Active Spiritual Discernment driven by godly engagement in Spiritual Warfare, which Jehoshaphat wasn’t practicing, at his alliance with Ahab. Jehoshaphat fell spiritually asleep to allow himself to be allied with Ahab’s idol worshipping kingdom. Pause for a moment. Doesn’t Scripture say, “The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day” (Proverbs 4:18)? The righteous may get better, but does that mean the world gets better? Doesn’t Scripture also say, “Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived” (2Timothy 3:13)? Wicked men get worse, but how does the LORD win in the end? Is the Second Coming of Christ a rescue mission or triumphal entry? Both. Jesus said it best. “When the Son of man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?” (Luke 18:8). Didn’t Jesus previously say, “Just as it was in the days of Noah, so also will it be in the days of the Son of Man. People were eating, drinking, marrying and being given in

⁷⁶ “Now Jehoshaphat had riches and honour in abundance, and joined affinity with Ahab” (2Chronicles 18:1).

marriage up to the day Noah entered the ark. Then the flood came and destroyed them all” (17:26-27 NIV)?

Isaiah 59 summarizes God’s position.

[a] God is completely able to save, but man prevented himself from being saved. How? They did not want to be saved, at least, God’s way. “Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither His ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you, that He will not hear” (Isaiah 59:1-2).

[b] Not only did God’s Professed People embrace sin, but they rejected those who didn’t. “Truth is nowhere to be found, and whoever shuns evil becomes a prey. The Lord looked and was displeased that there was no justice” (Isaiah 59:15 NIV).

[c] God could not find an intercessor, so He had to do it Himself. “And He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor: therefore His arm brought salvation unto Him; and His righteousness, it sustained Him” (Isaiah 59:16). When we intercede for someone, it is through prayer to God. When God intercedes for us, He is the intervention. Again, the concept of God or Christ being our Intercessor is just what Paul taught in the Book of Hebrews. “Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them” (Hebrews 7:25).

This is the idea of Christ's High Priestly Mediation. But, what does that have to do with prayer? Perhaps a word search for "infirmities" (KJV) would yield the most understanding of the role of the intercessor. "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:15). Jesus is the role model of the NT Spiritual Warrior Intercessor. "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us" (Romans 8:34). And, by far, the finest modern example of such a Spiritual Warrior would be Rees Howells (58:00). The classic account of his life and explanation of his ministry was written by Norman Grubb — *Rees Howells: Intercessor* (1952). Rees Howells (1879-1950) modeled the prayer life of George Müller, the evangelism of D. L. Moody, the missionary spirit of Jonathan and Rosalind Goforth; but, he was more reminiscent of the OT prophets in his miracles, healings, interest in Bible prophecy, in particular, the future of Israel, and his belief that intercession will influence the highest level of world events for the Kingdom of God.

[vi] *Make no mistake, though, God is taking back the Earth through the Gospel.* He intends to restore Eden, but, much heartache and birth pain must come before a Nation is Brought Forth in a Moment (Isaiah 66:8 NIV). Christ will return, then Judgment will come to God's enemies for their wicked treatment of the godly. "Hear that uproar from the city, hear that noise

from the temple! It is the sound of the Lord repaying His enemies all they deserve” (Isaiah 66:6 NIV).

Concerning a Restored Eden, notice the parallels between Eden and the Throne of God in the New Jerusalem.

[a] A river flows through it (Genesis 2:10⁷⁷; Revelation 22:1⁷⁸).

[b] Tree of Life (Genesis 2:9⁷⁹; Revelation 22:2⁸⁰).

[c] No more curse (Genesis 3:17⁸¹; Revelation 22:3⁸²).

⁷⁷ “And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads” (Genesis 2:10).

⁷⁸ “And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea” (Revelation 21:1).

⁷⁹ “And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil” (Genesis 2:9).

⁸⁰ “In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations” (Revelation 22:2).

⁸¹ “And unto Adam He said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life” (Genesis 3:17).

⁸² “And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and His servants shall serve Him” (Revelation 22:3).

[d] God and the Lamb shall be in it (Genesis 3:8⁸³; Revelation 22:1, 3⁸⁴).

[e] His servants shall serve Him (Genesis 2:15⁸⁵; Revelation 22:3⁸⁶).

Just as Israel's rejection of the Messiah brought salvation to the Gentiles, *as things become more difficult for the Church, Israel finally will be spiritually reborn.*

In the Second Coming of the Messiah, it will be as Judge for most, but as Savior of Israel, in particular. "Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children" (Isaiah 66:8).

Concerning the Second Coming of Christ:

[a] Faith will hardly be found in the Earth. "When the Son of man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:8).

⁸³ "And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden" (Genesis 3:8).

⁸⁴ "1 And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. 3 And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and His servants shall serve Him" (Revelation 22:1, 3).

⁸⁵ "And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it" (Genesis 2:15).

⁸⁶ See previous footnote.

[b] Prior to Christ's Second Coming we are to occupy ourselves with the Lord's business. "Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing" (Luke 12:43). "Occupy till I come" (Luke 19:13).

[c] Before the Second Coming, we should not become frustrated, if great numbers are not coming into the Kingdom of God, which doesn't mean we cannot see a measure of success. "Make every effort to enter through the narrow door, because many, I tell you, will try to enter and will not be able to" (Luke 13:24 NIV).

[d] Understanding the time of the end to be like the days of Noah does not just mean the unexpectedness of Christ's return, but the wickedness that preceded the Flood will be prevalent. "Just as it was in the days of Noah, so also will it be in the days of the Son of Man" (Luke 17:26 NIV).

To summarize the use of Prayer, it is our utter dependence upon God for everything.

Synthesis

Divine Council. Since the NT passage of Ephesians 6 sets up a struggle “not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places” (Ephesians 6:12), it is a most logical application of the *Divine Council* back story, of which Dr. Michael Heiser (1963-2023) was its most prominent interpreter, especially with his scholarly treatise on recovering the supernatural worldview of the Bible, *The Unseen Realm* (2015). *The Divine Council interpretation of Psalm 82 unlocks understanding* that could break the deadlock between the scholarship of the more traditional, conservative Biblical academics and the “not-everything-in-the-Bible-should-be-interpreted-literally” Biblical scholars.

Delay and Hastening. The Book of Daniel contributed the best battle map for the conduct of Spiritual Warfare through the visions he received while in the Babylonian Captivity. Discounting the significance of his visions due to the failed application of many of his zealous interpreters is a strategic error in navigating the progress of the Church towards the New Heavens and the New Earth. Neglect of the prophetic vision of Daniel leaves the NT disciple open to the perception Biblical Truth is unnecessary, inadequate, or unsatisfactory in explaining the often terrifying implications of world events, and deficient in planning the march of the armies of Christ. The messenger’s explanation for the *delay* in answering Daniel’s petition (Daniel

10:2) revealed *Spiritual Warfare in the heavenlies is replicated in the movement of the Church on Earth*. *Delay* is significant, since the Enemy cannot change Jehovah's ultimate victory, but he can *delay* it. The messenger explained he "was detained" (Daniel 10:13 NIV) twenty-one days by the angelic "king of Persia" (10:13). Warfare in the heavenlies paralleled Daniel's intercession for the progress of the people of God on Earth. The very fact of the messenger's arrival to Daniel indicates the correlation: *Progress in the Heavenly Theater of Conflict parallels in the Earthly Theater of Conflict*. Thus, our Lord simplified it in our need to daily pray, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:10).

Hastening the Lord Jesus Christ's Second Coming is not fanciful, since we are advised by Peter, "Look forward to the day of God and speed its coming" (2Peter 3:12 NIV). Jesus promised, "I come quickly" (Revelation 3:11; 22:7, 12, 20 KJV), to which we should pray in response, "Come, Lord Jesus" (22:20 ESV, KJV, NASB, NET, NIV). Understanding this very prayer brought about a modern response of missionary endeavor in late 19th century America around D. L. Moody, and resulting in missionary enterprises such as the China Inland Mission. Moody and others realized they were obeying, "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come" (Matthew 24:14). May the missionary endeavors of the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ reflect this understanding, as well, and hasten our Lord's return.

Promises. Though ***promises*** may seem too vague and open to interpretation, it is that very idea Christ capitalized upon, when He asserted, “According to your faith be it unto you” (Matthew 9:29). You may make something out of a statement someone else can’t. But, if you can grasp that in faith, “Nothing will be impossible for you” (Matthew 17:20 NIV). ***We can surprise ourselves and one another with how we can turn the statements of the Word of God into promises,*** which are checks drawn on the Bank of Heaven to conduct our business for the Lord. C. H. Spurgeon’s *Faith’s Checkbook* was just such a daily devotional concept. For example, for December 9, Spurgeon’s devotional entry is entitled, “The All of Belief,” which encourages us to trust God more. “Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth” (Mark 9:23). Earlier, I wrote, “Just as OT Israel’s great failure was their unbelief in the Messiah, our great failure in this Church Age has been our neglect in laying hold of the ***Promises of God.***” “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. 4 Through these He has given us His very ***great and precious promises,*** so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires” (2Peter 1:3-4 NIV). The LORD has ensured our godliness and fitness to dwell with Him now and forever. What secular military commander wouldn’t love to have such a Rule of Engagement to capture the hearts and minds of the populace they are called upon to

deliver? “For all the *promises* of God in Him are yea, and in Him Amen, unto the glory of God by us” (2Corinthians 1:20).

Gospel of Believing Loyalty, and Sanctified Living. The phrase ***Believing Loyalty*** was a favorite of Michael Heiser. The ***Gospel of Believing Loyalty*** is the Good News of redemption through faith in Jesus Christ to whom we have pledged our ***loyalty*** because we love Him. “We love Him, because He first loved us” (1John 4:19). The Gospel (Greek, *euaggelizō*) has always been Good News for its offer of redemption to them that “repent” and “believe the gospel” (Mark 1:15 NIV), especially since our record with the Almighty has been unabashed rebellion.

Believing Loyalty, in my opinion, is the evangelical mechanism of repenting or turning away from sin, while turning in faith to Jesus Christ, which would be coupled with pledging our undying ***loyalty to Christ at baptism.*** “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38 NIV). Baptism represents a loyalty oath, where the believer is “baptized into Christ” (Romans 6:3; Galatians 3:27 NIV), confessing Jesus as Lord (Romans 10:9⁸⁷). Peter said to repent and be baptized to receive the Holy Spirit, while Paul said to believe and be marked with the seal of the Holy Spirit. “And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in Him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit”

⁸⁷ “That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved” (Romans 10:9).

(Ephesians 1:13 NIV). The presence of the Holy Spirit is with those “who obey Him” (Acts 5:32; Hebrews 5:9 NIV), indicating His lordship and their loyalty to Him.

Sanctified Living is not optional because it is an inescapable part of the New Birth. “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them” (Ephesians 2:10). Who causes us to do what we think was our idea to do? God. “For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure” (Philippians 2:13). Good works never come before salvation for there is nothing humanly possible to merit salvation; but, it is a fallacy and doctrinal fetish to label good works as unequal to faith in salvation. Heresy? How then can Scripture both say about Abraham:

(1) “Abram believed the Lord, and He credited it to him as righteousness” (Genesis 15:6 NIV), and

(2) “You see that a person is considered righteous by what they do and not by faith alone” (James 2:24 NIV)?

Scripture gives the solution. Faith does not precede good works, nor do good works precede faith; but, Abraham’s “faith and his actions were working together [Greek, *sunergeō*]” (James 2:22 NIV). Martin Luther was rightly aghast at man’s religion attempting to purchase God’s salvation and grace with money. “Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the

gift of God may be purchased with money” (Acts 8:20). Fortunate still, Luther’s translation of the NT into the German tongue (1522) did include the Epistle of James, but he lowly esteemed it as a “work of straw.” Thank God for Luther, but even more so, thank God for James!

Prayer and Intercession.

Prayer. Without a great deal of instruction, we sense we “should always **pray** and not give up” (Luke 18:1 NIV). We know we need to **pray** more. What little we do, we **pray** quickly for ourselves, then we may **pray** for others, perhaps more from obligation than love. This obviously, God does not hear. “When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures” (James 4:3 NIV). Overhauling our **prayer** life begins with personal confession of sin, then graduates to collective confession (Daniel 9), as we identify with the shortcomings of others. “If My people, which are called by My name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land” (2Chronicles 7:14). **Prayer** is a virtuous cycle drawing us ever closer to God. “Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you” (James 4:8). In **prayer**, God uses our sense of personal need to motivate our **praying**, which develops our dependence upon Him, which causes us to search for promises from His Word, which further increases our confidence in Him, which results in our better

knowing Him. “And ye shall seek Me, and find Me, when ye shall search for Me with all your heart” (Jeremiah 29:13). As we are drawn into God’s presence, we become aware of His purposes in His kingdom that all would know Him and would dwell with Him, so “whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him” (1Thessalonians 5:10).

Intercession. Our spiritual sensibilities are excited by Christ’s Spirit of **intercession** (Hebrews 7:25⁸⁸) for us. What becomes apparent is the burden of our necessities, that is, our life’s circumstances are reflective of segments of humanity, who labor under similar burdens. For instance, the aging Baby Boomers, who are experiencing life changes of Empty Nesters, i.e., failing health, fixed incomes, etc., are able to especially **intercede** for others in like circumstances. Why? Christ’s **intercession** for us reflected the same concept. “For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (Hebrews 4:15). This is not an incidental characteristic of an **intercessor**, but it is the *key* characteristic of any **intercessor**. Just as our individual needs motivate our personal prayer for ourselves, our characteristic group needs motivate our **intercessory prayer** for those like ourselves. Why? God gives according to our needs, subject to His sovereign and loving ministration. “But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:19). Our

⁸⁸ “Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them” (Hebrews 7:25).

Heavenly Father is wisely efficient dispensing His unlimited resources, as should we; but, He will empty Heaven of His one and only Son “to save completely those who come to God through Him, because He always lives to intercede for them” (Hebrews 7:25 NIV).

You Are the Intended Audience.

Thank God for the academics who made possible that a plowboy could understand the Word of God! William Tyndale's historic translation of the New Testament into the English language (1525), cost this gifted academic -- conversant in eight languages, including Greek and Hebrew, graduating from Oxford and Cambridge -- his life, for aspiring, “If God spare my life ere many years, I will cause a boy that driveth the plow, shall know more of the Scripture than thou dost.” And remember, the **intended audience** of the Revelation of John the Apostle was prefaced: “The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to shew unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass; and He sent and signified it by His angel unto His servant John” (Revelation 1:1). Was John’s initial audience the Seven Churches of Revelation 2-3? Yes. Would they understand culturally and textually better than a disciple of the 21st Century? Yes. But, since they have been dead nearly 1,900 some years already, does that mean we can no longer appreciate Christ’s message to the churches? Of course not! Check yourself with this statement Christ made seven times to the churches, “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit

saith unto the churches” (Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22).
Do you have ears to hear? Then, **you are the intended audience**
to whom John wrote.

Conclusion

Spiritual Warfare for the Christian is not optional. “Joy and peace in believing” (Romans 15:13) cannot come unless we “take up the cross, and follow” (Mark 10:21) Jesus, confessing **believing loyalty** to Him as “Lord” (Romans 10:9), especially as we take our **loyalty oath** to Him, as we are “baptized into Christ Jesus” (Romans 6:3 NIV), *giving no doubt to even the Enemy of our commitment*. Spiritual Warfare is very personal because it ensures both our sanctified “spirit, soul and body” (1Thessalonians 5:23 NIV) commitment to the Lord, as well as our certainty the “God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly” (Romans 16:20).

Martin Luther’s well known battle hymn for the Reformation, *A Mighty Fortress Is Our God* (1529), understood Spiritual Warfare well.

1 A mighty fortress is our God,
a bulwark never failing;
our helper he, amid the flood
of mortal ills prevailing.
For still our ancient foe
does seek to work us woe;
his craft and power are great,
and armed with cruel hate,
on earth is not his equal.

2 Did we in our own strength confide,
our striving would be losing,
were not the right Man on our side,
the Man of God's own choosing.
You ask who that may be?
Christ Jesus, it is he;
Lord Sabaoth his name,
from age to age the same;
and he must win the battle.

3 And though this world, with devils filled,
should threaten to undo us,
we will not fear, for God has willed
his truth to triumph through us.
The prince of darkness grim,
we tremble not for him;
his rage we can endure,
for lo! his doom is sure;
one little word shall fell him.

4 That Word above all earthly powers
no thanks to them abideth;
the Spirit and the gifts are ours
through him who with us sideth.
Let goods and kindred go,
this mortal life also;
the body they may kill:
God's truth abideth still;

his kingdom is forever!

Even with the ongoing conflict in the heavenlies, Satan could never ultimately win. “Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you” (Luke 10:19). Yahweh’s overcoming placidness still rules from the Throne of God.

“Before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal” (Revelation 4:6). Even disciples on earth are becoming increasingly aware of the nature of the struggle, as can be seen from the Divine Council perspective, aiding in a knowledgeable force against an increasingly savage and desperate Enemy. “For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms” (Ephesians 6:12 NIV). Ultimate victory becomes more apparent as Spiritual Prayer Warriors arise to take their place to “stand in the gap” (Ezekiel 22:30) with their Lord and Master Christ Jesus.

In the end, was God’s whole plan for everything — His creation of the Universe of moral beings, angels, and man, the founding of Israel, establishing the Church, sending His prophets, recruiting an army of witnesses, judging the world, but most of all giving us His Son — will it be worth it all? Yes, as an expression of the Love that He is, it will be worth it all! “He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all thing?” (Romans

8:32). And, we will be able to respond from the heart, “Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ” (Philippians 3:8).

May Thy kingdom come!

Amen and amen.

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Effect of Truth upon Christ (1)

Effect of Truth upon others (1)

Effect upon the Enemy, Divine Council and Spiritual Warfare (1)

Elohim used twice in Psalm 82:1 describing Yahweh and the lesser gods (1)

Embrace sin, rejected those who didn't (1)

Emotions of God (1) (2) (3)

Enoch's "ungodly" sermon (1)

Enthronement of Satan as world ruler, by sinners through sinning (1)

Ephesians 6:12, most logical application of Divine Council backstory (1)

Epileptic condition, unsuccessful healing by disciples (1)

Escape is possible (1)

Eternal death (1)

Eternal Destiny, staked on Savior and Sanctifier (1)

Eternal life (1)

Eternal salvation, not because of obedience, but to the obedient (1)

Eternal sanctification possible on earth and in heaven (1)

Events after the Tower of Babel (1)

Everlasting God (1)

Everlasting salvation (1) (2) (3)

Evil angels battling holy angels (1)

Evil spirits or devils, Jews understood as demons (1)

Evolution of the species (1)

Execute judgment on the Nations, Sword of the Spirit, His Return (1)

Exorcism (1) (2)

Explanation for the delay in answering Daniel's petition (1)

Exploits, of the godly (1)

Extend the influence of the Almighty upon the world, peace and prosperity, where God puts us (1)

Failed application of many of Daniel's zealous interpreters (1)

Failure of OT Israel, unbelief in the Messiah (1)

Failure of NT Church, not laying hold of the Promises (1)

Failure of Yahweh, never (1)

Failure to comprehend Nephilim concept, inaccurate and incomplete picture for the Church (1)

Faith (1) (2) (3) (4)

Faith as sole condition of salvation, misleading (1)

Faith does not precede good works, nor do good works precede faith, both work together, "faith and his actions were working together [Greek, *sunergeō*]" (James 2:22) (1)

Faith in Christ, produces Eternal Life (1)

Faith is confidence in God, saves, then sanctifies us (1) (2)

Faithfully reflect and represent God, core objective (1)

Faithfulness, OT LXX, same as Truth (Ephesians 6:14) (1)

Faith never inconsistent with other instructions for salvation (1)

Faithlessness of Chosen People (1)

Faithless, self-justifying, selfish works, avoid at all costs (1)

Faith, real, only accompanied by right actions, given the opportunity (1)

Faith saves us (1)

Faith's Checkbook, C. H. Spurgeon's daily devotional guide featuring a promise of God for each day (1)

Faith, hardly present on the Earth, prior to the Second Coming (1)

Fallacy and doctrinal fetish, labelling good works as unequal to faith in salvation (1)

Fallen angels (1) (2)

Fallen angels procreated with human females to produce the Nephilim (1)

Fallen lesser gods and the demons know they are doomed (1)

Falling away of the churches in America (1)

False prophets, have only to tell him the lie they know he wanted to hear (1)

False reality, Devil's superiority and inevitability (1)

Fasting (1)

Fellowship of the Spirit, lost when sinning (1)

Fighting a common enemy in different spheres (1)

Fight the good fight to the finish, until the LORD takes us Home (1)

Final judgments of humanity (1)

Finest modern example of Intercessor Prayer Warrior, Reese Howells (1)

Finney, Charles G., explanation of Public Justice in the Atonement (1)

Flood, God's solution to the scourge of the Nephilim (1)

Flood of Noah (1) (2) (3)

Flood of Noah's significance, judgment of spiritual and physical corruption of man on earth (1)

Foot protection of the preparation of the Gospel of peace (1)

Footwear, appropriate, accomplish more, tire less (1)

Forbidden knowledge (1)

Forced submission of demons, not objective (1)

Foundation of Spiritual Warfare, humble seeking of understanding and prayer (1)

Free captive sinners from the Wicked One, Spiritual Warfare (1)

Free choice makes rebellion possible (1)

Freedom of the will, OT and NT (1)

Future benefit of human race (1)

Future welfare of the people of God, understanding of (1)

Gaining understanding of His Word and prophecies (1)

Garden of Eden (1) (2) (3)

Gateway to God (1)

Gentiles (NT), needed not to keep the Law of Moses (1)

Giants, Nephilim (1)

Gift of the Holy Ghost, the Promised Holy Spirit, given when baptized, when you believed (1) (2)

God causes us to do what we think was our idea to do (1)

God changes not, His immutability (1)

God considers, thousand years short (1)

Goddess of the hunt, Artemis (Greek), Diana (Roman) (1)

God does not hear prayer from obligation, which is not love (1)

God gives according to needs (1)

God gives it, but you must exercise it (1)

God is taking back the Earth through the Gospel (1)

God is working in our circumstances to increase our dependance upon Him (1)

Godlike appearance of angels (1)

Godliness and fitness to dwell with Him now and forever, ensured by God (1)

God must abide by same rules (1)

God of this world, Satan (1)

God only can save (1)

God saves those who obey Him (1)

God's good intentions for Pre-Flood humanity (1)

God's goodness, always been on display (1)

God's judgments display His righteousness (1)

God's position, summarized (1)

God's sovereignty over everything (1)

God's supernaturally revealed truth, preeminent (1)

God's whole plan for everything will be worth it all! (1)

God the Most High divided people, different nations, different languages, different gods (Psalm 82) (1)

God uses our sense of personal need to motivate our praying (1)

God will always find a way for His will to be done (1)

Golden calf rebellion (1)

Good news, offer of redemption to those who repent and believe the Gospel (1)

Good works, incapable and unnecessary to save us (1)

Good works never come before salvation (1)

Good works without testimony of Jesus, mere humanistic dogoodism (1)

Gospel (1) (2)

Gospel giving, shoe preparation (1)

Gospel of Believing Loyalty and Sanctified Living (1)

Gospel of Believing Loyalty, defined (1)

Gospel of the kingdom, preached in all the world, then (and only then) shall the end come (1)

Gospel submission to Christ, alone prevents war (1)

Gospel, true meaning, Michael Heiser (1)

Grace (1) (2) (3)

Grace and deliverance, embattled Saints, Second Coming (1)

Grace and faith, what God gives, you must receive (1)

Grace freely given, cheapened and abused by hardened sinners (1)

Grace, God's help for everything (1)

Grace of God, greater than all sin (1)

Great Commission (1) (2)

Greater dependance upon God is greater faith in God (1)

Hacksaw Ridge (1945) Desmond Doss saved 71 lives, miraculously, prayerfully (1)

Hark the Herald Angels Sing (1)

Hastening the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ (1) (2)

Heaven duplicated on Earth (1)

Heavenly Father, wisely efficient dispensing His unlimited resources (1)

Heaven secured from future rebellion (1)

Heaven sent change (repentance) lasts to the end (1)

Heiser, Michael (1) (2) (3)

Helmet of Salvation, hope of our salvation (1)

Helmet of Salvation, understanding of what, how, and why we are saved (1)

Highest Good (1) (2)

Historical Nephilim, extra-biblical gods and demigods (1)

Historic Preterism vs Pre-Tribulational Rapture Eschatology, prophecy already fulfilled vs prophecy yet to be fulfilled (1)

Holy conduct now and in eternity (1)

Holiness of Heaven secured (1)

Holy Spirit teaches and reminds us of what Christ said (1)

How Christianity transformed from traditional Judaism (1)

Howells, Rees (1879-1950), reminiscent of OT prophets, belief that intercession will influence the highest level of world events for the Kingdom of God (1)

How Spiritual Warfare is conducted in the heavenlies, and how it translates here below (1)

Human consciousness, understands inevitability of death (1)

Humanity of Jesus Christ (1)

Humankind, a miserable lot (1)

Humility (1)

Hypocrites, do not practice what they preach (1)

Hypocritical and self-deceived, if we consider ourselves spiritual, while disobeying God (1)

I come quickly, last thing Jesus said (1)

Idolatry (1)

Idolatry, attempts explaining the unknown without God (1)

Idolatry, cultural and social pressures to accept (1)

Idolatry, exploits fascination with self (1)

Idolatry, prevented by circumscription of Scripture (1)

Idolatry, worshipping other than the Living God (1)

Idols are demons (1)

Image of God (1) (2)

Image of God explained (1)

Imitating God, when we systematically reorganize our thinking (1)

Imputation, ascribed as derived from another (1)

Imputation of Christ's righteousness, when misconstrued, produces great evil (1)

Imputation of Christ's righteousness, when repent and believe (1)

Indication of the LORD's presence, overwhelming sense of powerlessness (1)

Indigenous pagan opposition (1)

Integration of new truth into our understanding (1)

Intended audience of the Book of Revelation, anyone with an ear to hear (1)

Intercede for others in like circumstances (1)

Intercession (1)

Intercession, God is the intervention (1)

Intercessor (1) (2)

Interpret King Nebuchadnezzar's dream, understanding given by God, possible even today (1)

Interrelationship between angelic actions in Heaven and reactions upon earthly inhabitants (1)

Israel, as a nation, will be spiritually reborn, at Christ's Second Coming (1)

Jealousy, Jehovah promised to make Israel jealous by reaching out to the Gentiles (1) (2)

Jehovah had already instructed the lying spirits to lie (1)

Jehovah will judge the godly and ungodly at the end (1)

Jerome defended the Book of Daniel, in his commentary (1)

Jesus alone saves (1) (2)

Jesus cast out demons, commonly with healing (1)

Jesus offended, even His disciples (1)

Jesus offended, to deliver captives (1)

Jesus promised, I come quickly (1)

Jesus refused the Devil the submission of worship (1)

Jesus the Righteous One (1)

Jesus used His confidence in the Father to protect Him (1)

Jesus used His Divine Council understanding to support His claim to divinity (1)

Jewish exorcists (1)

Job's tribulations (1)

Judged like their Rebel Angel parents (1)

Judgment of the Fallen Angels Some Time After the Bema Seat Judgment (1)

Judgment of the Saints follows the catching up or Rapture [harpazō] of the Church (1)

Judgment pronounced on wayward Divine Council members (1)

Judgments get everyone's attention (1)

Judgments resulted in the learning of God's righteous decrees (1)

Key characteristic of any intercessor (1)

Kindness, mercy, and love of Christ's atonement, counterbalanced Jehovah's judgment of Rebel Angels (1)

Kindness of God's grace, not accepted by scoffers (1)

Kingdom of Yahweh, Saints seek to hasten, not delay its coming (1)

Kingdoms of the world that exercise dominion over the Jews (1)

King Jehoshaphat of Judah, example of Divine Council,
Spiritual Warfare, and Prayer (1)

KING of Kings and LORD of Lords will execute judgment at
Armageddon (1)

King of Persia, fallen angel in charge of the earthly domain of
Persia (1) (2)

King Saul (1)

Lesser gods (1) (2) (3)

Life's work, complete, Shield of Faith (1)

Linking the Three Great Rebellions of Genesis with the Divine
Council (1)

Lose something when we sin, testimony of the Spirit (1)

Love produces obedience (1)

Loving Father (1)

Loyalty Oath of Allegiance, at baptism, lordship of Christ (1)

Lucifer (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6)

Lucifer abused his Moral Image Likeness to the Most High (1)

Lucifer, needed not a sinful nature to sin (1)

Magical incantation not, name of Jesus (1)

Main offensive weapon, the Word of God (1)

Make something out of a statement someone else can't (1)

Man prevents himself from being saved (1)

Manual of arms for the Christian (1)

Martin Luther, low opinion of the Epistle of James, "a work of straw" (1)

Massive hordes of the Enemy, easily overcome by the LORD (1)

Medal of Honor, Desmond Doss, for gallantry saving lives (1)

Mel Gibson movie, "Hacksaw Ridge" (1)

Mercy (1)

Merciful Kindness of God (1)

Messiah only, provides salvation (1)

Messiah the Prince (1)

Methuselah (1)

Michael protects earthly Israel because God is not done with elect Israel (1)

Michael the Archangel (1) (2) (3)

Micaiah, a prophet of God who would represent Jehovah's position (1)

Miracle, deliverance from a burning, fiery furnace (1)

Miracle, Handwriting on the Wall (1)

Missionary endeavor, should reflect the necessity of preaching the Gospel in all the world, in order for the Lord to return (1)

Missions movement, motivation for (1)

Missler, Chuck (1) (2)

Modern missionary response, Come, Lord Jesus (1)

Money cannot buy God, Luther's Ninety-Five Theses (1)

Moody, Dwight L., 19th century evangelist (1)

Moral agency (1) (2)

Morale of Heavenly Saints and Angels affected by our success and failure (1)

Moral perfection and imperfection, Michael Heiser (1)

Most beloved Scripture of the Gospels (1)

Murderer (1)

Mythological gods and demigods (1)

Name of God, powerful, handle carefully (1)

Name of Yahweh, special, claimed by Jesus (1)

Need to pray more (1)

Neglected Bible prophecy, failure to be ready for the Messiah (1)

Neglect in laying hold of the Promises of God, our great failure in the Church Age (1)

Neglect not the means of sanctification, NT Church warning (1)

Neglect of the prophetic vision of Daniel, Biblical truth is unnecessary, inadequate, or unsatisfactory (1)

Nephilim (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8)

Nephilim in the Church Age (1)

Nephilim, motivation for the production of Nephilim in modern times (1)

New Covenant embraced, differentiated traditional Judaism from the Church (1)

New Covenant, New Testament of the Christians (1)

New religion, no (1) (2)

Nimrod (1)

Noah and family, godly (1)

No Glorified Saint or Angel would become discouraged and rebel, Omniscience knows it, making future heavenly rebellions unthinkable (1)

No limitation on praying too much (1)

No one seemed to be listening to God, Pre-Flood spiritual deafness (1)

Not against us means for us, identifying friend from foe (1)

Not become a Jew first to become a follower of Christ (1)

Nothing happens without the LORD's permission (1)

Obedience represents His lordship and our loyalty to Him (1)

Obedience represents the presence of the Holy Spirit (1)

Occupy ourselves with the Lord's business, prior to His Return (1)

Offences must come, though we try hard not to (1)

Offended by God's Word, taking your place as an enemy of God (1)

Offensively, main objective, maximize Spirit led presentation of the Gospel (1)

Offensive weapon needed, to advance the Gospel (1)

Old age strips away everything but the understanding of the truth (1)

Old Covenant, mandated death for sinning (1)

Omnipotence and Omniscience will always win in the end (1)

Omniscience of God (1)

Omniscience of God, makes Him confident of the conclusion (1)

One world language (1)

Only eight godly, uncontaminated people left in the world (1)

Only penalty for frequency of prayer, have not because ye ask not (1)

Opposition, Christianity, religion with enemies (1) (2)

Original design, ill conceived plan, removal of moral agency (1)

Original Sin (1) (2) (3)

Others hear but may not discover prophecies (1)

OT predictions about armor of Jehovah fulfilled by Christ (1)

Our circumstances make a difference in our prayer life (1)

Our sympathies in prayer, reveal our understanding of Yahweh's Divine Council (1)

Overspreading the earth, commanded by God (1)

Overspreading the earth, refused by man (1)

Overvaluing our good works, as the foundation for our salvation, is self-deception (1)

Pagan idol worship (1)

Patience of God (1)

Paul and Barnabas identified as gods, supernatural cultural orientation of early NT times (1)

Paul the Apostle, at Antioch, Christian name first used (1)

Penitent, unselfish heart, not self-justifying (1)

Perfect, *tâmîym*, signifying unblemished physical sacrifice,
Noah and family (1)

Perpetual state of Spiritual Warfare (1)

Persecution, good works with testimony of Jesus (1)

Persecution of Paul by his fellow Jews (1)

Personal confession of sin, beginning of overhaul of prayer life
(1)

Physical depravity (1)

Pleasing God (1)

Political conquests, wars, and upheavals, Daniel prophesied (1)

Porphyry (3rd century AD), heathen philosopher attacked Book
of Daniel as forgery (1)

Praise God (1)

Praise and worship God based on discoveries of Truth (1)

Pray and not give up (1)

Pray before our mind directs our body in a series of motions (1)

Prayer (1)

Prayer and Intercession (1)

Pray for the fulfillment of Bible prophecy, see Ezekiel 36:37 (1)

Prayer for the world, remind them of the Word of God they've heard already (1)

Prayer God will answer, ask God to do what He wants to do (1)

Prayer is part of Spiritual Warfare (1)

Prayer, not typically defensive armor nor offensive weaponry, but can be both (1)

Prayer, our utter dependence upon God for everything (1)

Pray in response, Come, Lord Jesus (1)

Pray, not seize and steal (1)

Pray on until the prayer is answered (1)

Pray that God's judgments will be in the Earth, fulfill prophecy, His kingdom to come (1)

Prepared for the events that are about to come upon us (1)

Presence of God (1)

Preserving His honor, motivation for Yahweh's actions (1)

Preventing a repeat of Lucifer (1)

Prevent us from sinning now, means sin can be prevented in Heaven (1)

Pride (1) (2)

Prodigal son (1)

Produce children like themselves (1)

Progress parallels in the Heavenly Theater of Conflict as on the Earthly Theater of Conflict (1)

Promises marginalized because readily available (1)

Promises of God, all powerful (1)

Promises of God, complete guide to godly living (1)

Promises of God, develops understanding of God (1)

Promises of God, enables overcoming of evil desires (1)

Promises of God, makes us more like Christ (1)

Promises of God, manufacturer's label (1)

Promises, vague and open to interpretation, just what Christ wanted (1)

Promises, wrestle with the LORD, obtain (1)

Prophecy, detailed description of upcoming events in advance (1)

Prophecy fulfilled, Messiah's Breastplate of Righteousness (1)

Prophecy is God's desire for us to have an idea of how the affairs of man will progress (1)

Prophesied for tomorrow, revealed by the Holy Spirit (1)

Prophetic clock, runs on the destiny of Israel (1)

Protecting the immortal soul (1)

Protection and preservation (1) (2)

Protection coming from God, who is our Shield of Faith (1)

Protection, miraculous, until life's work completed (1)

Protoevangelium: salvation means war (1)

Public Justice satisfies God's Perfect Law, not by punishing the Messiah, but substituting His Perfect Suffering for the Endless Suffering of Sinners (1)

Public Justice vs. Retributive Justice, explains the Mystery of the Atonement (1)

Purpose in life (1) (2)

Pursuit of the Truth is our pursuit of God (1)

Pursuit of the Truth is Spiritual Warfare (1)

Put the kibosh on iniquity (1)

Rahab, those who will repent because of God's judgments (1)

Rainbow promise, never to judge by Flood again (1)

Rapture of the Church, idea of (1)

Rapture or Millenium? (1)

Reach out to the Gentiles, God's precedence - Romans 1:16 (1)

Readiness to make known the Gospel of Peace (1)

Rebel angels (1)

Rebellion (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8)

Rebellion of Lucifer in the heavenlies replicated by rebellion of Adam and Eve in the Garden (1)

Receive the Holy Spirit, at baptism (Peter), believe and be marked with the seal of the Holy Spirit (Paul) (1)

Reconciliation (1)

Recruiting an Evil Angel to tempt Ahab to go to war (1)

Repentance (1) (2)

Repentance is radical change of mind, siding with God against self (1)

Repentance of sin, restores holiness (1)

Repopulating the earth (1)

Rescuing captives from the Wicked One (1)

Resist and overcome Nephilim through faith (1)

Resist, not defeat, the devil (1)

Restrict common use of Scripture in public, enemy tactic (1)

Retributive Justice, only one sacrifice for one sinner (1)

Revival, in America, downturn in churches (1)

Righteous get better (ultimately) (1)

Righteous indignation of Christ (1)

Righteousness, contrary to Society's understanding (1)

Righteousness defined, right action inspired by God (1) (2)

Righteousness explained (1) (2)

Righteousness, identifies us as Christian by our actions (1)

Righteousness of Christ, imputed through faith in Christ (1)

Righteousness, our fruit of identification to the world (1)

Righteousness, promoted among the outcasts (1)

Righteousness, result of Spirit working in us (1)

Right reasons, attitude checking protection, Breastplate of Righteousness (1)

Role model of the NT Spiritual Warrior Intercessor, Jesus (1)

Role of the intercessor, understanding of, infirmities (KJV) (1)

Roman soldier, belt (1)

Ruler of the world, Prince of the Power of the Air, Satan (interim) (1)

Sacrificial Lamb of God, Jesus the Messiah, First Coming (1)

Salvation (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8)

Salvation changes behavior (1)

Salvation, explanation of why, who, what, and how we are saved (1)

Salvation necessary (1) (2) (3) (4)

Salvation, necessity of, sense of overwhelming need of (1)

Salvation sealed by the Spirit (1)

Sanctification (1)

Sanctification, battle fought for Israel and the Church (1)

Sanctification of earthly and heavenly saints, God is able to do so (1)

Sanctification of Glorified Saints and Angels indirectly aided by our conduct (1)

Sanctified Living, an inescapable part of the New Birth (1)

Satan (1) (2) (3) (4)

Satan bound by the Word, demons cast out (1)

Satan could never ultimately win (1)

Satan tempts us, God couldn't protect Jesus from the Cross (1)

Scattering of humanity, migration (1)

Scripture cannot contradict itself (1)

Scripture can prove anything, only they prefer their position more (1)

Scripture, not for our convenience (1)

Scripture of truth, everything that will happen recorded,
Scripture is one expression (1)

Scripture written always for us, but not necessarily directed to us
(1)

Second chance, program of grace (1)

Second Coming of Christ, concerning (1)

Second Coming of Christ, do battle with the lesser gods (1)

Second Coming of Christ, grace will be most evident (1)

Second Coming of Christ, most devastating judgments, prior to
(1)

Second Coming of Christ, rescue mission or triumphal entry,
both (1)

Secret weapon of the Christian, the Holy Spirit teaching us to
trust Christ more (1)

Seeking first the Kingdom of God (1)

Seeking the highest good of mankind, salvation is (1)

Self, crux of problem in salvation (1)

Self-deception only can hope to defeat Unlimited Power with limited power (1)

Self-existence, knowledge of, René Descartes (1)

Self-righteousness, dishonest depiction of God's righteousness (1)

Self-righteous works, deceive, cannot save us (1)

Self-sacrifice, hard to ignore (1)

Serpent adversary (1)

Seven Churches of Revelation (1)

Seventh Seal, heavenly hush (1)

Seventy Weeks Prophecy of Daniel (1)

Seven Vial or Bowl Judgments of God's Final Wrath (1)

Shield of Faith (1) (2)

Shield of Faith, God's power, protecting from sin and sinning (1)

Shield of Faith, only works, if known and used (1)

Sick, will recover (1)

Sin and treachery of Israel, motivation for Jehovah's armor (1)

Sin, earns death (1)

Sin, failure to do or not do as we can and ought (1)

Sin nature (1)

Sinner's agreement must be won, for salvation (1)

Sin, not righteousness, more common upon earth (1)

Sin, occasion for, when giving in to the flesh (1)

Sin's exceeding sinfulness, can't blame sin nature (1)

Sin's notable presence in the universe (1)

Sin without remorse and with complete abandon, only if deceived (1)

Sons of God (OT) means angels (1)

Sons of Noah, human ancestors of all humanity (1)

Sōtēria, Greek NT, salvation, saved, health, saving (1)

Speak in new tongues, enhanced communication of the Gospel (1)

Spirit of these Last Days, spirit of deception (1)

Spiritual Battle involvement, whether he realized it or not (1)

Spiritual Combat, of the godly, angels are keyed on responding to them (1)

Spiritual Conflict (1)

Spiritual Deception, employed against the godly, outright lies, false doctrine, general disinformation (1)

Spiritual Deception, liars lying to liars (1)

Spiritual Prayer Warriors, stand in the gap, ultimate victory more apparent (1)

Spiritual Treason, allowing yourself to be spiritually disarmed and lulled into supporting the goals of dishonest and wicked people (1)

Spiritual War, against anything that will replace our heartfelt allegiance to Yahweh (1)

Spiritual War, already took place in the heavenlies with Lucifer (1)

Spiritual Warfare (1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

Spiritual Warfare, benefitted by assistance of holy angels (1)

Spiritual Warfare, Ephesians 6:12 consistent with Psalm 82 (1)

Spiritual Warfare implications (1)

Spiritual Warfare in the heavenlies is replicated in the movement of the Church on Earth (1)

Spiritual Warfare, not optional (1)

Spiritual Warfare, on Earth mirrors Spiritual Warfare in Heaven (1)

Spiritual Warfare, why necessary, if Christ has already won? (1)

Spiritual Warrior, OT Daniel, NT Paul (1)

Spiritual Warrior, quintessential, Son of God, saves His people from their sins and sinning (1)

Spiritual Warrior, ultimate, Jehovah Himself (1)

Spiritual Warriors, lack of volunteers (1)

Spiritual Warrior's outfit, armor's name explains role and use (1)

Spiritual Warriors, whenever we are acting on behalf of Yahweh (1)

Spirit withholds His assurance and testimony, when in sin (1)

Spirit works predominantly through His Word (1)

Spurgeon, C. H., 19th century preacher of grace (1)

Start in Jerusalem, natural progress of Christianity, then worldwide (1)

Strategic understanding justified shorter term pain (1)

Strength, God put strength into Daniel, spoke strength into (1)

Submission and obedience, places us under the rulership of Christ (1)

Submission to God (1)

Submission to Christ, key to casting out demons (1)

Success, true (1)

Superhuman, crossbreed Nephilim (1)

Superiority of man's understanding over the Word of God (1)

Superior to intellectual self-assurance, testimony of the Spirit (1)

Supernatural and supreme, superiority of the Almighty (1)

Supernatural beings (1)

Supernatural enemy (1) (2)

Supernatural intrusion into bloodline of humanity (1)

Supreme heart preference, known to God (1)

Sword of the Spirit (1) (2) (3)

Synthesis, complex whole formed by combining (1)

Table of Nations (1) (2)

Tartarus (1)

Temple destruction (70 AD), emphasis taken away from Ceremonial Law (1)

Temple of the LORD in Jerusalem (1)

Temptation to sin, may not be impossible, must become more improbable (1)

Things will get worse before they get better (1)

Thy Kingdom Come! (1)

Time and space (1)

Took away the rebellion's ability to concentrate its wickedness (1)

Torture and death of the Messiah, victory (1)

Tower of Babel (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7)

Tranquility surrounds the Throne of God (1)

Treat people, according to conduct, not just what they say (1)

True Christian Consistency (1)

True Christianity (1)

Truth (1) (2)

Truth affects us regardless of acknowledgment by others (1)

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Truth, most potent weapon we must use upon the enemy (1)

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Appendix A: Perspective on God's Judgments

God judges everything, everywhere, all the time, not just events at the end of time. The expectation of the godly has been the certainty of God's righteous judgment. "O our God, wilt Thou not judge them? for we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon Thee" (2Chronicles 20:12). As a judge, God interprets and applies the law to all His creation. "Tell ye, and bring them near; yea, let them take counsel together: who hath declared this from ancient time? who hath told it from that time? have not I the LORD? and there is no God else beside Me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside Me" (Isaiah 45:21). The LORD's immutability guarantees His actions always are the very definition of righteousness. "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" (Genesis 18:25). As the Judge of All Possible Universes, Jehovah's actions can be discerned and understood by careful examination of His Law. "Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and Thy law is the truth" (Psalm 119:142). What actions mankind feels are random acts of disaster, are actually caused by the LORD. "When a trumpet sounds in a city, do not the people tremble? When disaster comes to a city, has not the Lord caused it?" (Amos 3:6 NIV). Humanity makes the great mistake of discounting the scope and reach of God's judgments. "And also I have withholden the rain from you, when there were yet three months to the harvest: and I caused it to rain upon one city, and caused it not to rain upon another city: one piece was rained upon, and the

piece whereupon it rained not withered” (Amos 4:7). When God has been ignored, He will respond as one could expect of a Great Sovereign. “If ye will not hear, and if ye will not lay it to heart, to give glory unto My name, saith the LORD of hosts, I will even send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings: yea, I have cursed them already, because ye do not lay it to heart” (Malachi 2:2). When the Living God is actively spurned, God’s most alarming verdict is His abandonment. “Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone” (Hosea 4:17).

What hope does mankind have from God’s judgments? To learn righteousness. “With my soul have I desired Thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek Thee early: for when Thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness” (Isaiah 26:9). But, do we need apocalyptic judgments to finally learn righteousness? Listen to the Apostle Paul. “For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world” (1Corinthians 11:31-32). Self-judgment and confession are key to the Spirit of God giving victory in Spiritual Warfare. “Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much” (James 5:16).

Self-judgment is keeping in step with His Spirit. “Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way

everlasting” (Psalm 139:23-24). When we cooperate with the Spirit of Holiness, we will introspectively self-judge and self-confess any wayward, sinful actions, not simply because it is conduct unbecoming a Child of God, but we are truly unhappy about our behavior misrepresenting God’s holiness. “I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus; Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke: turn Thou me, and I shall be turned; for Thou art the LORD my God. Surely after that I was turned, I repented; and after that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh: I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth” (Jeremiah 31:18-19). If we would not eventually self-judge ourselves by the direction of His Spirit, we would force the Almighty to treat us like the ungodly, whom He will judge at His Return. “And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb” (Revelation 6:15-16). May God favor His people with self-judgment and repentance to the acknowledging of His truth.

Appendix B: Unconventional Christianity

“Woe to them that are at ease in Zion” (Amos 6:1).

A kingdom dedicated to the highest good of God and to our neighbor as ourself would find its greatest expression in humbly taking Christ’s yoke upon ourselves, which is submitting gladly to His will. “For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light” (Matthew 11:30). True happiness is found in the discipline of submission to our Heavenly Father, while standing firmly against the Wicked One. “Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you” (James 4:7). The paradox of resting in the arms of our Savior must be counterbalanced against our warfare with the Enemy, who would allure us with “all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life” (1John 2:16). If we do not dedicate ourselves to a culture of Spiritual Warfare, we will be vanquished by a wily enemy, becoming complacent in Zion. “Woe to them that are at ease in Zion, and trust in the mountain of Samaria, which are named chief of the nations, to whom the house of Israel came” (Amos 6:1). Our trust should not be in the false protection of man’s defenses, and our delight should not be in man’s comforts. Asceticism or the practice of self-denial is not the goal. Instead, a willingness to put aside anything interfering with our seeking to know Christ as the answer to “all things that pertain unto life and godliness” (2Peter 1:3) must be our quest. Every other plan’s fitness must be evaluated from this perspective.

While we are at ease abiding in our Savior, we should not seek our comfort in the world. Compared to the world, ours is an Unconventional Understanding of Our Circumstances and Warfare:

1. Life requires being disciplined by God, for destruction is easy, and life is found by few. “13 Enter ye in at the strait [narrow] gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: 14 Because strait [narrow] is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it” (Matthew 7:13-14).
2. ‘Christ is the answer’ is not an embarrassing cliché, but a unifying field principle, which resolves all the questions of life. “Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me” (John 14:6).
3. Science cannot behold the “Invisible God” (Colossians 1:15) directly; but still, the same who rely upon science while rejecting God, desperately rely upon the faithfulness of His Natural Law to justify their unbelief. “And He is before all things, and by Him all things consist” (Colossians 1:17).
4. Salvation is gracious because God gives it; however, He gives it only to those who (in cooperation with the Holy Spirit) perform the works of faith. “14 What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not

works? can faith save him? 17 Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone” (James 2:14, 17).

5. Preservation is an act of the Holy Spirit forcefully preventing anyone from removing us from His hand, while persevering in faith is our permission to let God continue to preserve us. “And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand” (John 10:28).
6. Salvation is never against the will of the individual being saved in the beginning or at the end; in other words, to die in unbelief is not to be saved. “But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved” (Matthew 24:13).
7. Though science may not justify the position of faith, neither can it reliably disprove faith. “Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear” (Hebrews 11:3).
8. Though faith is our willing confidence or conviction that God is true, only the active presence of the Holy Spirit working in us makes us willing. “And I will put My spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes, and ye shall keep My judgments, and do them” (Ezekiel 36:27).
9. The feeble attempts to scientifically explain the beginning of all things without allowing for the work of God the Creator requires more of a secular kind of faith than the faith that comes from the Scripture. “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth” (Genesis 1:1).

10. Claiming that you can prove anything using Scripture, only supports the accuser's personal interpretation, while condemning all other interpretations. "As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest [twist], as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction" (2Peter 3:16).
11. Scripture is our authoritative guide to all things supernatural, since its author is the Living God. "16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17 That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works" (2Timothy 3:16-17).
12. Ours is not to make the Word of God more agreeable to the preconceived notions of man, but to allow God's Spirit to enlarge our understanding and make us more agreeable to God. "The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law" (Deuteronomy 29:29).
13. God's works are miraculous. "The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto Him, Rabbi, we know that Thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that Thou doest, except God be with Him" (John 3:2).
14. Godly seed is physically procreating children, who are brought up to trust God. "And wherefore [why] one? That He might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your

spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth” (Malachi 2:15).

15. Nephilim are the Fallen Angels’ version of producing a physical seed that will supplant the seed of the woman. “And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed [the seed of the Serpent] and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel” (Genesis 3:15).
16. A miraculous, worldwide flood was sent by the Almighty to annihilate Nephilim contaminated humankind. “And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth Me that I have made them” (Genesis 6:7).
17. The Miracle of the Tower of Babel was the Most High God’s confusing of the common language of the rebels to protect the sanctity of the Unseen Realm. “And the LORD said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do” (Genesis 11:6).
18. The annihilation of the occupants of the Promised Land was to guard against the resurgence of the Nephilim among the Israelites. “And Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it” (Numbers 13:30).
19. David fought and overcame the Nephilim, when he defeated Goliath. “And there went out a champion out of

the camp of the Philistines, named Goliath, of Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span [nearly seven feet]” (1Samuel 17:4).

20. Daniel was taught that though the Enemy can never ultimately win, he can DELAY the Lord’s final victory. “But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia” (Daniel 10:13).
21. Jesus defeated the demons or devils, who are the disembodied spirits of dead Nephilim, when He cast them out repeatedly during His earthly ministry. “When the even was come, they brought unto Him many that were possessed with devils: and He cast out the spirits with His word, and healed all that were sick” (Matthew 8:16).
22. Disciples are also given authority over the Devil and demons, if they are truly submitted to God. “Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you” (James 4:7).
23. “Lying wonders” (2Thessalonians 2:9), such as UFOs, surround Satan’s attempt to install his substitute Christ or Antichrist (a Nephilim) into a Third Temple to fulfill his program of the “mystery of iniquity” (2Thessalonians 2:7). “Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God” (2Thessalonians 2:4).

24. The time preceding the Second Coming of Jesus Christ will be a time of apostasy, where the “love of many shall wax cold” (Matthew 24:12) — because the deceived will find UFOs as a better explanation for Unexplained Supernatural Phenomena than the religion represented as Christianity in the Bible. “I tell you that He will avenge them [the elect] speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?” (Luke 18:8).

The Spiritual Warfare of the Christian demands not simply taking ground from the Enemy by freeing captives from the slavery of sin through the Gospel — which hastens Christ’s coming (2Peter 3:12) — but also, by cooperatively and patiently praying with Brothers and Sisters to overcome the Enemy’s delay and hasten our Lord’s return.

“He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus” (Revelation 22:20).

Amen and amen.

Appendix C: Mystery of Iniquity

“For the mystery [Greek, *mustērion*] of iniquity [Greek, *anomia*] doth already work: only he who now letteth [Greek, *katechō*, restrains] will let [restrain], until he be taken out of the way” (2Thessalonians 2:7 KJV).

“For the secret power of lawlessness is already at work; but the one who now holds it back will continue to do so till he is taken out of the way” (2Thessalonians 2:7 NIV).

“For the hidden power of lawlessness is already at work. However, the one who holds him back will do so until he is taken out of the way” (2Thessalonians 2:7 NET).

What is this Mystery of Iniquity? A mystery is something unexplained or unknown, at least until it is revealed. In the Greek, *mustērion* is translated as “mystery” (KJV), “secret power” (NIV), and “hidden power” (NET), while *anomia* is translated as “iniquity” (KJV) and “lawlessness” (NIV and NET). What is a mystery, secret, and hidden? Evidently, the identity of the one described in the following verse. “And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming” (2Thessalonians 2:8). I believe this describes the Antichrist, “who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he

as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God” (2Thessalonians 2:4).

In 2Thessalonians 2:7 the Mystery of Iniquity “doth already work” means the Deceiver’s secret program working against Christ has been working all along throughout human history. “But the one who now holds it back” (2:7 NIV) is Yahweh Himself through His Spirit. But, He forewarned us, “My Spirit shall not always strive with man” (Genesis 6:3). “Will do so until He is taken out of the way” (2Thessalonians 2:7 NET) indicates Divine agreement that Antichrist’s revealing of himself during the Seventieth Week of Daniel is only by God taking away His Spirit’s restraining influence through the miraculous rapture⁸⁹, withdrawal, catching up, or *harpazō* (1Thessalonians 4:17) of His Spirit Indwelt Church. Once the cataclysmic withdrawal of the Church takes place, the remaining World System will have the new beginning Satan so desperately desires to enthrone himself as the god to be worshipped by the world. Blasphemous and frightening! Remember, the Almighty is using Satan’s plan against Satan.

⁸⁹ Rapture is an eschatological, theological concept, but not translated in the Biblical text. *Harpazō* or “caught up” is found in 1Thessalonians 4:17. Whether this miraculous event takes place at the Beginning of the Seventieth Week of Daniel (Pre-Tribulational Rapture), the Middle of the Tribulation (Mid-Tribulational Rapture), before the End of the Tribulation (Pre-Wrath Rapture), after the Tribulation Week (Post-Tribulational Rapture), or some combination of the above, the Godly should be **Ready to Go, But Prepared to Stay**. Christ is the keeper of the Saints. And, like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who were threatened by Nebuchadnezzar, our hearts should be fixed: “If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up” (Daniel 3:17-18).

At the Beginning of Daniel’s Seventieth Week, the Lord of the Harvest will cease to restrain the Mystery of Iniquity, when the Spirit Indwelt Church is removed, raptured, or caught up from the Earth. “Only he [Holy Spirit Indwelt Church] who now letteth [Greek, *katechō*, restrains] will let [restrain], until he be taken out of the way” (2Thessalonians 2:7). Then, the revelation of this “Man of Sin” (2:3), as God in the flesh, occurs specifically at the Middle of the Seventieth Week of Daniel (Daniel 9:27), which is the Abomination of Desolation (Matthew 24:15, Mark 13:14). “But when ye shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not, (let him that readeth understand,) then let them that be in Judaea flee to the mountains” (Mark 13:14). And, the iniquity or *anomia* in the Mystery of Iniquity is the very definition of sin. “Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law [Greek, *anomia*]” (1John 3:4).

When Nebuchadnezzar repented, he made this following pronouncement about the Most High God. “And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay [slap] His hand, or say unto Him, What doest thou?” (Daniel 4:35). Yahweh is a Sovereign God; yet, He allows Himself to be directed by prayer. Contradictory? No. That is the Mystery of Godliness. “And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of

angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory” (1Timothy 3:16). Our opponents scoff at the incomprehensibility of God; yet, they don't blink an eye, when allowing for the multiple realities of an indefinite number of universes. Which solution do you prefer?

On the one hand, Lucifer rebelled because he felt himself as good as the Creator. “For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High” (Isaiah 14:13-14). This is deceived and irrational. Yahweh is not just a powerful Creator — He is All Powerful. Man’s machinations can go awry and conceivably destroy us, if God allows it. But, Limited Power cannot defeat All Power. “God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this; that power belongeth unto God” (Psalm 62:11). Jesus, the Son of God, claimed to be similarly All Powerful. “And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth” (Matthew 28:18).

On the other hand, the Adversary has been continually thwarted by our Heavenly Father throughout history. He failed to eliminate all of the Godly Seed from the Earth, replacing it with his Nephilim tainted seed before the Flood. He was refused control of the world, when the Almighty confused the languages of mankind at the Tower of Babel. He failed to prevent the Children of Israel from possessing the Promised

Land. He could not prevent the coming of the Messiah. He could not stop the mission of Christ from atoning for the sins of mankind on the Cross. In fact, he plotted to put Christ on the Cross. He could not prevent Christ from arising from the dead. He was not able to prevent the giving of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. And, he will not be able to stop the Second Coming of Christ. In fact, he will promote his own Kingdom Program resulting in being recognized as God in the flesh (another Nephilim), seated upon a Throne in the Temple of Jerusalem, at a future time. And, he will only play into the Almighty's plan to take back the planet, restore Eden, rescue His Church, and finally redeem Israel.

So, the Mystery of Iniquity both knows it is doomed to fail, yet plans on winning! Contradictory? Certainly! Irrational? Absolutely! Dangerous? Unquestionably. But, "ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world" (1John 4:4).

"And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen" (Romans 16:20).

Appendix D: Lying Wonders

What is a Lying Wonder?

“Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders” (2Thessalonians 2:9 KJV).

“The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with how Satan works. He will use all sorts of displays of power through signs and wonders that serve the lie” (2Thessalonians 2:9 NIV).

In context, the Antichrist is being described.

Paul used this trio of things to describe the attributes of the Antichrist, “whose coming is after the working of Satan” (2:9) — “power and signs and lying wonders” (2:9).

“Power [Greek, *dunamis*]” (2:9) is what anyone can recognize. The Third Plague of Moses upon the Egyptians was swarms of gnats (NIV) or lice (KJV). If you ever unexpectedly breathed in a gnat and know the disgust of that feeling, then imagine all the dust becoming swarms of gnats on man and beast (Genesis 8:16-18 NIV) by the outstretched rod of Aaron. When Pharaoh’s magicians attempted to do the same, they could not. “Then the magicians said unto Pharaoh, This is the finger of God: and Pharaoh’s heart was hardened, and he hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had said” (Exodus 8:19). Power is noticed by the ungodly and the godly because it cannot be ignored. For this

reason, the Gospel is called the Power of God Unto Salvation. “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” (Romans 1:16). If the ungodly can ignore the Gospel then they have developed a resistance to it, and you must alter your approach to its presentation. God will do that, if you don’t.

“Signs [Greek, *sēmeion*]” (2Thessalonians 2:9) are miracles, which cannot be explained by Natural Law. In other words, supernatural phenomena, which cannot be duplicated scientifically, is available to Satan and his version of Christ. The Antichrist will not be called Antichrist, since the name implies he is an impostor. Only as the events of Daniel’s Seventieth Week unfold, will it become increasingly apparent, who the Antichrist is. Eventually he will declare himself to be God in the Jerusalem Temple. “Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God” (2:4). And, the False Prophet will require all to worship him as God on penalty of death for refusal. “And he [the False Prophet] had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed” (Revelation 13:15).

“Lying [Greek, *pseudos*, false] wonders [Greek, *teras*, omens]” (2Thessalonians 2:9). Deception is the key to the workings of

Satan and the Antichrist. When supernatural wickedness manifests power and miracles in support of a false conclusion — such as, the Antichrist is the True God, seated in the Temple of God in Jerusalem — then humanity either must trust the evidence of the lying wonders or the evidence revealed by the Testimony of God’s Word and His Two Witnesses. “To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them” (Isaiah 8:20). “And I will give power unto My two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth” (Revelation 11:3).

Of special note, “lying wonders” (2Thessalonians 2:9) are essentially anything supernatural that contradicts or defies our understanding of scientific, Natural Law, but used in opposition to God. When given the necessity of choosing between the Lying Wonder and the Truth of the Word of God, it is understandable that most will be overpowered by the testimony of their senses in support of the Lying Wonders. “10 And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. 11 And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: 12 That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness” (2Thessalonians 2:10-12). But, disbelieving the Greater Truth of God’s Spiritual Reality comes with the sober realization of damnation, because they had “pleasure in unrighteousness” (2:12). Pleasuring God by trusting God is

available to everyone. So, not believing God's Word is a foundational act of displeasing God. That may not seem like it matters much, but it does.

The Greater Reality of the Truth of God's Word

1. The reality or truth of God's existence. His existence may be disputed by sceptics, but God is not impressed. After all, the most significant being in all of existence knows of His self existence. The Self-Existent God does not need to be persuaded of the reality of His own words. "In the beginning God" (Genesis 1:1).
2. The weightiness of His words. Man's words can be easily multiplied and discounted. But, God's words are truth. His words govern the reality of all possible universes. Even His enemies cannot protect themselves against the truth of His words. "Thy word is truth" (John 17:17).
3. The powerfulness of His words. We need only determine God is the source and originator of His words to conclude power comes from His words. We have been put to sleep with a recitation of God's words without a concurrent expectation of power, dulling our own response to His words. "So shall My word be that goeth forth out of My mouth: it shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it" (Isaiah 55:11). "Is not My word like as a fire? saith the LORD; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?" (Jeremiah 23:29).

4. The strength of God's words. When God speaks strength into His prophets, He does it through His words. When He says, "Be strong" (Joshua 1:6), then we are strong. We do not have to consult anyone or anything else for permission. God's words make us strong.
5. The wisdom of God's words. Even God's enemies can perceive the wisdom and understanding of God's words. "And in all matters of wisdom and understanding, that the king enquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in all his realm" (Daniel 1:20). Skillful writers of this world must match their writing to the wisdom of God's Moral Law to gain a resonance or sympathy from others of God's Moral Creation, who read and consume their writings.
6. In Awe of Thy Word. Forget the fear of man's words, God's words are infinitely more worthy of our concern. "Princes have persecuted me without a cause: but my heart standeth in awe of Thy word" (Psalm 119:161). "Rulers pursue me for no reason, yet I am more afraid of disobeying Your instructions" (Psalms 119:161 NET).
7. Jesus is the Word of God. So inseparable are God's words from Himself, He declares His Son to be the Word of God. "1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth" (John 1:1, 14). "And He was clothed with a

vesture dipped in blood: and His name is called The Word of God” (Revelation 19:13).

The significance of these Lying Wonders with the Antichrist is the revelation of the person of this World Leader worthy of being worshipped is so contrary to our understanding of the possibilities of worldwide agreement among political, economic, cultural, and religious differences that it would require something otherworldly and supernatural to cause worldwide agreement. Either this would be the real person of Christ or a Substitute Christ. Of course, this Substitute Christ would be Satan’s plan. A Nephilim or even a Supernatural Alien could very well fit the description of what Paul describes as the Antichrist in 2Thessalonians 2. ***Only a true Disciple’s grasp of the Greater Reality of the Truth of God’s Word (see above) would keep him from worshipping Satan’s Substitute Christ.***

“1 Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto Him, 2 That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. 3 Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; 4 Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. 5 Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? 6 And now ye know

what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. 7 For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. 8 And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming: 9 Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, 10 And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. 11 And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: 12 That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness” (2Thessalonians 2:1-12).

We have been warned!

May God preserve His people from this Coming Great Deception!

Appendix E: Love Is Not Just A Special Way of Feeling

Was the Creation of Heaven and Earth a miracle of God? If a miracle defies Natural Law for explanation, then does Creation taking place in Six Literal Days defy the scientific explanation of evolution over a far greater epoch of time? Creationists have proposed solutions that amaze me at their scientific possibility of reconciling Science with Creation. But, if we accept the plain statement of Scripture in Genesis, then God created in Six Literal Days and rested on the Seventh. “For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it” (Exodus 20:11).

I may draw criticism from the scientifically educated Evangelical Christian Community for asserting God created the world in Six Literal Days and rested on the Seventh Day without a necessity for a greater period of time. Even with the understanding of the poetic way the Genesis text is presented, *I believe Jesus the Creator created everything in Six Literal Days, because He could.* “1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 The same was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made by Him; and without Him was not any thing made that was made” (John 1:1-3).

Now that I have suggested how Contemporary Christianity could be construed as in agreement with the Secular, Scientific

Community on Creation, I draw your attention to another discussion, far from the field of science, namely, *What is love?* Just as Conventional Christianity has a tendency to mimic Secular Understanding about Creation; likewise, it would not be surprising for Conventional Christianity to sound like the world about love. The Secular Answer about love may involve a scientific discussion of physical sexuality, the romance of courtship, or the behavior of mating. And the Conventional Christian Community might even elevate the discussion with examples of noble behavior. But, what saith the Scripture? “For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments: and His commandments are not grievous [burdensome, i.e., impossible]” (1John 5:3). Our ability to accomplish anything is measured by God’s commands, since He will never require us to do the impossible. *To obey God from the heart is truly the love of God.*

I confess that equating love with obedience to God’s commands can degenerate into a dispassionate religion of works that may not attract the world other than their primal fear of hell because of their rejection of Jesus. “I am going to Heaven, and you are going to Hell, because you have not become a Christian.” Many will simply point to a decision of trusting Christ, as their certainty of Heaven. But, what saith the Scripture? “3 And hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. 4 He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him” (1John 2:3-4). Only those who presently abide in loving obedience have

a right to claim they know Him to be their Personal Lord and Savior.

This concept of abiding in Christ or remaining (abiding) in obedience is taught in the Gospel of John. “If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love; even as I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love” (John 15:10). Jesus especially instructed His disciples in the Secret of Abiding during the days immediately preceding the Cross. “If ye love Me, keep My commandments” (John 14:15). We know that “God is love” (1John 4:8, 16). Paul taught us the character of love (1Corinthians 13), and Jesus personified God’s teaching on love. But here, Jesus carefully explained to His Inner Circle the True Nature of Love. “He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me: and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him” (John 14:21). If love is only “grit-your-teeth-and-do-what-He-tells-you” then, sadly, that would not be impressive. But, if obedience flows from an abiding relationship with Jesus Christ, where we are walking in step with His Spirit, then it is gladly, joyfully “God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure” (Philippians 2:13). In particular, our joy is to remain or abide in the Vine. “I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without Me ye can do nothing” (John 15:5). Abiding in Yahweh has always been His goal for all of us, who are His creation. “Lord, Thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations” (Psalm 90:1).

The difference between Unconditional Love and Conditional Love must also be addressed. Not all of God's Love is the Unconditional Love of John 3:16. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). This Love of Benevolence is Unconditional because "God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). Without any conditions for anyone, He loved us unconditionally "while we were yet sinners." Everyone is included in the World of Lost Sinners. Anyone can be saved. **However**, God also has a Conditional Love, some have historically called it a Love of Complacency — not because it doesn't care, but because it is complacent upon or rests upon obedience to Him. Conditional Love is, again, John 14:21. "He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me: and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him" (John 14:21). ***This was the critical or key statement Christ made to His committed followers right before He would leave them for Calvary.***

Yahweh has always desired His people to obey Him, not because of fear of punishment or hope of reward, but because they love Him. "Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him" (John 14:23). Even the OT can find such theology, attaching love to

obedience: “12 And now, Israel, what doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to fear the LORD thy God, to walk in all His ways, and to love Him, and to serve the LORD thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, 13 To keep the commandments of the LORD, and His statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good” (Deuteronomy 10:12-13 cp. Deuteronomy 11:13).

Amplifying the OT theme of loving obedience was a New Covenant promise of an Indwelling Spirit producing a willing heart resulting in obedience. “And I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes, and ye shall keep My judgments, and do them” (Ezekiel 36:27). Paul taught a similar concept. “For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure” (Philippians 2:13). Pentecost showered the Blessed Holy Spirit upon the Church, which will even more produce the Final Harvest desired by the Father. “18 And on My servants and on My handmaidens I will pour out in those days of My Spirit; and they shall prophesy: 21 And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Acts 2:18, 21).

“But whoso keepeth His word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in Him” (1John 2:5).

May our understanding of the Love of God assist us in building His kingdom.

“And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ” (2Thessalonians 3:5).

Amen and amen.

Appendix F: Conduct for Spiritual Warfare

God is⁹⁰, I exist⁹¹.

His Will⁹², I act⁹³.

His Power⁹⁴, I employ⁹⁵.

His Kingdom⁹⁶, I submit⁹⁷.

⁹⁰ “He that cometh to God must believe that He is” (Hebrews 11:6).

⁹¹ “For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse” (Romans 1:20).

⁹² “Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven” (Matthew 6:10).

⁹³ “For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure” (Philippians 2:13).

⁹⁴ “All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth” (Matthew 28:18).

⁹⁵ “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me” (Philippians 4:13).

⁹⁶ “Whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom is from generation to generation: And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest Thou?” (Daniel 4:34-35).

⁹⁷ “For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God” (Romans 14:11).

His Law⁹⁸, I admire⁹⁹.

His Judgments¹⁰⁰, I support¹⁰¹.

His Enemies¹⁰², I oppose¹⁰³.

His Reality¹⁰⁴, I aspire¹⁰⁵.

His Word¹⁰⁶, I trust¹⁰⁷.

His Truth¹⁰⁸, I love¹⁰⁹.

⁹⁸ “Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law” (Psalm 119:18).

⁹⁹ “Make me to understand the way of Thy precepts: so shall I talk of Thy wondrous works” (Psalm 119:27).

¹⁰⁰ “When Thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness” (Isaiah 26:9).

¹⁰¹ “Righteous art Thou, O LORD, and upright are Thy judgments” (Psalm 119:137).

¹⁰² “God is jealous, and the LORD revengeth; the LORD revengeth, and is furious; the LORD will take vengeance on His adversaries, and He reserveth wrath for His enemies” (Nahum 1:2).

¹⁰³ “Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head” (Romans 12:20).

¹⁰⁴ “For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the LORD” (Isaiah 55:8).

¹⁰⁵ “But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him” (1Corinthians 2:9).

¹⁰⁶ “Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth” (John 17:17).

¹⁰⁷ “Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me” (Acts 27:25).

¹⁰⁸ “Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth” (John 17:17).

¹⁰⁹ “O how I love Thy law! it is my meditation all the day” (Psalm 119:97).

His Commands¹¹⁰, I obey¹¹¹.

His Warnings¹¹², I heed¹¹³.

His Promises¹¹⁴, I believe¹¹⁵.

His Prophecies¹¹⁶, I apply¹¹⁷.

His Son¹¹⁸, I abide¹¹⁹.

¹¹⁰ “He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me: and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him” (John 14:21).

¹¹¹ “For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments: and His commandments are not grievous [burdensome, i.e., impossible]” (1John 5:3).

¹¹² “Discretion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee” (Proverbs 2:11).

¹¹³ “And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you” (Matthew 24:4).

¹¹⁴ “Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust” (2Peter 1:4).

¹¹⁵ “Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me” (Acts 27:25).

¹¹⁶ “17 But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; 18 How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts” (Jude 1:17-18).

¹¹⁷ “20 But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, 21 Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life” (Jude 1:20-21).

¹¹⁸ “In this was manifested [made known] the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son [‘one and only Son’ NIV] into the world, that we might live through Him” (1John 4:9).

¹¹⁹ “If ye abide [remain] in Me, and My words abide [remain] in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you” (John 15:7).

His Spirit¹²⁰, I walk¹²¹.

His Gospel¹²², I share¹²³.

His People¹²⁴, I befriend¹²⁵.

His Concerns¹²⁶, I volunteer¹²⁷.

His Joy¹²⁸, I rejoice¹²⁹.

His Intercession¹³⁰, I pray¹³¹.

¹²⁰ “At this I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, Don’t do that! I am a fellow servant with you and with your brothers and sisters who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For it is the Spirit of prophecy who bears testimony to Jesus” (Revelation 19:10 NIV).

¹²¹ “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God” (Romans 8:14).

¹²² “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief” (1 Timothy 1:15).

¹²³ “How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?” (Romans 10:14).

¹²⁴ “Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God” (Ruth 1:16).

¹²⁵ “I am a companion of all them that fear Thee, and of them that keep Thy precepts” (Psalm 119:63).

¹²⁶ “And He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor: therefore His arm brought salvation unto Him; and His righteousness, it sustained Him” (Isaiah 59:16).

¹²⁷ “Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me” (Isaiah 6:8).

¹²⁸ “The joy of the LORD is your strength” (Nehemiah 8:10).

¹²⁹ “Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice” (Philippians 4:4).

¹³⁰ “Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us” (Romans 8:34).

¹³¹ “Be careful [anxious] for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God” (Philippians 4:6).

His Example¹³², I follow¹³³.

His Fellowship¹³⁴, I comfort¹³⁵.

His Teaching¹³⁶, I understand¹³⁷.

His Testing¹³⁸, I suffer¹³⁹.

His Faithfulness¹⁴⁰, I escape¹⁴¹.

¹³² “For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps” (1Peter 2:21).

¹³³ “Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ” (1Corinthians 11:1).

¹³⁴ “God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord” (1Corinthians 1:9).

¹³⁵ “Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God” (2Corinthians 1:4).

¹³⁶ “Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will shew you things to come” (John 16:13).

¹³⁷ “Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding” (Proverbs 4:7).

¹³⁸ “The LORD your God proveth [is testing] you, to know whether ye love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul” (Deuteronomy 10:3).

¹³⁹ “Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (2Timothy 3:12).

¹⁴⁰ “There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer [allow] you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it” (1Corinthians 10:13).

¹⁴¹ “Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man” (Luke 21:36).

His Hand¹⁴², I persevere¹⁴³.

His Return¹⁴⁴, I hope¹⁴⁵.

His Overcoming¹⁴⁶, I conquer¹⁴⁷.

His Reigning¹⁴⁸, I rule¹⁴⁹.

His Heaven¹⁵⁰, I long for¹⁵¹.

¹⁴² “28 And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand. 29 My Father, which gave them Me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father’s hand” (John 10:28-29).

¹⁴³ “He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved” (Matthew 24:13; Mark 13:13).

¹⁴⁴ “Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven” (Acts 1:11).

¹⁴⁵ “Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:13).

¹⁴⁶ “These things I have spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33).

¹⁴⁷ “Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us” (Romans 8:37).

¹⁴⁸ “And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth” (Revelation 19:6).

¹⁴⁹ “If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him: if we deny Him, He also will deny us” (2Timothy 2:12).

¹⁵⁰ “16 They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. 17 For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes” (Revelation 7:16-17).

¹⁵¹ “Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy” (Jude 1:24).

His Eternity¹⁵², I marvel¹⁵³.

His Highness¹⁵⁴, I worship¹⁵⁵.

His Person¹⁵⁶, I rest¹⁵⁷.

¹⁵² “The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and He shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, Destroy them” (Deuteronomy 33:27).

¹⁵³ “Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it” (Psalm 139:6).

¹⁵⁴ “For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones” (Isaiah 57:15).

¹⁵⁵ “I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God” (Revelation 22:9).

¹⁵⁶ “Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28).

¹⁵⁷ “There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God” (Hebrews 4:9).