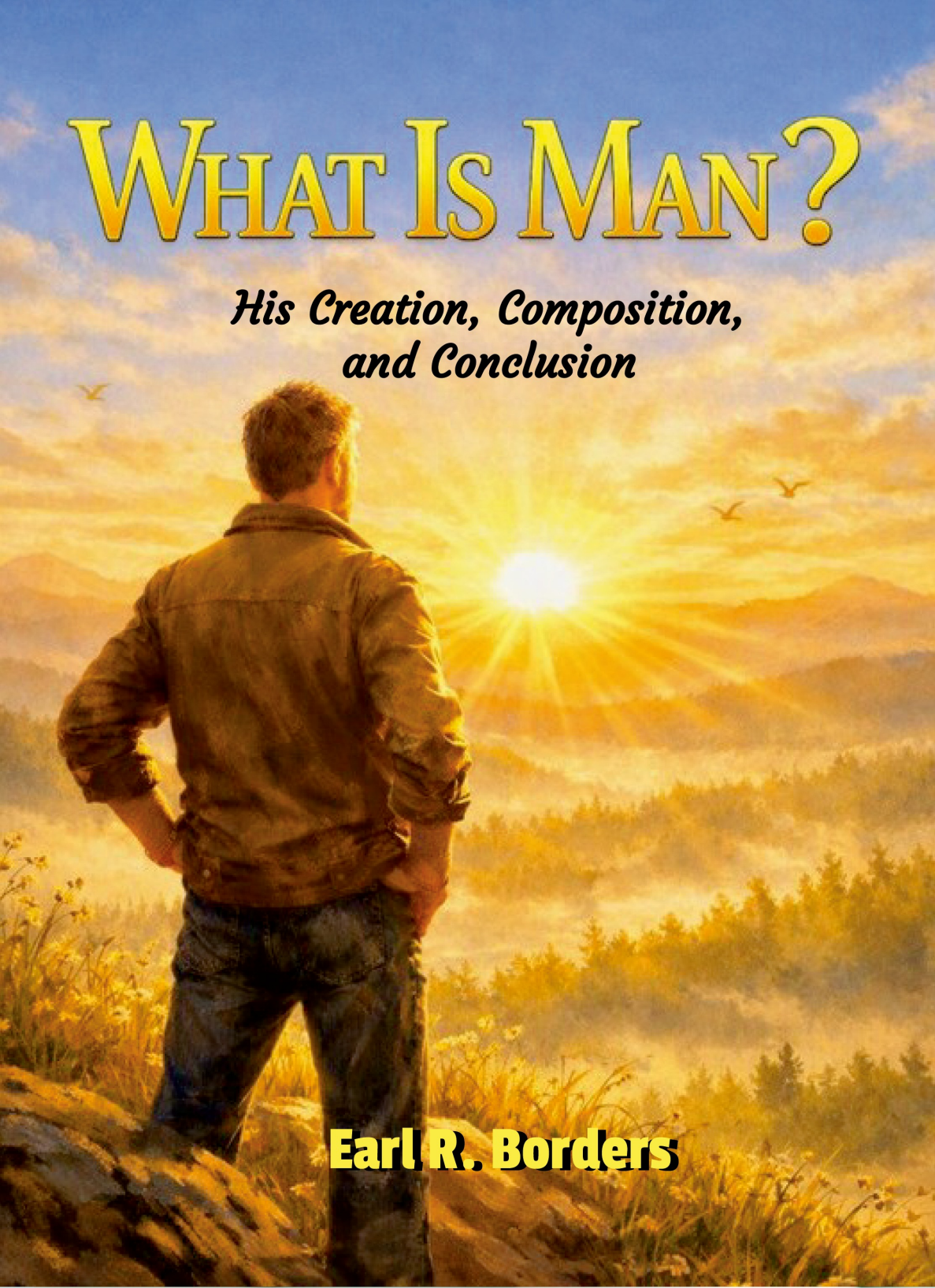
WHAT IS MAN?
His Creation, Composition, and Conclusion
Earl R. Borders

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The Church of God, God's Acres
2026

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PREFACE

"What is man?" (Psalm 8:4). This question posed by David, "the sweet psalmist of Israel" (2 Samuel 23:1), has reverberated down throughout the corridors of time. It is a question the minds of men have mused upon since time immemorial and entertain yet today. Sadly, there has been much confusion on this subject due to the host of voices that have presented a babel of erroneous teachings.

The burden of this book is to thoroughly provide Biblical exposition concerning the truths of which the subject of man is comprised. We are privileged to live in the unique period of time when "the mystery of God" is being "finished" (Revelation 10:7); we have the "book open" (Revelation 10:2). As the Apostle Paul penned in Romans 16:25, we are now able to enjoy "the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began." If these words were so in the first century, they are certainly so in this twenty-first century when we have the "book open" and "the light of seven days" (Isaiah 30:26). The understanding concerning *What is Man? His Creation, Composition, and Conclusion* in this unprecedented day of light, contains truths that (as the songwriter so aptly described) are enabling "the mists of confusion" (to be) "passing away."

Over the centuries many dear brethren have dealt with this subject. We sincerely appreciate their labors and would never disparage, or cavalierly dismiss the understanding or work of such great men of God. However, they lived in periods of lesser light, or understanding. We are privileged to live in the brightest portion of human history, "the perfect day" (Proverbs 4:18). "Light," or "understanding" (Psalm 119:130) is coming "clear as crystal" (Revelation 21:11).

Our burden in this writing is to enable the Lord to shine greater understanding, seventh-seal understanding, on this vital subject. Dear brethren have approached me and posed questions concerning the various truths addressed in this book. It is our prayer that the Lord will use this book to Biblically address the questions entertained by many. (Where we mention Scriptural passages in the Book of Revelation, you will find a more full treatment of these passages in my six-volume series *The Book of Revelation Explained.*)

It is without further adieu, that we present this writing to you for the glory of God, and the edification and enlightenment of the church.

Yours in Christ,
Brother Earl R. Borders
Newark, Ohio
July 2026

CHAPTER 1

MAN'S PURPOSE AND HIS ORIGIN

Psalm 8:4 What is man that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?
5 For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour.

The one whom 2 Samuel 23:1 styles as the "sweet psalmist of Israel" set forth a question on which the minds of men have mused throughout the ages of time. The Psalmist David posed this inquiry when he wrote, "What is man, that thou art mindful of him?" Those words, especially the three first words, have reverberated throughout history and have entertained the minds of many. "What is man?" First Corinthians 14:33 says, "God is not the author of confusion." The Lord desires we understand Biblical truths. He inspired His Word so that we might understand timeless truths. Thus, He had His Word penned and preserved throughout the annals of time. Psalm 119:130 tells us, "The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple."

With the help of God, I feel impressed to set before you a study concerning *What Is Man? His Creation, Composition, and Conclusion*. We will look at these truths in view of seventh-seal light. God desires we clearly understand this most vital and pertinent subject. In this segment of our study, we want to examine man's purpose before proceeding to his origin or creation. Another question that begs to be addressed before we consider "What is man?" is "*Why* is man?" Why did God create man? What was the reason? What was the original intent and purpose?

Ephesians 1:9-11 says: "Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself. That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him: 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." These verses reveal God's purpose. He works all things "after the counsel of his own will." The Lord has a definite purpose for everything.

What was God's purpose in creating man? Revelation 4:11 reads, "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." The Greek word for

"pleasure" is the word *thelema*, and it is rendered sixty-two times in the New Testament as "will." We can read Revelation 4:11 as, "For thy will they are and were created." This reveals that doing God's will is what brings God pleasure. Thus, God's desire is for man to do His will; that produces His pleasure. Psalm 147:11 says, "The LORD taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy."

Psalm 149:4 reads, "For the LORD taketh pleasure in his people: he will beautify the meek with salvation." This gives insight into God's will for mankind. The Apostle Paul wrote in 1 Timothy 2:3-4, "For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who *will* have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." The purpose of man is to bring God pleasure, and for man to do such, he must perform God's will. First Thessalonians 4:3 says, "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification [*sanctification* is setting yourself apart to do God's will]." This is His will; this brings Him pleasure.

Why is man? This requires understanding God's nature. One of the most pronounced aspects of His nature is, "God is love" (1 John 4:8). There are many Greek words for love, but the Greek word here is *agape*, which means "a commitment to action for the object's highest good." God has made a commitment to man. First John 4:19 says, "We love him, because he first loved us." Love desires a return, a reciprocation. God created man because the Lord desired man to reciprocate or return His love. Love that is not chosen is not true love.

Matthew 22:36-38 reads: "Master, which is the great commandment in the law? 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. This is the first and great commandment." That "great commandment" has been the Lord's desire in all ages. Jesus was quoting from Deuteronomy 6:4-7, which reads: "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart. And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." That should be the first and foremost thing on our minds and the foremost thing we instill in our children's minds. God's greatest desire is for men to love him.

Jesus said He had "legions of angels" at His disposal in Matthew 26:53. A Roman legion consisted of six thousand soldiers. Twelve times six thousand is seventy-two thousand, and I am sure there are far more angels than that. Matthew 18:10 says, "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say

unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven." Heaven contains legions of angels who do God's will because they have no power of choice. Angels are not creatures of choice; therefore, they cannot truly demonstrate love. The power of love must have the power of choice exercised. Love cannot be forced; if it is forced, it is not love. God created man as a creature of choice to be able to express his love back to God.

Love Causes the Production of Action

God has proven His commitment to mankind. John 3:16 states, "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." First, there is the commitment ("God so loved") and then the action ("he gave"). The Scriptures substantiate God is love because He proved it by His commitment to mankind and His action. Romans 5:7-8 reads: "Scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." What a commitment! First John 3:1 says, "Behold, what manner of love [commitment] the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God."

God has made a commitment to man, and He desires a commitment in return. We live in a most deceitful and deceptive age when everyone (purportedly) loves the Lord. One of our greatest challenges today is not to get people saved, but to help people realize they are lost. Read the obituaries. Almost everyone of them reads, "Home to be with their Lord." However, not everyone is saved. Sadly, there are more people *not* saved than *are* saved.

When a marriage ceremony takes place, the thought of exchanging vows means two parties make a promise. It is doubtful that you have seen a wedding with only one party making vows. It is the same with God. He has made a commitment to us, and His love desires mankind to make a commitment to Him. John 14:15 states, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." Talk is cheap; anybody can say, "I love the Lord," but this *agape* love is a commitment to action. It is easy for me to tell my wife that I love her, but it takes much more than that. I must prove it through my actions. It is the same with the Lord. John 14:21 says, "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."

A true affirmation of love can only take place when there is a choice. God put the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil in the midst of the Garden of Eden for one reason—to present mankind with a choice. Genesis 2:17 reads,

"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." Adam and Eve did not die physically. God was not talking about physical death. Genesis 5:4-5 says: "And the days of Adam after he had begotten Seth were eight hundred years: and he begat sons and daughters: And all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years: and he died." Adam lived 930 years physically; so how did he die after eating the fruit? Ezekiel 18:4 states, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." Adam died spiritually.

Genesis 2:8 says, "And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed." Verses 16-17 read: "And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it." The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil was in the garden before God put the man there to present man with a choice; so man could prove his love. Constantly, the Scriptures encourage us to make the right and proper choices because those choices confirm or deny our love. If I told my wife I love her, but I did not come home because I had been with another woman, I could not convince her of my love and allegiance. It takes more than words. Love is a commitment to action. Choices become integral in proving our love.

Is love coordinated with choice? Look at Moses' words when he spoke to the next generation, those who were ready to enter Canaan. Deuteronomy 30:19-20 reads: "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore *choose* life, that both thou and thy seed may live: That thou mayest love the LORD thy God, and that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him: for he is thy life." He said to "choose life" so that they may "love the LORD." Proper choice exhibits our love.

Temptation is not designed to induce failure because God is "not willing that any should perish" (2 Peter 3:9). Temptation is designed to exhibit an affirmation of our love. It should strengthen both our love and us. The Bible repeatedly reiterates the Lord's desire that we exercise proper choice. Joshua 24:15 says, "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." Verse 24 states, "And the people said unto Joshua, The LORD our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey."

The proper choice is crucial. In 1 Kings, Chapter 18, Elijah was on Mount Carmel, and the people were halting "between two opinions" (verse 21). That is the sin of a divided heart. Hosea 10:1-2 says: "Israel is an empty vine, he

bringeth forth fruit unto himself: according to the multitude of his fruit he hath increased the altars; according to the goodness of his land they have made goodly images. Their heart is divided; now shall they be found faulty." Jesus put it in these terms: "Ye cannot serve God and mammon" (Matthew 6:24). You cannot serve two masters because true love requires a commitment of wholeheartedness.

In 1 Kings 18:21, Elijah said, "How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him." The people could not answer, as there was no excuse for their divided hearts. There was nothing to say. By the time Elijah was finished, 1 Kings 18:39 says, "And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, The LORD, he is the God; the LORD, he is the God." Proper choice is crucial. God made man for His pleasure; to give God pleasure, we must do His will. His will is for us to make proper choices, "to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:4).

The Triune Godhead

Verse 5 of our text proclaims, "For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels." The Hebrew says, "a little lower than *Elohim*," which is the Hebrew word translated as "God." God did not make man lower than angels; He made man lower than God. The word *Elohim* is used some 2,346 times as "God." It denotes the Triune Godhead because it is a plural noun joined with a singular verb. It denotes the three in one.

The Scriptures clearly teach there is a Triune Godhead—a Trinity. This will take on significance as we study. Christ said in Matthew 28:19, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." There are the three personalities of the Triune Godhead: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. We are instructed to baptize in that manner because each plays a role in our salvation. The Father *originated* the plan, the Son *implemented* the plan, and the Holy Ghost *administers* the plan. Second Corinthians 13:14 reads, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all." Again, we see the Triune Godhead. Ephesians 4:4-6 says: "There is one body, and one Spirit ... One Lord ... one God and Father of all." Throughout the Scriptures, we see a Triune Godhead.

We read of the Trinity in the Book of Beginnings (Genesis). In Hebrew, the actual title is *Bereshith*, which means "in the beginning." The introduction to the creative account introduces the Triune Godhead. Genesis 1:1 tells us, "In the

beginning God [the Father], created." The word "created" brings in the second personage, Jesus Christ. Ephesians 3:9 tells us God "created all things by Jesus Christ." First Corinthians 8:6 says, "But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things." Let us examine the distinction. When it talks about God the Father, it says, "*of* whom are all things." It was His divine design; it was His will. He is the originator.

When 1 Corinthians 8:6 talks about Jesus Christ, it says, "*By whom* are all things" because He was the implementer. John 1:1-3 states: "In the beginning was the Word ['Jesus Christ'; verses 14 and 17], and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him [the Word, Jesus Christ]; and without him was not any thing made that was made." He was the Agent in Creation.

Colossians 1:13-17 states: "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption [through 'his dear Son'] through his blood [through 'his dear Son'], even the forgiveness of sins: Who is the image of the invisible God ['his dear Son'], the firstborn of every creature ['his dear Son']: For by him were all things created ['his dear Son'], that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist."

When Christ introduced Himself to the Laodiceans in Revelation 3:14, He said, "These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God." Christ was not the first creation; He is "the beginning of the creation of God," or the Agent of Creation. Second Corinthians 5:17 tells us, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." *The Emphatic Greek Diaglott* says "a new creation." Before God ever formed a planet or created a man, He made a plan. God knows the end from the beginning (Isaiah 46:10). He knew what man would do, so He made Christ the Agent in *Creation* because Christ was going to be the Agent in *Re-creation*. With salvation, you actually become a re-creation.

Ephesians 4:24 says, "And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created." Genesis 1:2 states: "And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." In the first two verses of the Bible, we see the Triune Godhead—the Father, the Son, and the Spirit of God (the Holy Ghost). What does that have to do with man? It has everything to do with man. Genesis 1:26 reads, "And God said, Let us make man in *our* image, after *our* likeness." Notice the

plural form is being used. In that verse, the Hebrew word for "God' (*Elohim*) is the same word used in our Scripture text; it is a plural word. Who was God talking to? He had not created man yet; so, He was not speaking to man. He was not speaking to the angels because they are not in His image, or after His likeness. He was talking to the other personages of the Triune Godhead. The Father was speaking to the Son and the Holy Ghost. He said to Them, in verse 26, "Let *us* make man in *our* image, after *our* likeness."

Man Is a Threefold Being

As we proceed, we want to consider man's trichotomous nature. There are several other truths we must consider first. One question we must address is, What is man's position? Man is the apex of God's creation. Man was designed to rule. Psalm 8:5-8 tells us: "For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet: All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field; The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas." The Hebrew word for "dominion" is *mashal*, which means "to rule, to reign." It is the same Hebrew word translated as "rule" in several other Scriptures. Genesis 1:18 says, "And to rule [speaking of the two great lights, the sun and moon; verse 16] over the day and over the night."

God used the word "rule" when He pronounced sentence upon the woman. Genesis 3:16 says, "Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee." It was used when God said to Cain in Genesis 4:7: "If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him." Also, Judges 8:23 says, "And Gideon said unto them, I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you: the LORD shall rule over you." The Hebrew word for "rule" is also translated as "dominion" in Genesis 1:26.

Again, man was designed to rule over God's creation. He is "crowned" (Psalm 8:5) because he occupies a position of rule. The Hebrew writer quoted our text. Hebrews 2:7-8 tells us: "Thou madest him a little lower than the angels [*Elohim*, God]; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands: Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him." Man is the apex of God's creation. In reward for his love, man was designed to rule: "Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every

creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth" (Genesis 1:26). Psalm 8:6 says, "Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet." One rendering says, "You [God] gave him authority over your creation."

Look specifically at the question in Psalm 8:4, "What is man?" Of what does man consist? First Thessalonians 5:23 says, "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." *The Emphatic Greek Diaglott* says "entirely; and may Your Whole person—the SPIRIT and the SOUL and the BODY," revealing man is a trichotomous (threefold) being—spirit, soul, and body. God designed the threefold structure of man for a purpose.

Look in Genesis at the creation of this complex creature—man. Genesis 1:26 states, "And God [*Elohim*, a plural Hebrew word, the Triune Godhead] said, Let us [plural, talking to the other personages of the Trinity] make man in our image, after our likeness." In these words, we see the Triune Godhead and the trichotomy of man. In verse 26, He said, "Let us make man." The Hebrew word for man is actually *adam*. Doctor Adam Clark said, "The word is intended to designate the species." *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance* says, "This noun is related to the verb *adom*, which means 'to be red,' and therefore probably relates to the original ruddiness of human skin." The word "man" (verse 26) refers to the portion of man known as "the body" (1 Thessalonians 5:23). It is the species, or the physical component of man.

The second thing mentioned in Genesis 1:26 regarding man is the phrase "in our image." What portion of man does this refer to? Colossians 3:10 says, "And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him." The "new man" is renewed after "the image." What is "the image" we receive when we are saved? Ephesians 4:24 reads, "Put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." The image is "righteousness and true holiness." That is how man was originally made. We know that because God had fellowship with him; God walked with man in the cool of the day (Genesis 3:8). God does not fellowship with sin. Ephesians 4:23 says, "Be renewed *in the spirit* of your mind." "Righteousness and true holiness" are found in man's "spirit." Thus, the phrase "in his image" (Genesis 1:26) refers to man's spirit. First Corinthians 2:11 states, "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him?"

Last of all, when Genesis 1:26 says "after our likeness," it is referring to the soul of man. Deuteronomy 33:27 says, "The eternal God is thy refuge." Isaiah 57:15 tells us God inhabits eternity; He is the eternal God. The soul is the part of man that is like God. Jesus said in Matthew 10:28, "And fear not them which

kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." The "soul" is eternal. The Greek word for "destroy" is *apollumi*. *Strong's Expanded Dictionary of Bible Words With Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary* says, "The idea is not the extinction, but of ruin, loss; not of being, but of well-being." Man is eternal.

The Bible speaks of the "soul" and of hell in Mark 9:43-49, which says: "And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thy foot offend thee, cut if off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

"And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. For every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt." The phrase "the fire is not quenched" reveals it is eternal. Matthew 25:46 says, "These [speaking of the goats] shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous [the sheep] into life eternal." God is the eternal God, and man has an eternal "soul." The spiritual portion of man was created first and then the physical. "God is love," and He desires man's love. He desires a reciprocation and loving service from man.

The Soul Was Created First

Man is a created being. God created him through Jesus Christ (Ephesians 3:9). The spiritual portion of man was created before the physical portion of man. Genesis 1:26-27 says: "And God [*Elohim*, plural] said, Let us [speaking to the Trinity] make man [the species, the body] in our image [spirit], after our likeness [soul]: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image [the spiritual portion was created first], in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them." The latter expression is moving to the physical portion of man, because there is no difference in the male and female spiritual portion. Verse 28 states, "God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth." Obviously, that is talking about the physical portion of man.

We need to understand the soul was created first. Much of the Scripture

speaks first in general terms and then restates it in specific terms. Many people do not understand that, thinking it is a different occurrence, which it is not. For example, Genesis 1:31 says: "And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day." Genesis 2:1-3 reads: "Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made." Genesis 1:31 says "every thing" was made, but Genesis 2:1 gives a greater explanation of some aspects.

Genesis 2:4-7 tells us: "These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were [past tense] created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens. And every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew: for the LORD God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was not a man to till the ground. But there went up a mist from the earth and watered the whole face of the ground. And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."

Verse 7 engenders much confusion. However, it is only a more detailed explanation of Genesis 1:27, which says, "Male and female created he them." Verse 7 deals only with the male. Then, Genesis 2:21-23 reads: "And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." Again, Genesis 1:27 gives a synopsis ("male and female created he them"), and Genesis 2:7, 21-23 gives a more detailed description of the creation of the physical form of male and female.

We read in Genesis 1:26 that the spiritual portion of man was created first. Look again at Genesis 2:7, which reads, "The LORD God formed man [denotes the species, physical form] of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life [here is where the confusion comes in]; and man became a living soul." The *King James Version* says "living soul," but many other renderings offer that as "a living being." Often, people take the erroneous thought that man was just a dead lump of clay that God breathed into, and that is when He put the soul in. However, the breath of God is not talking about the soul.

Referring to Genesis 2:7, the famous German scholars, Keil and Delitzsch, said, "The breath of life (breath-producing life) does not denote the spirit by

which man is distinguished from the animals, or the soul of man from that of the beasts, but only the life-breath." When God breathed the "breath of life," He was animating the body. The soul was already there. Talking about the Flood, Genesis 7:21-22 says: "And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man: All in whose nostrils was the breath of life." All those animals had the same breath (using that same expression) that was breathed into Adam's nostrils. However, animals do not have a soul; thus, Genesis 2:7 is not talking about the soul but about animating the body. The soul was created first, and then a body was formed. It is like having all the pieces put inside a watch and then activating it. When studying the Scriptures, it is necessary to look at them in the entire scheme and harmony of the Scriptures, not just a single verse.

Ecclesiastes 3:19 says, "For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other, yea, they have all one breath [the breath cannot be the soul or the beasts would have a soul]; so that a man hath no preeminence [physically] above a beast: for all is vanity." This is not talking about the spiritual portion of man. It states we are all creatures of time, and our bodies will die just as the animals die. Man is just like the beasts, in that sense. Ecclesiastes 3:20 reads, "All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again." If these verses were talking about the spiritual portion of man, it would make no difference what anyone did, how he lived, or whether he was saved. However, they are talking about the body, the physical portion of man.

Ecclesiastes 3:21 states, "Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?" The word "spirit" is the same Hebrew word, *ruwach*, which is translated as "breath" in verse 19. It is talking about the same thing. We could read verse 21 as, "Who knoweth the *breath* of man that goeth upward, and the *breath* of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?" It is talking about man's physical portion, not his spiritual.

Christ Puts the Soul in the Body

Ezekiel 18:4 states, "Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die." All souls are God's. When conception takes place, God puts a soul in. That is when an individual's soul life truly commences. Let us deal with some ancillary thoughts that confuse people. Some advocate the teaching that every baby comes forth with a sinful nature, saying babies have inherited, inbred sin. Yet, God says, "All souls are mine." Christ (the Creator; Ephesians 3:9) puts the soul in the body.

Galatians 2:17 poses this question: "Is therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid." Christ does not fellowship with sin. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezekiel 18:4). Sin brings a separation from God. Is Christ going to put a soul with sin into a conceived body? Certainly not! Christ is not "the minister of sin," yet many tout that teaching. God forbid such thinking as that! God puts the sinless soul in at conception.

The following verses are indeed explicit, and I want to be respectful, but we need to understand the truth. These are the words of the great patriarch Job. Notice all the personal pronouns. A personal pronoun requires a person. Life begins at conception; that is why abortion is murder. Someone may question what happens if a child dies before it is born. He is still a soul with an eternal destiny. Until they come to an age of accountability, children are clear. Paul said in Romans 7:9, "I was alive without the law once." What does that mean? The Law was given in 1491 B.C.; Paul lived almost fifteen hundred years later. He was saying he was alive before sin came to his knowledge. When it came to his knowledge, "sin revived" (came alive), and he "died" because the Law said, "Thou shalt not covet," and he coveted. Not until a child reaches the point of having the knowledge and the power of choice is there accountability. Babies *in utero* do not have any accountability because they have no knowledge. Romans 4:15 says, "Where no law is, there is no transgression." Millions and millions of aborted babies will be in God's Heaven.

Job 10:10-12 reads: "Hast thou not poured *me* [a personal pronoun] out as milk [the marital act of copulation], and curdled *me* like cheese [the form changes when conception takes place]? Thou hast clothed *me* with skin and flesh, and hast fenced *me* with bones and sinews. Thou hast granted *me* life and favour, and thy visitation hath preserved *my* spirit." Who is the "me" before there was "skin and flesh"? The "soul" is the real you before there was a body. The real you looks out through your eyes and hears through your ears. One day, your soul will move out. When it does, there will be nobody looking through your eyes. Your eyes will be glassy with a fixed stare because nobody will be at home inside.

The real you, the "soul," was before the body was formed. David said, "For thou hast possessed *my* [a personal pronoun] reins: thou hast covered *me* in my mother's womb" (Psalm 139:13). There had to be a "me" before there was a covering. The "me" is the "soul." Verses 14-17 says: "I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul [the 'me'] knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret [the marital act], and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book [the

Book of Life] all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them. How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God!" Before there were members, a body, there was a "me," the "soul."

Let us Biblically establish another way we can know the "soul" (the eternal essence, the part of man that is "after our likeness"; Genesis 1:26) was created first. First Peter 2:21 states, "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example." Christ is our example in all things. Hebrews 2:6 quotes our text, saying, "What is man?" Then, it gives us understanding. Hebrews 2:14-17 says: "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself [Jesus Christ; verse 9] likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;

"And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily he took not on him the nature of angels [angels do not have the power of choice, a physical form of flesh and blood, or a birth]; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren." That is a broad, all-inclusive statement. One fact it reveals is that children do not have a sinful nature (inbred sin) for Jesus would have had to have had it as well to be made in all things "like unto his brethren."

Christ Was an Eternal Being Who Moved Into a Body

Let us consider the incarnation of Christ because He is our example "in all things." Was His physical form created first and then God breathed the soul into Him? No, He is the pre-existent, eternal Christ. He was an eternal being who moved into a body. He is our example—we have an eternal soul that moves in at conception. The eternal portion, the soul, is a divine property. In Ezekiel 18:4, God said, "All souls are mine." At conception, a part of the divine (a soul) is dispensed to the conceived. Again, Hebrews 2:14 tells us, "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood [a body], he [personal pronoun] also himself [personal pronoun] likewise took part of the same." There was a "he" and "himself" before Christ partook of flesh and blood. He is the eternal, pre-existent Christ; He is from everlasting.

Hebrews 10:5 says, "Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me." Christ was ("me") before God prepared "a body" for Him. Does that make a difference? It is the difference between truth and error. Isaiah 9:6 tells us, "For unto us a child is *born*, unto us a son is *given*." Those are two separate things. A

birth is a beginning. The child who was "born" had a beginning in a stable in Bethlehem, but the Son was "given." The physical form who was "born" was *Jesus*, but the Son who was "given" was the eternal, pre-existent *Christ*.

John 1:1-4 says: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life," Verses 14 and 17 tell us who we are reading about: "And the Word was made flesh [the Word was pre-existent, before there was 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.... For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." The "Word" personified is "Jesus Christ." He was the Word prior to being made flesh. He was with God in the council hall of eternity past.

Psalm 90:1-2 reads: "Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God." Who formed the earth and the world? Ephesians 3:9 tells us God "created all things by Jesus Christ." Jesus Christ formed the earth and the world. Jesus Christ, God the Son, is from everlasting to everlasting. He was the everlasting Christ *before* conception took place.

Micah 5:2 says, "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." Man is an eternal being. Christ is the eternal Christ. Christ is our example (1 Peter 2:21). Hebrews 2:17 reveals "in all things," He was "made like unto his brethren." He was the eternal Christ before His incarnation. The spiritual portion was before the physical. Likewise, man is an eternal being with an eternal portion (a soul). The soul is first, then the body, serving as a constant reminder of the need to make every decision with our soul in mind. The body is going to return to the dust, but the soul is eternal. We need to live in view of eternity and make sure we deal with our soul first and foremost above everything else.

In the inaugural message of Jesus' public ministry, the Sermon on the Mount, He set down the basic tenets of the New Testament economy. Matthew 6:33 states, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things [things of this physical life] shall be added unto you." The Kingdom of God is not some city that is going to drop from the sky in the future. Romans 14:17 tells us, "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink [it is not literal, temporal, physical]; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." It is a spiritual experience that man needs in his soul. If we do as Matthew 6:33

says, we can keep our souls in their proper position. People get in trouble when other things take a preeminent position, when their priorities are out of order, and when they lose perspective. Someone once stated to the ancient elder Tertullian (A.D. 155-240), "I must to live," and the ancient father said, "Must you?" Galatians 2:20 tells us, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." We must make every decision with our soul in mind and eternity in view.

Look at Jesus' words to Martha concerning Mary. Martha, like many people today, was overcome with the busyness of life. (The enemy works through that yet today.) In Luke 10:41-42, Jesus said: "Martha, Martha [you can almost see the sorrow in His eyes and see Him shake His head, as if to say 'you just do not get it'], thou art careful [full of cares] and troubled about many things: But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her." Martha's decisions were based on time and on the flesh, but Mary's were based on things eternal. Everything Martha had now lies in the dust heap of history, but what Mary was enjoying then, she is still enjoying today because she saw what was needful for the soul.

Christ, our example, was the eternal Christ before He was a physical creature. When we look at Adam, we see he had a soul before his body was formed. Also, the Scriptures explain a baby is a soul before there are any members. Acts 10:34 tells us, "God is no respecter of persons." The way the eternal Christ entered a fleshly body is the same manner in which the eternal soul is placed in a body at conception. The soul was first, serving as a forcible example that the soul of man should be considered first above all things. If people realized that truth and made every decision based on the welfare of their souls, many decisions would be made differently.

We deal in a realm called *time*, but God deals in eternity, in eternal values. Second Corinthians 4:17 says, "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." We measure everything in terms of time, but God does not. He weighs it on the eternal scale, not on the scale of time. If men and women would measure in the same manner as God does, they would have less sorrow and grief.

How will your decisions affect your soul? If you are thinking of marriage, how will that one affect your soul? How about professional career opportunities? If you could move and make a six-figure income, is there a Church of God congregation close by where you can get your soul fed? Every decision should be made in the light of, "How will that affect my soul?" Matthew 6:33 says, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God." It is better to earn less and be in the church services, than to earn more and lose your soul. Mark 8:36 asks, "For what shall

it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" God dealt with the soul first because He wants us to deal with it first.

There may be things you have done in the past that you cannot undo. God knows that, but I am talking about from now on, making sure you do everything with your soul in view. "The kingdom of God" should be your first priority. Watch for things that affect the reign of Christ in your soul. Everything should revolve around your eternal welfare—where you live, where you work, where you go, and what you do. If we are parents or grandparents, it becomes broader. We must consider, "How will this affect my children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren?"

No man is an island unto himself. That is why the Judgment does not occur as soon as we die. Revelation 14:13 says, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord ... that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them." The Apostle Paul has been dead a good while, yet every time we read one of his Epistles, he receives a benefit from that labor. Every time we sing one of Brother B. E. Warren's songs, he receives a benefit from that. The Judgment Day does not take place until time ends, for that is when the influence stops. Influence continues long after our lives are over. Thus, we need to be cautious of the moves we make; we need to make them with our soul and eternity in view.

An attitude of "I do not care what anybody thinks" is selfish. You will win nobody to the Lord with that attitude. I care about what people think. Many times, I cannot *help* the things they think, but I *care* because I want to have a godly influence on them. We need to live in such a way that if someone hears something wrong about us, they can say, "I know him better than that."

Too many people become selfish and say, "I do not care what anybody else does; I want to do what I want." There are repercussions for that. They may get straightened out somewhere along the line, but they may lose their children and grandchildren. Lot made it out of Sodom, but a couple of his daughters and his sons-in-law did not. We need to keep eternity always in view. We are heading to the Judgment, where we will be judged for what we did, how we lived, the decisions we made, and the influences we had.

Man's Body Was Formed of the Dust of the Ground

Genesis 1:27 says, "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them." This verse is a general summary. A common teaching style among the Hebrews was to state a summation, or general overview first, and then, in the succeeding portions, give specific details. Genesis 2:4 states, "These are the generations of the heavens and of

the earth when they were created [past tense], in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens." That verse refers to the entire creative episode singularly as a "day." (The New Testament dispensation, the whole Gospel Day, is also referred to as a "day"; 2 Corinthians 6:2).

Genesis, Chapter 2, breaks the creative account down into specific details. Genesis 2:5 says, "And every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew: for the LORD God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was not a man to till the ground." Let us notice some truths. When the Flood came, Genesis 7:11-12 reads: "In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened. And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights."

Some teach there had never been rain before the Flood. There is no truth in that. According to Dr. Adam Clark, the Flood was some 1,656 years after Creation. Does the Bible say it never rained during all those years? Why does Genesis 2:5 say there had not been rain? Genesis 2:5-6 says: "And every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew: for the LORD God had not caused it to rain upon the earth [why?], and [because] there was not a man to till the ground. But there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground." The next verses tell about God making a man. Then there *was* a man to till the ground.

Genesis 2:15 reads, "And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it." Some renderings say "to till the ground." Now there was a man to till the ground, and now it could rain. To say there was no rain until Noah's day is a great stretch of Genesis 2:5. It is talking about the conditions prior to the creation of man, because God made the garden before he made a man (Genesis 2:8).

Let us consider Genesis 2:7, which says, "And the LORD God formed man [*adam*, denoting the species, the physical body] of the dust of the ground." It is the body that comes from the "dust" of the ground (Ecclesiastes 12:7). Second Corinthians 5:1-4 reads: "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle [our earthly house, our body] do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality [our earthly house] might be swallowed up of life."

The Lord formed a body "of the dust of the ground," but the spiritual portion of man was created first, and it is the same yet today. It takes place with

every conception; before there is a body, there is the soul. God controls and dispenses souls (Ezekiel 18:4). Adam's soul was before his body. Then Eve was made subsequent to that. Genesis 2:21-22 says, "And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man." Here is where the woman was created. These are the details of Genesis 1:27, where it says, "Male and female created he them."

Man Became a "Living Creature"

Genesis 2:7 tells us, "And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." This creates great confusion in the minds of many. This does not say, as it would appear with casual perusal, God made the body first and then placed in the soul. We have already established that the soul, the spiritual portion, was first. The word for "soul" (verse 7) is not used exclusively to denote the eternal essence of man. It is the Hebrew word *nephesh* and comes from the root word *napash*, which refers to the act of breathing. It means "taking breath"; it means "life." This same word is also rendered as "living creature."

Let us look at some examples. Genesis 1:21 reads, "And God created great whales, and every living creature [the same Hebrew word translated as 'living soul'; Genesis 2:7]." Genesis 1:24 says, "And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature [the same Hebrew word]." These verses talk about animals. Genesis 2:19 says, "Out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature [the same Hebrew word]." Genesis 9:10, 12, 15, and 16 all render the same Hebrew word as "living creature." Furthermore, Leviticus 11:46 says, "This is the law of the beasts, and of the fowl, and of every living creature [the same Hebrew word]."

In Genesis 2:7, the *Amplified Bible* renders the Hebrew word for "living soul" as "living being." Another rendering offers it as "living creature" and another as "living person." It is important to understand that verse is not speaking of the soul, the eternal essence, but of the breath of life that animates the physical body. Some say the breath of life has to be the soul. However, that causes a problem because then animals would have the same thing, and that is contrary to the Scriptures. We need to rightly divide the Word of Truth (2 Timothy 2:15) on this point for, if we are not cautious, we will use Scriptures in a wrong way.

If the soul is merely breath, Ecclesiastes 3:19 reveals animals and man "have all one breath." If that breath is the soul, then one of two things must be concluded: animals have souls, or the soul is nothing more than breath (as the Jehovah Witnesses have espoused)—when you quit breathing, the soul is done. However, the breath has nothing to do with the soul. We have read several Scriptures where it is translated as "living creature," talking about physical life.

Ecclesiastes 3:20-21 states: "All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again. Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?" The Hebrew word for "spirit" (*ruach*) is translated as "breath" in verse 19. It is not talking about the spiritual portion of man, but simple animal breath. When your animal breath leaves your body, your physical body is going to do the same thing the animals do. It is going to die, and it will turn back to dust. That is what those verses are saying. They have nothing to do with the soul of man. When breath ceases, man and animals are on a common level when it comes to the physical portion.

Genesis 7:21-22 says, "And all flesh died [talking about the Flood] that moved upon the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man: All in whose nostrils was the breath of life." Animals have the same "breath of life" because that breath activates their physical life. *Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible* says, "All in whose nostrils was the breath of life whether fowls, beasts, cattle or creeping things of all that was in the dry land died." The expression in Genesis 2:7 is saying man became "a living being."

Physical Death Was Always in God's Plan

Let us consider another truth misunderstood many times concerning man. Sin did not activate death; physical death was always in God's plan. Some people say that if Adam and Eve would not have eaten that fruit in the garden, we would never have died. That is not so. Before man ever fell, Genesis 1:28 tells us, "And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth." You do not have to *replenish* something unless it is *diminishing*. Death was always in God's plan. Psalm 119:89 says, "For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven." The Word was settled before it was ever sent down and given to man. God had it fixed forever. Hebrews 9:27 states, "It is appointed unto men once to die." That was forever settled in Heaven before the Hebrew writer was inspired to write it. Physical death was in God's plan before there was a man; sin did not activate it. God never ordained earth to be man's eternal home.

The Scriptures are clear that man's physical nature is a mortal nature. Renown sixth-seal Church of God authors set forth the same truth. Brother R. R. Byrum wrote in *Christian Theology,* pages 293 and 294: "The popular notion that man's body was originally inherently immortal is not supported by the scripture nor reason. As created, he was naturally mortal. His physical constitution was like that of the animals, which in no case are said to be immortal. Like them, his body was made of the dust, and was therefore subject to change and dissolution, by which it would return to dust again.... That man's body was created essentially mortal is evident from the Scriptures. In its present condition, it is commonly represented as 'your mortal body' (Romans 6:12; 8:11). That it was originally mortal is certain because it was made of temporal matter, dust (Genesis 2:7). It was given natural food to sustain it, which would have been superfluous if it were immortal (Genesis 1:29). Adam was given work to do to provide food for himself (Genesis 2:15). Marriage was instituted and propagation of the race was enjoined (Genesis 1:28), which is not true of the angels, who are immortal (Luke 20:35, 36)."

These same truths are set forth by Brother F. G. Smith in his book *What the Bible Teaches,* pages 57-58. In this writing, he brought up valid points concerning these truths. To summarize his position, he presented that the Bible refers to our bodies as "your mortal body" and when we look more closely at the Genesis account, if our bodies were immortal, they would not have required food. The propagation of the race would not have been necessary. He holds to the truth that man's body was not designed to be immortal, even in its original state.

Second Corinthians 5:1 says, "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." Verse 4 reads, "That mortality might be swallowed up of life." These verses make it clear that our earthly house is mortal. In the Fall of Man, man's spiritual and moral nature was changed, not his physical nature. There are no Scriptures to indicate man's physical nature was changed.

Were Man and Animals Initially Created as Vegetarians?

What is another misconception that needs dispelled by the light of truth? Some erroneously espouse that prior to the Fall of Man, both animals and men were vegetarians. Let us consider the animals first. An article entitled "What Are Carnivores?" states, "A common distinguishing characteristic, however, is that most have characteristic enlarged teeth, which work together to effectively cut and shear off pieces of meat and tendon." An article from ACS Distance Education, produced by *Live Science,* entitled "Facts About Plant Eaters," states:

"The digestive systems of carnivores and herbivores are very different. Carnivores typically have one stomach chamber and a simple digestive system. Herbivores often have several stomach chambers and a much larger digestive tract." The bodies of plant eaters and flesh eaters are constructed differently.

It is necessary we understand these facts because when God created the beasts in Genesis 1:24-25, "God saw that it was good." That was prior to the Fall of Man because animals were created before man. We do not read of their natures or composition being altered subsequent to the Fall of Man. When man fell, the animal's bodies did not change. Animals do not have a moral or spiritual nature. They have never disobeyed God. They are not creatures of choice. Their nature and composition did not change. Their teeth and stomachs remained the same. This faulty thinking lays the groundwork for the erroneous teaching that, in the millennium, animal's natures will need to be changed so the lion can lie down with the lamb. However, animals did nothing to require their nature to be changed; they are just the way God created them.

In the antediluvian time, when man's sin caused God to destroy the earth, 2 Peter 3:6 says, "Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished." When God formulated what He would save from the Flood, He did not destroy the animals and then recreate them. The animals went onto the ark. If their nature needed to be changed, that would have been a good time to destroy them all and start over. However, God did not do that; He preserved them by placing them on the ark.

Genesis 7:7-9 states: "And Noah went in, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives with him, into the ark, because of the waters of the flood. Of clean beasts, and of beasts that are not clean, and of fowls, and of every thing that creepeth upon the earth, There went in two and two unto Noah into the ark, the male and the female, as God had commanded Noah." Consider the words of the Lord to the Patriarch Job (chronologically the oldest book of the Bible). When He spoke to Job at the end of his trial, God brought up the creative account. Job 38:3-6 and 8 say: "Gird up now thy loins like a man; for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me. Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding. Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it? Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof .... Or who shut up the sea with doors, when it brake forth, as if it had issued out of the womb?" Notice what else God spoke of concerning the original condition or state.

Job 38:39-41 reads: "Wilt thou hunt the prey for the lion? or fill the appetite of the young lions, When they couch in their dens, and abide in the covert to lie in wait? Who provideth for the raven his food? when his young ones cry unto

God, they wander for lack of meat." In the original state of these creatures, they "hunt the prey." Lions do not eat plants; their teeth are carnivorous teeth, for ripping and tearing flesh. Man's teeth are the same way.

The psalmist dealt with much the same truth. Psalm 104:5 says, "Who laid the foundations of the earth, that it should not be removed for ever." Again, it is talking about the creative account. Verses 21 and 24 tell us: "The young lions roar after their prey, and seek their meat from God.... O LORD, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches." God made them to "seek their meat." The same is true with man. In the Fall, man's spiritual state changed but not his physical state. Man has had and continues to have one stomach and teeth like carnivores. Have you ever wondered why you have sharp teeth? A famous zoologist, Matan Shalom, said: "The best evidence is our teeth. We have biting, tearing, ripping incisors and canines like carnivores."

Man Is to Have Dominion

A supposed proof text used to tout man was vegetarian is Genesis 1:29-30, which says: "And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat. And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so." These verses are used to say that both man and creatures were vegetarians. *Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible* says, "Here is no prohibition of eating flesh, nor is it said that this only should be for meat, which is before mentioned."

When the Lord destroyed the antediluvian world because of sin, He sent forth instructions for essentially a new world. Notice His instructions to Noah. Genesis 9:2-3 reads: "And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth upon the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea; into your hand are they delivered. Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things."

Genesis 9:1-2 is, basically, a re-institution of what God said in Genesis 1:28. "And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth." God said to "have dominion," and He clarified that when He renewed the instruction of Genesis 9:3, where He said, "Every moving thing that

liveth shall be meat for you." Another rendering says "shall be food for you."

Christ is our example in all things. He was "made like unto his brethren" in all things (Hebrews 2:17). If a man's body was changed by sin, Christ would have been obligated to have that same body. We are instructed to "follow his steps" (1 Peter 2:21) and "to walk, even as he walked" (1 John 2:6). Look at Christ, our example. Luke 22:15 tells us, "And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer." What did they eat at the Passover? Exodus 12:3 says, "They shall take to them every man a lamb." Verse 8 says, "They shall eat the flesh in that night." They ate the flesh of the lamb (meat).

What did Jesus request after His Resurrection when He had His glorified body, the one that our vile body is going to be "fashioned like unto" (Philippians 3:21)? Luke 24:41-43 states: "And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here any meat? And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb. And he took it, and did eat before them." Jesus did not say, "Now that I have this glorified body, I cannot eat meat; I am a vegetarian." Instead He asked them, "Have ye here any meat?" He is our example.

We teach, and it is true, that everything lost through Adam has been restored through Christ. Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 6:13, "Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats." It could not be much clearer than that. First Timothy 4:1 talks about "doctrines of devils" and lists some of them. Verses 3-5 say: "Forbidding to marry [devilish], and commanding to abstain from meats [a doctrine of devils], which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer." All things are to be received "with thanksgiving." If vegetarianism was man's original state, it would have been restored by Christ. However, it clearly was not. I trust we can see the truth of this aspect of man's origin and nature. His moral nature and spiritual nature were corrupted by sin, but his physical nature did not change, except that man who is under a sinful nature satisfies his lawful desires in unlawful ways.

God's Will for Marriage From the Beginning

There is another controversial point of truth we need to clarify. I cannot deal with this particular item extensively in this study, but since we are studying man's origin and nature, it is necessary to mention it. We are desirous, as the Apostle John penned, to get back to that which was "from the beginning"

(1 John 1:1). It is notable where Jesus took the Pharisees after they questioned Him about marriage and divorce. In Matthew 19:3, they were tempting Him, asking if it is lawful for a man "to put away his wife for every cause" (under the old economy, it pretty much was). However, Jesus wanted them to know how God viewed marriage. He said in Matthew 19:4-6: "Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female .... What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." Then, they asked why Moses allowed divorce. In verse 8, Jesus said, "Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered [or permitted] you to put away your wives: but [Jesus made a key statement here] from the beginning it was not so."

If we want to know God's will concerning marriage, we should go back to that which was "from the beginning." How was it in the beginning? Genesis 2:21-23 tells us: "And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." One obvious truth is, God made just two genders; that is all there are, and He joined opposite genders. God made a woman and "brought her unto the man," which denotes that true marriage is not to be a human act or choice but one of divine creation and guidance.

Genesis 2:24 states, "Therefore shall a man [singular] leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife [singular]: and they shall be one flesh." That which was "from the beginning" reveals God designed and desired marriage to be monogamous, not polygamous. It did not say his *wives*, but "his *wife*." I trust we can see the scriptural truths concerning man's origin and his nature and that God has cleared away some misconceptions and confusions which have been attached to this subject and these texts. "God is not the author of confusion" (1 Corinthians 14:33). Jesus proclaimed in John 8:32, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Free from what? The blood of Christ frees us from sin (1 John 1:7), and the truth makes us free from falsity, error, and misconceptions.

CHAPTER 2

THE THREEFOLD NATURE OF MAN'S COMPOSITION (PART 1)—THE BODY

Psalm 8:4 What is man, that thou art mindful of him? And the son of man, that thou visitest him?

5 For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels (the Hebrew word is Elohim, which means God), and hast crowned him with glory and honour.

1 Thessalonians 5:23 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.

24 Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.

We have been studying the question, "What is man?" Now, we will move onto the question, What is man's composition or nature? A prior study revealed the word "God" (Genesis 1:26) is *Elohim,* which is a plural word, letting us know it is speaking of the Triune Godhead. Genesis 1:26 reads, "And God said, Let us [plural, denoting the Trinity] make man [the Hebrew word is *adam*, which according to Dr. Adam Clarke denotes 'the species,' or the physical portion of man—the body] in our image [which represents the spirit of man], after our likeness [the part of man that is like God, the eternal soul because He is 'the eternal God'; Deuteronomy 33:27]." In the beginning, God created man with a threefold nature. In our companion text, that great theologian of the New Testament (the Apostle Paul) set forth beyond any fear of contradiction the threefold nature of man. He distinguished the three components of man's composite being, or composition, describing them as "*spirit* and *soul* and *body*" (1 Thessalonians 5:23). We will begin with the portion of man's being with which we are the most familiar, the "body."

Questions that loom in men's minds regarding the body are, Why does man have a body? Has man always had a body? Will man always have a body? Why were not we just made spirit beings? What is the purpose of having a body? and How can the body be "preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thessalonians 5:23)? These are valid inquiries to which the Scriptures give definite answers. In 1 Thessalonians 5:23, the Apostle employed the word "body" to denote this facet of man's being. The Greek word is *soma*, and when the word stands alone, it represents the instrument of life. *Soma* is not used of man alone, but also of beasts (Hebrews 13:11) and of celestial and

terrestrial bodies (1 Corinthians 15:40). The celestial bodies are what we would call heavenly bodies—the sun, moon, and stars. The terrestrial bodies are on this Earth. When our text talks about "body" (*soma*), it is not used only of man but of beasts and celestial and terrestrial bodies. That word is used for the physical nature, whether it be man's physical nature, a beast's physical nature, or a celestial or terrestrial body's physical nature.

The body is not the real person; we can exist apart from our bodies. Second Peter 1:14-15 says: "Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me. Moreover I will endeavour that ye may be able after my decease ...." After death, you are going to "put off this ... tabernacle." We read in 2 Corinthians 5:1, "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved." Verse 4 explains what this "earthly house of this tabernacle" is, stating, "For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that *mortality* ...." This "tabernacle" is the mortal portion of man—his body—that is made of the dust of the earth.

Philippians 1:20-24 reads: "According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body [*soma*], whether it be by life, or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot not. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you." We identify ourselves and others through the body, but the real person is much deeper than the body. The real you and the real me is the soul. The soul looks out through our eyes and hears through our ears. The body is just an instrument of the soul.

The Body Inhabits the Natural World

First Corinthians 15:40 in the *Amplified Bible* says, "There are also heavenly bodies [sun, moon and stars] and earthly bodies [humans, animals, and plants]." The sun, moon and stars are celestial bodies in the firmamental heavens, but also, men, animals, and plants all have bodies. This widens the thought of bodies out much further than what is commonly considered. It is necessary to understand that there are celestial and terrestrial bodies to understand what the body is for. First Corinthians 15:41 reads, "There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory." Verse 39 tells us, "All flesh is not the same

flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds." The common denominator of these two verses is that they all occupy the natural realm or the natural world. The sun, moon, and stars serve no spiritual purpose. They perform no spiritual function except to serve as types. Literally, what is their function?

In the creative account, Genesis 1:14 says, "And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years." The sun and the moon distinguish day from night. Verses 15-18 state: "And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so. And God made two great lights [the sun and moon; Psalm 136:8-9]; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also. And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth. And to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that it was good." They operate in the natural realm. Their purpose is exclusively in the natural world.

The sun and the moon are natural, literal, measurable bodies. Beasts, fish, and birds inhabit the same sphere. Genesis 1:20-25 tells us: "And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven. And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that it was good. And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth. And the evening and the morning were the fifth day. And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so. And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind, and God saw that it was good." They occupy the Earth—the natural realm, the natural world.

The natural world is the same world that man's body inhabits. Genesis 1:27-28 says: "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth." Man's body inhabits this same natural realm. Therefore, for Christ (who is eternally pre-existent) to make His Advent into this *natural* world, He had to have a *natural* body prepared. Hebrews 10:5, speaking of Christ, tells us, "A body hast thou prepared me." This

refers to His natural "body" ("the body of Jesus Christ") that served as an "offering" for mankind (Hebrews 10:10).

Many do not see Christ any farther back than the Incarnation, but He is the pre-existent, eternal Christ. Psalm 110:1 says, "The LORD said unto my Lord [or God said unto Christ], Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." Matthew reveals this refers to Christ. Matthew 22:41-45 tells us: "While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, Saying, What think ye of Christ? whose son is he? They say unto him, The son of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying [quoting Psalm 110:1], The LORD said unto my Lord [notice the capital 'LORD' and the lowercase 'Lord'—two different Hebrew words], Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David then call him Lord, how is he his son?" He is talking about His pre-existence.

The Body Is Our World Consciousness

This may be well-worn, but I think it needs to be re-established. Psalm 90:1-2 says: "Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting; thou art God." Who formed the world? Who was the Agent in Creation? John 1:1-3 tells us: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him ['the Word'; verse 1]; and without him was not any thing made that was made." Verse 14 reads, "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 1:17 says, "Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." Jesus Christ is the "him" in verse 3. Ephesians 3:9 says that God "created all things by Jesus Christ." He was the Agent of Creation. Colossians 1:13-16 reads: "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For *by him* ['his dear Son' (verse 13); verses 9-17 are all part of one sentence] were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him." He is a pre-existent, eternal Christ.

Hebrews 10:5 states, "Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me."

Why did Christ need a body? He came into the world telling us the real person is not the body, but the soul. Christ's Incarnation required a body. That body became His contact with the natural world. The things in the world (including our bodies) are physical. The body is our world consciousness; it is how we relate to the world. *Webster's New World Dictionary* defines *consciousness* as "the state of being conscious, aware, especially of what is happening around one." Our body is our awareness, or our contact with the natural world.

When our bodies die, we no longer have any awareness of what takes place on the earth. You may have had a favorite cologne or a favorite perfume, and someone may bring it into the funeral home, come up to the casket, and put it right under your nose. However, you will not smell it. You will know nothing about it. People like to think consoling thoughts, such as, "Grandma is over in Heaven, looking down on us, and how thrilled she is that Johnny got saved this morning!" How thrilled is she going to be if Johnny backslides six months later? There is no awareness in Heaven of earthly matters. Would you want to go to Heaven and still see what is going on down here? No! You may hear people make statements like, "He is still with me; he is smiling down on me." People have all kinds of thoughts that have no basis in truth whatsoever.

Many supposedly Biblical scholars place the account of the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16:19-31 with the parables, but there is not a single parable in the New Testament that uses an individual's name. Christ used a name, "Lazarus." He was not giving a parable; He was uncapping eternity, providing a view. Luke 16:20 says, "There was a certain beggar named Lazarus." In this very familiar account, I would like to bring some things to your attention. Some advocate the erroneous thought that when an individual dies, he goes into a soul sleep. Jesus mentioned sleep when He was speaking of another Lazarus in John 11:11-14, but He was talking about physical death. There is no soul sleeping.

Luke 16:22-23 reads, "And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; And in hell he lift up his eyes, [There was no soul sleeping. As soon as his eyes closed here, they opened in the eternal realm; there was no interval in between.] being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom." These Scriptures do not mention that either the rich man or Lazarus had any awareness or consciousness of what was taking place in the world.

The body is what gives us an awareness of earthly things, and it distinguishes us from being spirit beings. After Christ's Resurrection, Luke 24:36-43 tells us: "And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit. And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled?

and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them his hands and his feet. And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here any meat? And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb. And he took it, and did eat before them." These verses reveal Jesus was not a spirit as they supposed.

The Body Is an Instrument of Choice

There are questions that commonly arise, such as: Why does man have a body? Why were we just not made spirit beings? To answer these, we need to be reminded of why man was created. The Scriptures tell us, "God is love" (1 John 4:8), and "love" desires reciprocation. God has a Heaven full of legions of angels, but for love to truly be love, there has to be a choice. Revelation 4:11 says, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure [the Greek word is *thelema*, which means 'thy will'] they are and were created." We were created to perform God's will; that is how we prove our love to Him. Jesus said, " If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15). To prove our "love," we must exercise proper choice. In order to present man with a choice, so man could show his love and allegiance, God had to give him an instrument that would allow him to be presented with a choice. That instrument is a body. Spirit beings are not creatures of choice. The Lord wants us to serve Him because of choice and desire. It is our bodies, the pull of the flesh and our humanity, that present us with choice.

Look at what God made our world consciousness (our body) from. He made us from "the dust of the ground" (Genesis 2:7; Ecclesiastes 12:7). We previously studied the creative account, but there are some additional things we need to notice. Genesis 2:8 states, "And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed." Man was placed in a physical, natural environment, and he had a physical, natural body. Verse 17 states, "But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it." As soon as man was created, God immediately gave him a choice.

Look at what component the tempter used to bring temptation. Genesis 3:1-3 says: "Now the serpent was more subtil [crafty] than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made [God made it through Christ as His Agent]. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the gar-

den, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, *neither shall ye touch it*, lest ye die." God did not say that.

You can tell when the truth starts galling people. They misrepresent it (or try to make it seem excessive or unreasonable) because they do not want to measure to it. Eve misrepresented it. The command in Genesis 2:17 was, "Thou shalt not eat of it." Genesis 2:15 says, "And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it." Maintaining the garden required touching the trees. God never said not to touch it, but Eve was feeling a little irritated. Forbidden fruit is always sweeter. Adam and Eve were allowed to eat of every tree in the garden but one. Which one do you think they desired? It was the one they were told not to eat. The devil saw Eve was ripe for this particular temptation. That is why he approached her instead of Adam.

Genesis 3:4-6 tells us: "And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. [They already knew good. Why did they want to know evil?] And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise." How did the devil work on her? James 1:14 says, "Every man is tempted." Saved or unsaved—all are tempted. I was told a preacher made a statement that he was so sanctified, he was not even tempted. If that were true, then he has a better experience than Jesus had, because Christ "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:15). Romans 3:4 says, "Let God be true, but every man a liar." When we contradict the Word of God, we make ourselves liars.

James 1:14 reads, "But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed." *Lust* in the Greek actually means "desire." Satan works through our human desires. John broke it down a little more. First John 2:15-16 states: "Love not the world, neither the things [preachers sometimes have to preach on *things* because *things* will work to pull you away from the Word of God; that is why the man of God warns about the dangers of such *things* as computers, the internet, televisions, etc.] that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 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." The body is our world consciousness; it is how we relate to this world. Every man, saved or unsaved, is tempted by his own desires. All those desires fall into one of three categories. When Hebrews 4:15 says Christ "was in *all* points tempted like as we are," the enemy will tell you there are a million points. However, there are only three: "the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life" (1 John 2:16).

How did the devil work on Eve? Genesis 3:6 says, "And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food [lust of the flesh], and that it was pleasant to the eyes [lust of the eyes], and a tree to be desired to make one wise [pride of life]." That is how the enemy appears. The body is the instrument of the soul. It is the instrument God gave to present man with a choice. At thirty years of age (Luke 3:23), the Jewish age to enter sacred service (Numbers 4:3, 23, 30, 35, 39), Jesus was baptized by John and ready to commence His public ministry. Matthew 4:1 says, "Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil." Why would the Spirit lead Him there? So He would be "tempted in all points" "like as we are," so He could be a "merciful and faithful high priest" (Hebrews 2:17). That is why God gave Him a body. There were obviously other reasons, such as to make it the sacrifice for sins. However, Hebrews 2:16 says that "he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham." Verse 17 says, "It behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest."

Christ is sitting at the right hand of God. We may pray and say: "Lord, I'm hurt. I'm in pain." God, who is a Spirit (John 4:24), might look to Jesus, who may say: "Father, I experienced pain when I was down there, and I know what he is talking about. I know what pain is. I know what it is to hurt." One reason Jesus took on Him the very seed of Abraham was so He could be "a merciful and faithful high priest." Hebrews 4:15 says, He can be "touched with the feeling of our infirmities." The root Greek word means a "fellow feeling." When you tell Him about something that takes place in the body, He understands.

Look at Christ's temptation. Matthew 4:1-3 says: "Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungered. And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread." The devil was using "the lust of the flesh." In essence, the devil was saying: "Satisfy that appetite. Satisfy that human craving." Verses 5-6 read: "Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple [he took Him in His mind just as he takes you and me when he tempts us], And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone." The devil misquoted the psalm (Psalm 91:11); nonetheless, he appealed to Jesus' pride: "the pride of life."

Matthew 4:8 says, "Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world." That was "the lust of the eyes." Christ was tempted in the same three avenues that we are. Hebrews

4:15 tells us He "was in all points tempted like as we are." It is important we understand this because the very body Christ was given to perform the will of God and the body that has been given to us enable us to have the power of choice. God gave Christ the same world consciousness we have—a body. Christ could choose right, as our example in all things (1 Peter 2:21), and perform the will of God (John 8:29). Likewise, God gave us a body as an instrument to choose right, to choose His will, and to show our love.

Consider some of Moses' last words to the new generation before they were ready to go into Canaan. Their parents' carcasses had fallen in the wilderness (Hebrews 3:17), and he was telling them to make proper choices; their parents did not. Deuteronomy 30:19-20 says: "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live: That thou mayest love the LORD thy God, and that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him: for he is thy life, and the length of thy days." Moses correlated proper choice with loving God.

The Opposition of Body and Spirit Presents a Choice

Man is created upright in his initial state. Ecclesiastes 7:29 tells us, "Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright [the Hebrew word is *yashar*, which means 'righteous']; but they have sought out many inventions." This was written many hundreds of years subsequent to the fall of man (approximately 977 B.C.). It shows God still makes everyone who comes into this world in an "upright," righteous, state. Children do not come in with a depraved nature or inherited sin; they come in "upright." Speaking of King Tyrus, Ezekiel 28:15 says, "Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee." Isaiah 53:6 states, "All we like sheep have gone astray [why?]; we have turned every one to his own way." There are those of the persuasion that man has a perverted nature, and that makes him sin, but they have it backwards. It is when you exercise the power of choice and you sin that your nature becomes perverted. The body is designed by God so that we can exercise choice.

Again, God created man upright (*yashar*, righteous), but they sought out many "inventions" (Ecclesiastes 7:29). The Hebrew says "subterfuges," which means "to flee, escape, any plan or action used to evade something different, or difficult, or unpleasant" (*Webster's Dictionary*). Many times, it is unpleasant to deny the flesh; it can be difficult. Once the flesh is yielded to at the age of accountability, then there is a constant pull that is contrary to the will of God.

Paul described his condition prior to salvation in Romans 7:9. He said, "I was alive without the law once." He was talking about the age of innocence prior to the age of accountability. He said, "But when the commandment came ...." The commandment was given on Mount Sinai in 1491 B.C. Paul was writing some fifteen hundred plus years later. What did he mean? He was saying when it came to his realization, his awareness, "when the commandment came" to him, then "sin revived." Paul said in verses 7-9: "I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. But sin, taking occasion by the commandment .... when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died." In essence, he said, "When I came to that age of accountability and I had an awareness, a consciousness, of what God wanted, I exercised a contrary choice, and that is when I died; when I died, I came under a power."

Romans 7:18 say, "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh [body],) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not." Verses 22-23 state, "For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members." Look at verse 17—"Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me." Why does man have a body? Why were we not made only spirit beings? It is because the opposition of our body to our spirit presents us with a choice.

Galatians 5:17 reads, "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other." When your alarm goes off, it was not the spirit telling you to stay in bed but the flesh. When it is a fast day, it is not your spirit that starts grumbling but your flesh says, "Feed me!" You may have seen the little cartoon of an angel on one shoulder and a devil on the other shoulder. Although it is a caricature, there is an element of truth in it. When choice comes, you have two voices talking to you. One voice says: "You know that will not hurt you if you do it just once. Nobody will know." But the other voice says, "Do not do that; God is watching you." If we were merely spirit beings, with no fleshly desires to contend with, and without our two natures pulling at us (a human nature and the "divine nature"; 2 Peter 1:4), we would not be creatures of choice; we would be spiritual automatons.

Love Requires Action

God desires our love and allegiance. John 14:15 states, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." Divine love, *agape*, is not a feeling nor an emotion. People say, "I just had chills go up and down my spine; it must be God." If you

licked your finger and stuck it in a light socket, you might have the same feeling. *Agape* is a Greek word whose definition is "a commitment to action for the object's highest good." John 3:16 says, "For God so *loved* [the commitment] the world, that he *gave* [the action]." It is a commitment to action. "Greater *love* [the commitment] hath no man than this, that a man *lay down* [the action] his life for his friends" (John 15:13). That is love—action. "If a man *love* [the commitment] me, he will *keep* [the action] my words" (John 14:23).

We have both spirit and body pulling on our souls. When Christ was praying in Gethsemane, He said in Matthew 26:38, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." He went back "and findeth them asleep, and saith ... What, could ye not watch with me one hour?" (verse 40). Verse 41 reads, "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation." Why did Jesus say that? They were not in temptation; they were asleep. Who was in temptation? He was. In John 12:27, Jesus said: "Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour." Although He knew the will of God and that He should not pray, "Save me from this hour," what did He do? He prayed, "Let this cup pass" (Matthew 26:39). What was in temptation? His flesh was. Matthew 26:41 says, "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." Jesus' flesh was weak, and He prayed amiss twice, but the third time was when He got the victory. It is the pull of both spirit and body on our soul that presents us with choice and enables us to prove our love to God by action, not just words. Words are cheap.

Has man always had a body? We found the spiritual portion of man was created first. Genesis 1:27 reads, "So God created man in his own image." The *Amplified Bible* says "likeness," letting us know that the spiritual portion, the spirit and the soul, were created first. Then it says, "Male and female created he them." That speaks of the physical portion.

Will Man Have a Body in Eternity?

The spiritual portion of Adam was created first, then God formed a body for him. With his body, he had a world consciousness to give him the ability to exercise choice. Acts 10:34 says, "God is no respecter of persons." Every person who comes into this time world is given a body and the same power of choice. Will man always have a body? First Corinthians 15:35-38 says: "But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come? Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened [made alive], except it die: And that which thow sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain,

it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain: But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body."

In the graveside committal service, the body is taken to the cemetery where it is buried. It is the same thing a farmer does in the spring. When he takes a potato with several eyes and sows it, he does not expect it to come out like it went in. He hopes to get a whole hill of potatoes. When he sows corn seeds, he expects to reap ears of corn. He does not expect to reap exactly as it was sown. Likewise, when our body dies, it will not come out of the grave as it went in. It will be a "glorious body" (Philippians 3:21); it will be a "changed" body (1 Corinthians 15:51), but it will come out recognizable. When Jesus appeared to the disciples with His glorified body, He said in Luke 24:39, "Behold my hands [the nail prints] and my feet [the nail prints]." Our glorified body is going to have the features of our corporeal bodies.

We sow a body when it dies. First Corinthians 15:42 reads: "So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption." When the body is taken to the funeral home, the undertaker takes out the blood because the blood causes the body to decompose. The blood is the corruption. When the Scriptures speak of the glorified body, they talk about flesh and bone, but they say nothing about blood (Ephesians 5:30). There is no blood in the glorified body (Luke 24:39). The Old Testament says the life (physical) is in the blood (Deuteronomy 12:23). When we are resurrected, we will have a glorified body, and we will not need that corruptible blood. First Corinthians 15:43-44 states, "It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body."

We are going to have a body in eternity. The body is the instrument of the soul, and the body is going to be rewarded or punished for what it has done. Second Corinthians 5:10 says, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ." Do not listen to the preachers who tell you the saved do not have to appear at the Judgment. Paul was writing "unto the church of God" and "all the saints" (2 Corinthians 1:1). Then Paul said in 2 Corinthians 5:10, "For we [all the saints, the church of God, himself included] must *all* appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that *every one* may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." At the Judgment, the body will be rewarded or receive retribution for what it has done.

How do we sanctify our bodies? How can they be as 1 Thessalonians 5:23 says, "Preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ"? Romans 8:11-13 tells us: "But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken [make alive] your mortal [not immortal, not talking about the resurrection at the end

of time] bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." Through salvation, we enjoy a physical body that is sensitive to the control of His Spirit. The Spirit enables you to "mortify." The Greek word is *thanatoo*, which means "to put to death." When you are in sin, the body dominates the spirit, but when you get saved, the spirit dominates the body.

Thanatoo denotes a strong word. It is the same Greek word used in Matthew 10:21 and Matthew 26:59 and rendered as "death." It is a word charged with emotion, followed by swift, decisive action to be rid of its object. The word *sanctify* (1 Thessalonians 5:23) actually means "consecrated, dedicated, set apart for sacred service." The word "blameless" in our text means "unblamed." First Thessalonians 5:24 says, "He that calleth you, who also will do it." How is He going to do it? Verse 19 states, "Quench not the Spirit." He will do it through the Spirit of God, by your giving your whole, complete, entire body to the Spirit of God and letting Him mortify, sanctify, and preserve by our lives being dominated by the Spirit rather than the flesh.

Galatians 5:16 says, "This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh." First Corinthians 6:20 says, "For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." God gave us a body, and it is our responsibility to use our bodies as the appropriate instrument of the soul, to make proper choices, to show God our love, and to cause Him pleasure. That is why we "are and were created" (Revelation 4:11).

I trust we can see the truth concerning this part of the threefold nature of man—the body, an instrument of choice given to enable us to prove our love to God. We must allow our bodies to be sanctified, consecrated, dedicated, and set apart. This is the only way we can exercise appropriate choice. We must cause our bodies to make proper choices through the power of the Spirit, so we can be "preserved blameless" all the way to "the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

CHAPTER 3

THE THREEFOLD NATURE OF MAN'S COMPOSITION (PART 2)—THE SOUL

Psalm 8:4 What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?

5 For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, (Hebrew word is Elohim which means God), and hast crowned him with glory and honour.

1 Thessalonians 5:23 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.

24 Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.

Man is a threefold being; he has a threefold nature. In our prior study, we addressed the questions of why we have a body and what is its purpose? In this segment, we will study the soul. Hebrews 4:12 states, "For the word of God is quick [which means alive], and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit." There is a distinction between the soul and the spirit. Another rendering of this verse says, "It penetrates deeply, making a distinction between." You cannot make "a distinction between" two things if they are not distinct. The Scriptures give great insight into man's nature, or composition.

When studying the soul, many questions come to mind, such as, What is the soul? Is the soul more than breath? Is the soul and the heart the same? Is the mind in the body or the soul? What about the conscience? and Is the soul immortal? These are not simple questions, but God's Word addresses them. Proverbs 30:5 says, "Every word of God is pure." There is divine design and import attached to every word in the sacred Scriptures. Second Timothy 3:16 says, "All scripture is given by inspiration" and "is profitable." The words in our text convey a number of truths. When 1 Thessalonians 5:23 says "spirit and soul and body," the Greek actually reads "pneuma and psuche and soma," which denote different elements or components of man's nature. When Hebrews 4:12 says "soul and spirit," the same Greek words are used: *psuche* and *pneuma*. These two Greek words have different meanings. There is a distinction between "soul" and "spirit" because they operate in different realms for different purposes.

Hebrews 4:12 uses an equation or parallelism to explain the distinction between "soul" and "spirit." A parallelism is where a truth is stated in one manner

and then restated in another manner to clarify the first expression. The psalms are replete with instances of parallelism. One example is Psalm 119:130, which says, "The entrance of thy words giveth light." This is the first part of the parallelism (defined by some as "couplets"). The second part of the parallelism clarifies it by saying it "giveth understanding." This explains what "light" is representing. Another example is when the Apostle Paul prayed about his thorn. In 2 Corinthians 12:9, Jesus told him, "My grace is sufficient for thee." That is the first part of the parallelism. The second portion says, "For my strength is made perfect in weakness." Because of the parallelism, we know that "grace" is "strength."

"The Joints and Marrow" Explain the "Soul and Spirit"

Hebrews 4:12 employs a parallelism that gives insight into the function (or operation) of the "soul and spirit." The first part says "piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit," and the second part says "and of the joints and marrow." That verse makes an equation or a parallel between "soul and spirit" and "joints and morrow." Insight into what "joints and marrow" are designed to do and how they function will give insight into the distinction between the "soul and spirit" and what they are designed to do.

Let us consider the thought of "joints." *Webster's Dictionary* tells us, "Joints in anatomy are placed where two bones or corresponding structures are joined, usually so they can move." We have a joint in our elbow that joins two bones so it can move. *Webster's Medical Dictionary* says, "An area where two different bones meet." Joints are connectors. *National Institutes of Health* writes, "Joints are movable connections between the bones." They hold two things together. The Hebrew writer equated "joints" with the "soul." The soul holds two things together, the body and the spirit. When the soul moves out, the body and spirit are no longer held together.

Ecclesiastes, Chapter 12, gives details concerning the aging process. Verse 3 says, "In the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble." This is referring to when the legs will have trouble supporting you. Thus, the need for canes, walkers, and wheelchairs arises. Verses 3-5 continue describing that process, stating: "The strong men shall bow themselves [as the aging process advances, even the strongest and tallest begin to stoop], and the grinders cease because they are few [you start losing teeth], and those that look out of the windows be darkened [you need more light to be able to read], And the doors shall be shut in the streets, when the sound of the grinding is low, and he shall rise up at the voice of the bird [you do not sleep as soundly] ... and desire shall fail: because

man goeth to his long home." The *Septuagint* says "eternal home; when death seizes." Verse 7 states, "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." When the soul (the connector, the "joint") leaves, the spirit and the body are no longer held together. Then, they go to their respective places.

Next is the marrow. *Webster's Medical Dictionary* defines *marrow* as "soft tissue in the center of the bone." *Modern Biology* says, "It is active in forming the red corpuscles and most of the white corpuscles of the blood" (page 566). The functioning of the marrow brings understanding of the spiritual truths Hebrews 4:12 portrays. Red corpuscles (erythrocytes) are essential to life because they transport carbon dioxide from the body's tissues to the lungs to be dispelled. They are crucial for expelling carbon dioxide from the body. White corpuscles (leukocytes) are defensive mechanisms. As part of the immune system, they fight against bacteria and infection to keep the body pure and healthy. The Hebrew writer equated these joints and marrow with soul and spirit.

The joints possess marrow, without which the joint could not function. Think of it as the way vehicles were lubricated in the recent past. It is like when there were grease fittings on the joints of a car. The car had to have a lube job. The grease had to get into that joint, or the joint would not keep working. Likewise, marrow is essential. It is actually life to the joint, and it keeps the body functioning properly. Look at the spiritual parallel. Our soul possesses a spirit, which is our God consciousness, our link to the spiritual realm. When God's Spirit (the Holy Spirit) has the right of way, He performs dual functions. He continues to produce life, and He is a divine defense mechanism against all satanic advances and infections of the enemy. Romans 8:10 says, "The Spirit is life." Just as the joints are dead, useless, without the life of the morrow; the soul is dead without the life of the Holy Spirit. The soul without the Spirit and joints without the marrow cannot function for the purpose God intended.

Ephesians 2:1 speaks of being "dead in trespasses and sins." What part of us is "dead"? Paul wrote in 1 Timothy 5:6, "She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth." When we are in sin, we are dead. Ezekiel 18:4 says, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." The body may still be living, but the soul is dead. In both of the Scripture texts, the original word for "soul" is *psuche*. Much confusion is engendered because of the translators. The Word of God is inspired, infallible, and inerrant, but the translators were not. The Scriptures were not originally written in English; that did not occur until about 1535 A.D. when the *Coverdale Bible* was first printed. Many places in the Scriptures, the word "soul" is used where it was not intended to mean the eternal portion of mankind.

Genesis 12:5 reads, "And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's

son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls [the Hebrew word *nephesh*] that they had gotten in Haran, and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan." You cannot take souls, the eternal part of man, anywhere. That verse is not talking about souls, but about people. Genesis 46:14-15 says: "And the sons of Zebulun; Sered, and Elon, and Jahleel. These be the sons of Leah, which she bare unto Jacob in Padanaram, with his daughter Dinah: all the souls of his sons and his daughters were thirty and three." Did Leah give birth to souls with no bodies? If this is talking about souls, what is the difference between the soul of the son and the soul of the daughter? It is not talking about souls, the eternal part; it is speaking of people. We often use the expression, "That poor old soul," but we are talking about the person.

Proverbs 6:30 tells us, "Men do not despise a thief, if he steal to satisfy his soul when he is hungry." I wonder what you would steal to feed your soul? Again, it is not talking about the soul; it is talking about the person. I want you to see what is causing so much confusion. The tendency can easily be to just read, but never actually study or reason. Just superficially reading the Bible can cause or generate confusion. Jeremiah 2:34 says, "Also in thy skirts is found the blood of the souls of the poor innocents." It is the body (not the soul) that has blood. It is talking about people. Passages, such as these, must be considered closely to see what the context is actually conveying and not be misunderstanding what the Bible teaches concerning the soul.

What Is the Soul?

What actually is the soul? Some say it is merely animal life, merely breath. One book (published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, Brooklyn, New York), entitled *Let God Be True*, says, "The claim of religionists, that man has an immortal soul, and therefore differs from the beast, is not scriptural" (pages 59-60). They teach that the Bible shows both man and beast are souls or merely breath activating a body. That is the result of not rightly dividing the Word of Truth, not having the Spirit of Truth give you a revelation of the Word of Truth. The scriptures are too plain and too numerous to accept any type of erroneous thoughts such as that!

Genesis 35:16-18 says: "And they journeyed from Bethel; and there was but a little way to come to Ephrath: and Rachel travailed, and she had hard labour. And it came to pass, when she was in hard labour, that the midwife said unto her, Fear not; thou shalt have this son also. And it came to pass, as her soul was in departing ...." *The Interlinear Hebrew* says "as her soul was going forth." Going forth where? If the soul were only breath, then it would stop when the breath

did. However, this verse says her soul was going forth. Where was it going?

Genesis 35:29 states, "And Isaac gave up the ghost, and died, and was gathered unto his people." There is something beyond death. Isaac was "gathered," not buried. This is not talking about his physical body. He was "gathered unto his people." Where were Isaac's people? Isaac was the son of Abraham. Where was Abraham? In Luke, Chapter 16, Jesus uncapped eternity to provide a glance at Lazarus and the rich man. Verses 22-23 tell us, "The rich man also died, and was buried; And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom." Abraham was in Paradise. The rich man recognized him and spoke to him, centuries after Abraham's death. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob did not cease to be when their breath left them; they departed to the heights of Paradise.

Jesus said in Matthew 8:11, "Many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Issac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven." Jesus was speaking centuries later about Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob being in the kingdom. When their breath ceased, they did not cease to be. Matthew 17:1-3 says: "And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart. And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias [Greek for the Hebrew Elijah] talking with him." Moses and Elijah had not ceased to exist. They were still alive in the eternal realm, and they were recognizable.

Peter, James, and John had never seen Moses or Elijah, but the minute they saw them, they knew who they were. They were all in the kingdom, in the eternal or the heavenly phase. Before being martyred, Paul penned his final letter to the young minister Timothy. Second Timothy 4:18 says, "The Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom." There is an aspect of the kingdom beyond this veil of time. Paul joined Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, and Elijah in that "heavenly" or eternal aspect.

Many Scriptures substantiate the eternal nature of the soul and that it continues after physical death, just in another realm. Consider the words of Jesus to the repentant thief on the cross in Luke 23:43. He said, "To day shalt thou be with me in paradise." In 2 Corinthians 5:8, the Apostle Paul wrote that if he was "absent from the body," he would "be present with the Lord." Philippians 1:21 tells us, "To live is Christ, and to die is gain." Verse 23 proceeds to tell us that "to depart" is "to be with Christ; which is far better."

To understand the soul, first, let us see what it is not. The Greek word used for "soul" is *psuche*, not *psucho*. What is the distinction? *Psucho* means "breath." The word used for soul is the Greek word *psuche*, the same word our

English word *psychology* is derived from. Webster defines *psuche* as "the mind, logos, a discourse." *Vital Words of the Bible* says the word *psuche* means "the true center of man's life, the conscious self, or personality which is the entire center of emotions, desires, affections, of the thoughts, and moral action" (page 110). Some offer the Greek word as *psyche. The Oxford Classical Dictionary* says, "*Psyche* is the Greek term for soul." In essence, the soul is the real you; it is your self consciousness. The soul, the real you, looks out through the "windows" (Ecclesiastes 12:3), or your eyes.

The Soul Is Distinct From the Body

Jesus said in Matthew 10:28, "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul," letting us know there is a distinction between "the body" and "the soul," contrary to the erroneous position of the Jehovah's Witnesses that teaches the soul dies when the body died. However, there is actually a vast distinction between the soul and the physical life, or the body. We studied the Scriptures in Job and Psalms and found there was a soul before there was ever a body. The soul is the seat of the personality. Jesus said in Luke 9:24-25: "For whosoever will save his life [or soul; the Greek word is *psuche*] shall lose it; but whosoever will lose his life [or soul] for my sake, the same shall save it. For what is the man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself." The "himself" is the soul. Matthew 16:26 reads, "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own *soul* [the Greek word *psuche*]? or what shall a man give in exchange for his *soul*?" Luke 9:25 correlates with Matthew 16:26, letting us know the "soul" is equated with "himself," teaching that the soul is the real self.

The soul is the seat of the sentiment element in man by which he perceives, reflects, feels, and desires. It is in the soul that man feels, that has emotion. Psalm 42:5 says, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me?" Desires are in the soul. A prophecy concerning when Jeroboam would take over the kingdom reads, "And I will take thee, and thou shalt reign according to all that thy soul desireth, and shalt be king over Israel" (1 Kings 11:37).

Jesus said in Matthew 11:29, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find *rest* unto your souls." Rest is a desire, and that desire is in the soul. It is the soul that learns and has perception. Psalm 139:14 states, "I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul *knoweth* right well." In Luke 2:34, Simeon prophesied to Mary of what Christ would do, saying, "This child

is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel." In verse 35, he spoke to Mary as a mother, stating, "Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul." Mary was at the foot of the Cross. How do you think she felt as a mother? That feeling, that emotion, was in her soul.

Acts 14:2 says, "But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles, and made their minds [*The Emphatic Greek Diaglott* says 'souls'] evil affected against the brethren." The soul is where feelings reside. Also, much of our thinking and rationalizing ability comes through the soul. Proverbs 23:7 tells us, "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he." One rendering says, "For as he thinks in his soul, so is he." The soul is more than the mind because there are those who, through deformity or injury, cannot think or rationalize; yet, they have souls. The soul is the eternal portion of us that is like God. In Genesis 1:26, God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." God is "the eternal God" (Deuteronomy 33:27); that is His nature, and we have a likeness to that. There is an eternal essence in every individual, an eternal soul, that will inhabit the eternal realm.

In Isaiah 57:15, speaking through the prophet, God said, "Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity ...." Where are we going to inhabit eternity? Matthew 25:46 states, "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal." Both the righteous and the unrighteous are going to inhabit eternity, just as God does. At death, the body goes to the grave, the spirit goes back to God, and the soul is going to inhabit eternity.

The Soul Contains the Intellect, Will, and Emotions

Psalm 84:2 says, "My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the LORD." The condition of a person's soul is revealed by what their desires are, what they long for, where they want to be, and where they spend their time. Isaiah 26:9 reads, "With my soul have I desired thee in the night." The soul is the seat of emotion and feeling. Numbers 21:4 says, "And they journeyed from mount Hor by the way of the Red sea, to compass the land of Edom: and the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way." The soul also is the seat of will and purpose. Acts 4:32 tells us, "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul." They had a united purpose, a united will. It is in the soul, the real self, where the intellect, will, and emotions dwell. When Jesus was in Gethsemane, He said, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death" (Matthew 26:38). The soul is the inner man. Jesus had the intellect to know what was going to occur. He had the emotion to feel what it was going to be like, and the human will did not want to do that.

To simplify our being, 2 Corinthians 4:16 reduces it to a duality when it says, "For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish ...." The body, the "outward man," is perishing. With every passing day, we are getting closer to the cemetery. The aging process mentioned in Ecclesiastes, Chapter 12, becomes more real with every passing year, month, and day. Second Corinthians 4:16 continues, "Yet the inward man is renewed day by day." The soul is a part of that inward man, and it has senses just as the body, the natural man, does.

When a child is born healthy, he has sight, smell, taste, touch, and hearing. However, medical science tells us that these senses are underdeveloped. The child can see, but his mother is a blurry figure. It takes a while for his vision to sharpen. All those natural senses have to be developed. You can be born with good hearing, but to be a musician, you have to have your ear trained. Some people are born with what is called "perfect pitch." They can hear a train whistle and tell you what the note is, but they would not have known what that note was without some training. A child can be born with great dexterity, but he still has to be trained to be a neurosurgeon. He must develop all those senses.

Hebrews 5:14 tells us, "But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age [mature spiritually], even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." The senses of the soul also need to be exercised, or developed. We are born with spiritual senses that need to be developed by the Spirit we possess. The body has a brain, but the mind is in the soul. Proverbs 23:7 says, "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he." The Hebrew word for "heart" in that verse is *nephesh,* the same word used in the Old Testament for "soul." The Greek word for "heart" is *kardia*, from which our English word "cardiac" comes. The heart is the seat of affections, and it resides in the soul. We know that because the conscience is in the heart.

Hebrews 9:9, talking about the Old Testament and the old Tabernacle, which was a figure for the Old Testament dispensation, says, "Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience." The people could go through all the rituals of the Old Testament, but it did nothing to their consciences. It could not address the needs of their consciences. Verse 14 states, "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works [Old Testament observances] to serve the living God?"

Hebrews 10:2 (talking about how the animal sacrifices did not suffice) reads, "For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins." The

people had a "conscience of sins" because the blood of bulls and goats could not remove sin. Only the blood of Christ purges the conscience of sins. What kind of conscience? Hebrews 10:22 states, "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience." The conscience is in the heart, and the heart is in the soul.

The soul is far greater than just breath, just animal life. Man's eternal faculties are in the soul. Let us look again at a familiar account in Luke, Chapter 16. Verses 19-22 read: "There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full or sores, And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table [there is nothing here to indicate the rich man ever mistreated Lazarus]: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. And it came to pass, that the beggar [the Greek says 'poor man'] died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom." There is no soul sleeping; only the body sleeps. The soul never loses consciousness. Evidently, Lazarus' soul must have been functional, operational, and recognizable. The rich man knew who Lazarus was and asked Abraham to allow him to perform a certain task.

Verses 22-23 tell us: "The rich man also died, and was buried [we do not read that Lazarus had a burial, but the rich man had the means, and he 'was buried']. And in hell he lift up his eyes [as soon as his eyes closed here, they opened there], being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom." The rich man did not have a body nor eyes; his body was buried. His eyes were in the grave, yet he *saw* Abraham. All his natural faculties were functional and operational within his soul. His ability for vision and perception of distance were there, and he had a depth of emotion, vocal abilities, desires, recognition, and will.

The rich man said in verse 24, "Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue [he experienced severe discomfort]; for I am tormented in this flame." The tongue was buried with the body, but he had that faculty of what the tongue desired. There is much more to the soul than we realize.

Sometimes this question is posed: How could your soul go to hell, into flames, and never be consumed? It is the same way the flames were in the burning bush (Exodus 3:2). It was never consumed because it had a special quality that God made. Fire and brimstone fell from heaven on Sodom and Gomorrah, but Jude 7 says, "Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire." The

fire that came that day was "eternal fire." It went from the realm of the seen to the unseen. They are still "suffering [present tense] the vengeance of eternal fire."

Luke 16:25 reads, "Abraham said, Son, remember." The rich man had full mental faculties. Verses 27-28 tell us: "Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment." He had an understanding of divine realities. All these things reside in the soul. Some may say, "I thought the mind, the heart, and the soul were all different; Jesus spoke of them as being separate." Let us study that. Mark 12:30 says, "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength." It would appear there is a distinction and there is a distinction, but Jesus was showing what actually constitutes truly loving God.

Your heart (the seat of affections) must be fully reserved for God's occupation. To give God full sway of your affections, you must yield to Him your innermost self (your soul). To perform these feats, you must do them "with all the understanding" (Mark 12:33). Jesus was talking about the different components of what is incorporated in the soul of man. To truly love God as you ought, you must love Him with your mind (all the understanding that has been shed on your intellect), with your heart (your seat of affection, where the thoughts and feelings and desires arise), and with your soul (your self consciousness). All these things are distinct details of what must be operable in the soul to truly please God.

When Did the Soul Begin?

First, we must Scripturally re-establish the premise that God is indeed "eternal" (Deuteronomy 33:27; Isaiah 57:15). Psalm 90:2 establishes the fact, "Even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God." This reveals that His "eternal" nature is from "everlasting" past to "everlasting" future. The expression "LORD" as used throughout the Old Testament (Psalm 96:1; 97:1; 98:1; 99:1; 100:1; 101:1 and a host of other verses) is the Hebrew word *Yehovah*, which means "[the] self-Existent or Eternal" (*The New Strong's Expanded Dictionary of Bible Words With Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary*).

Concerning man's soul, the Scriptures speak repeatedly (some forty-one times in the New Testament) of "eternal life" (as in Matthew 19:16; John 3:15; 4:36; 5:39; 6:54, 68 and many others). The New Testament also makes reference to "eternal salvation" (Hebrews 5:9) and "eternal redemption" (Hebrews

9:12). The Greek word for our English "eternal" is *aionios,* and is defined as "perpetual (also used of past time, or past and future as well):–eternal" (*Strong's With Vines*). If there is to be "eternal life," "eternal salvation," and "eternal redemption," there must be an "eternal" depository where these can reside for eternity. Hence, the soul of man, which is eternal. That it exists beyond time and/or life is beyond question. A host of Scriptures substantiate this truth.

Jesus told the repentant dying thief, "To day shalt thou be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:43). The "thou" and "me" were their never-dying souls. The Apostle Paul declared when penning to the saints in Corinth, he was "willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord" (2 Corinthians 5:8). Obviously, the portion of Paul that would be "absent from the body, and ... present with the Lord" was the eternal part of our being—the soul. Philippians 1:21 and 23 set forth this same truth. There Paul spoke of "to die is gain" and "to be with Christ; which is far better."

However, the question remains if the Greek word for "eternal" (*aionios*) means "used of past time, or past and future as well," then we must address the questions, "When did the soul begin," or "does this mean the soul has no beginning?" Let us go back to "the beginning" (Genesis 1:1). In Genesis 1:26, "God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." The word "likeness" in the Hebrew is *demuwth*, and by definition, it "signifies the original after which a thing is patterned." If indeed the soul is in "likeness," or "patterned" after "the original," it must be "from everlasting to everlasting" (Psalm 90:2) as well.

Consider the words in Ezekiel 18:1 and 4 of "the LORD" (Hebrew *Yehovah*, meaning "the self-Existent or Eternal"): "Behold, all souls are mine." The Hebrew word for the English "mine" is *aniy*. This word is defined as, "I, me, which, for I, mine" (*Strong's With Vine's*). According to the *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, "In earlier Hebrew, in prose at least, the stress is unmistakable" (Volume 1, page 57). This reference lists three grammatical principles when it is used, and it refers to two Scriptures where this word is employed: (1) where Esau pled, "Bless *me*, even *me*" (Genesis 27:34), and (2) when Abigail implored David, "Upon *me*, my lord, upon *me* let this iniquity be" (1 Samuel 25:24). Again, these verses use the same Hebrew word rendered as "me" in Ezekiel 18:4. There are at least ten renderings that offer Ezekiel 18:4 as "me," and several others say the Hebrew word is *li*, which commonly means "to me" or "for me."

This reveals that the pre-existent, eternal soul came from "the eternal God"; it is part of His eternal essence. *Webster's New World Dictionary* defines *essence* as "something that is, or exists ... that which makes something what it is; intrinsic, fundamental nature (of something); essential being." Therefore, the

soul is actually a part of God's eternal essence, "something that is, or exists." In Ezekiel 18:4, the meaning of the word "mine" could cause the verse to say, "All souls are me." When conception occurs, God places the part that is in His "likeness," His "fundamental nature," that eternal essence, that part which is "from everlasting to everlasting" (Psalm 90:2) into the initially conceived child, and that soul shall exist "to everlasting."

Matthew 10:28 states, "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." Luke 12:20 says, "But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee." Mark 9:43-48 reads: "And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not [Job 25:6 and Psalm 22:6 explain the 'worm' is 'man'], and the fire is not quenched.

"And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched [this is repeated several times for divine emphasis]. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." These verses let us know there is an eternal part of man.

One of the best evidences for an eternal soul is found in Matthew 17:1-8. Moses' appearance on the Mount of Transfiguration nearly fifteen hundred years after the death of his body offers conclusive proof that the soul is distinct from the body and is eternal. It exists after death in a continued state of consciousness. It is vital that we understand these truths.

Sanctification of the Soul

First Thessalonians 5:23 tells us, "And the very God of peace sanctify [set apart for sacred usage, dedicate, consecrate] you wholly [completely, the whole person]; and I pray God your [then he clarified what wholly is] whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." God's desire is that we be preserved blameless all the way up to the day of Jesus Christ, the Second Advent. Verse 24 says, "Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it." God will do His part, but we must sanctify our spirit, soul, and body. He is either Lord of all, or He is not Lord at all. To be "preserved blameless," we must have our soul sanctified (our self consciousness, our personality, our feelings). Sanctification is an ongoing process "unto the coming

of our Lord Jesus Christ." Every day, we should become more sanctified. We must live in a state of where our soul is being sanctified continuously—our self consciousness, personality, feelings, desires, emotions, will, purposes, conscience, mind, thinking, heart, and affections are all being yielded to the Divine will.

In Mark 12:28 and 30, when a scribe asked, "Which is the first commandment?" Jesus said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength." This timeless commandment was quoted from Deuteronomy 6:5. Jesus was showing the route to sanctification. To sanctify the soul takes in a large territory. Jesus said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself ['himself' is the soul], and take up his cross daily, and follow me" (Luke 9:23). In 1 Corinthians 15:31, Paul said, "I die daily." (I realize the context of this verse is speaking of the physical reality, but the same applies as a spiritual principle.)

At conversion, there are some things we have to die out to once and for all, but there are some things we have to die out to "daily." We still have a personality, feelings, desires, emotions, and a will. Even Christ, the perfect Son of God, said in John 12:23, "The hour is come." Verse 27 states: "And what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour." However, in the garden, Jesus prayed God would save Him from "this hour." What was doing the praying? His self consciousness, self, and self-will. He prayed, "Let this cup pass" (Matthew 26:39). It took Him praying three times to get His flesh under. It may take you and me three or more.

How do we get our souls sanctified? Again, Luke 9:23 tells us, "Let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily [you cannot take the cross up daily if you do not deny yourself daily first], and follow me." All three things have to be done to sanctify yourself. I trust we can see in a greater way the position of the soul and the part it plays in man's nature. Just as the body is our world consciousness, the soul is our self consciousness. We need to ask ourselves, "Is it sanctified; is it blameless?" If not, it needs to be. Paul said, "I keep under" (1 Corinthians 9:27). If we do not keep ourselves under, it will lead us in the wrong direction.

When we came to the age of accountability, what caused us to go into sin? Isaiah 53:6 says, "All we like sheep have gone astray [why?]; we have turned every one to his own way [will]." That is in the soul; so self consciousness arose. If we do not want self consciousness to arise and lead us into sin again, we have to get the self consciousness sanctified. That is not something we do once or twice, but it is something we have to do "daily." If we make that effort, God is faithful to give the sanctification that we need.

CHAPTER 4

THE THREEFOLD NATURE OF MAN'S COMPOSITION (PART 3) — THE SPIRIT

Psalm 8:4 What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?

1 Thessalonians 5:23 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.

Hebrews 4:12 For the word of God is quick [alive], and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and morrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

In this segment of the series, we will consider the spirit of man. Often, many questions immediately loom to mind, such as, Is there really a distinction between soul and spirit, or are they merely just interchangeable terms? Why is man a threefold being? What is the need and purpose of man's trichotomous nature? Why does man have a spirit? and What is the spirit's function? The Scriptures give sound answers to these valid questions. There may be occasions in the Scriptures where soul and spirit are used in an interchangeable sense, but when indicated specifically (as in the Scripture texts), it denotes a definite distinction. First Thessalonians 5.23 lists the three separate portions of man's being, separating each with the conjunction "*and*." Likewise, Hebrews 4:12 speaks of "the dividing asunder of soul *and* spirit," letting us know there must be a distinction. One rendering says, "It penetrates deeply, making a distinction between." There can be no "distinction" unless they are distinct, separate, and different.

Hebrews 4:12 sets before us an equation, a parallelism, that we previously studied. The mention of "soul and spirit" is equated with "joints and marrow," giving insight on the distinction between "soul and spirit." The joint holds two bones together and makes them functional. The "joints" correlate with the "soul." Just as "joints" hold two bones together, the "soul" holds the "body" and "spirit" together. When the soul moves out of the body, the body and spirit separate; they are no longer held together. Ecclesiastes 12:5 says, "Also when they shall be afraid of that which is high [talking about the ravages of age; you are unable to navigate heights as easily as before], and fears shall be in the way, and the almond tree shall flourish, and the grasshopper shall be a burden [even little

things are hard to bear], and desire shall fail [loss of appetites]: because man goeth to his long home [the *Septuagint* says 'eternal home']." Verse 7 tells us what happens next, stating, "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." Again, when the "soul" moves out, the "spirit" and the "body" are no longer held together.

The "marrow" correlates with the "spirit." What is the purpose of marrow? *Webster's Medical Dictionary* says it is the "soft tissue in the center of the bone." *Modern Biology* says, "Marrow is active in forming the red corpuscles and most of the white corpuscles of the blood" (page 566). The pigment in the red blood cell is hemoglobin, which is a complex iron-containing protein. The chemical element iron gives hemoglobin the ability to carry oxygen, and oxygen is essential to life. Physical life is in the red corpuscles through the hemoglobin. That is a picture of spiritual life made available by the shedding of Christ's blood and given to us through the Holy Spirit.

In John 3:6, Jesus said to Nicodemus, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." The Spirit brings spiritual birth; He brings life. Second Corinthians 3:6 says, "Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." Romans 8:2 states, "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." Verse 10 reads, "The Spirit is life." Just as the blood carries oxygen that is essential for physical life, Christ shed His redemptive blood and ushered in the Holy Spirit who is essential for spiritual life.

The Spirit of Man Is Designed to Be Inhabited by the Holy Spirit

Think of "the spirit of man" (1 Corinthians 2:11) as a conduit. Electricity has a conduit, or piping, where wires pass through to bring power. "The spirit of man" is somewhat of a conduit; it is designed to house the Holy Spirit. The literal conduit does not bring electricity or power; it is the wires within the conduit that bring the power. Likewise, "the spirit of man" does not bring life, but the Spirit of God inside the spirit of man brings spiritual life to man. If the marrow inside the joint is not working or is not there, then that joint quits operating.

The marrow also produces white corpuscles—defense mechanisms to fight off bacteria and infection and keep the body pure and healthy. Spiritually, the Spirit is our defense. Isaiah 59:19 tells us, "When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him." The Spirit not only brings life, but maintains life. The Spirit of God labors to sustain life by acting as a divine defense mechanism to ward off satanic infections and

impurities.

Romans 8:16 says, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." There is a vivid distinction between the Holy Spirit and the spirit of man. First Corinthians 2:11-12 states: "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God." The spirit of man is designed to have the Spirit of God as its occupant. Again, the spirit of man (acting as a conduit) acts according to what it is yielded to or what spirit indwells the individual.

A man can refuse God and pick up demonic spirits; then his spirit will be a conduit for the devil, for devilish spirits. Or he can yield his life to Christ. Verse 12 says, "Now we have received." The spirit of man is designed to receive something; it will not remain empty. There are many people who have received "the spirit of the world," and it is dominating their spirits. Verse 12 continues, "We have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God [why?]; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God." God communicates with us through our spirit—the spirit of man is a conduit.

Where did the spirit of man originate? Ecclesiastes 12:7 tells us, "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." God gave man a spirit. He made him a threefold being because man operates in three realms. Hebrews 10:5 says, "Wherefore [speaking of the Advent of Christ] when he cometh into the *world*, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a *body* hast thou prepared me." The body is our world consciousness. Another Scripture talks about souls. In Luke 9:24-25, Jesus said: "For whosoever will save his life [the Greek word is *psuche*, translated in other Scriptures as 'soul'] shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life [*soul*] for my sake, the same shall save it. For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose *himself*, or be cast away?"

The soul is our self consciousness; it is the real you. Matthew rendered the same thing in Matthew 16:26, which says, "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul [*psuche*]." In Luke it is rendered "himself." It is talking about the "soul," our self-consciousness; the real you, the real me. In Luke 23:43, Jesus said to the thief, "To day shalt thou be with *me* in paradise." What was the "*me*"? Christ's body was placed in a sepulchre. In verse 46, He said, "Father, into thy hands I commend my *spirit*." When the body dies, the spirit goes back to God who gave it because there is no longer a need for it. This body went to a sepulchre, His spirit went back to God who gave it, and the "me" that went to "paradise" was His soul.

What Is the Purpose of the Spirit?

Why did God give man a spirit? Job 32:8 states, "But there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding." The spirit is how we relate to God and how God relates to us in this world. The body of man is our world consciousness, the soul of man is our self consciousness, the spirit of man is our God consciousness. God communicates and brings understanding to us through our spirit.

First Corinthians 2:12 says, "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God [that is the summation, now the clarification]; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God." It is through God's Spirit, indwelling our spirit, that we gain understanding and revelation. It is through His Spirit that God gives inspiration. It is God's venue of divine communication with mankind. The human spirit is the portion of man that God actually deals with. Romans 8:16 states, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit." The spirit of man is correlated with the Spirit of God (1 Corinthians 2:11) because God designed for the spirit of man to be occupied by the Spirit of God.

John 4:24 says, "God is a Spirit." Therefore, communion and communication with Him must come on a spiritual level. We must get beyond the world (our world consciousness), beyond ourselves (our self consciousness), let the Holy Spirit be an indwelling reality in our lives, in our spirit, so we can receive the revelation, understanding, and communication God desires we have.

Proverbs 20:27 says, "The spirit of man is the candle of the LORD, searching all the inward parts of the belly." A candle is used to bring light to darkness. The spirit of man is the venue by which God brings light (or understanding; Psalm 119:130) through the Holy Spirit. Ephesians 1:17-18 reads: "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened." The Spirit enlightens our understanding. He brings wisdom, light, understanding, revelation, and knowledge to the spirit of man. The spirit of man is the "candle" (the venue, the conduit) God uses to bring all that we need into our lives by the Spirit of God. The spirit of man is the part of man God enlightens.

Man has a spirit because that is where the "image" of God is. Genesis 1:26 says, "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." What is the "image" of God? Colossians 3:10 reads, "And have put on the new man [conversion], which is renewed in knowledge after the image [the Greek word is *eikon*, which means 'representation and resemblance'] of him that created

him." Conversion renews and puts man back into his original state. How does God renew man? What does man receive? Ephesians 4:24 tells us, "And that ye put on the new man [conversion], which after God is created in [here it tells us what that 'image' is] righteousness and true holiness." Colossians 3:10 says when we "have put on the new man," we are "renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him." Ephesians 4:23 says, "And be renewed in the spirit of your mind." The "image" is found in the spirit.

What is the function of the spirit? It is the portion of man with which God communes. We have found that the joints represent the soul, which holds the body and the spirit together. We have also found that marrow represents the spirit of man, which is essential to life. As the soul is the life of the body, the spirit is the life of the soul. When the soul leaves the body, the body is dead. We are going to bury it. Ezekiel 18:4 tells us, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." Romans 6:23 states, "For the wages of sin is death." Paul said in 1 Timothy 5:6, "But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth."

Ephesians 2:1 talks about being "dead in trespasses and sins." These verses are not talking about being physically dead. The soul did not have any spiritual life because "the Spirit is life" (Romans 8:10), and in an unregenerate state, a life dominated by sin, there is no spiritual life within. What brings life to the soul? When the Spirit of God inhabits the spirit of man, spiritual life is brought to the soul. Just as the marrow produces red corpuscles that have a complex of iron, containing protein, giving it the ability to carry oxygen, our spirit must possess the Holy Spirit who produces spiritual life.

Ephesians 5:18 says, "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit." The word "filled," in this context, in the Greek means "under the influence." When a man gets drunk, we say that he is under the influence. He does things he would not normally do, acts in ways he would not normally act, and says things he would not normally say. It is because he is not under his own thinking or his own power; he is under an influence. God wants us under the influence of the Spirit, so He will change our thinking, how we act, and what we say. When we are under that influence, it produces a God consciousness. We will feel what He feels, think what He thinks, hurt when He hurts, and rejoice when He rejoices. That is the influence that needs to be running through our conduit.

Our Spirit Is Designed to Feel What God Feels

Our spirit is the part through which we have intimate communion with God. This is why the Scriptures speak with different expressions. For instance, Job

7:11 reads, "Therefore I will not refrain my mouth; I will speak in the anguish of my spirit; I will complain in the bitterness of my soul." Two separate Hebrew words are used for "spirit" and "soul" because there is a distinction. The first time God brought Job up to Satan, God permitted Satan to take everything Job had. Then, in Chapter 2, Satan came back and said, "Skin for skin" (Job 2:4), or "let me at him."

God said to Satan in Job 2:3, "Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? and still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause." God felt the anguish of what Job was going through. Obviously, Job felt it in his spirit, and because God and Job were in communion, the Lord felt the sorrow. Paul said in 2 Corinthians 2:13, "I had no rest in my spirit." If our spirit is truly indwelt by the Holy Spirit and our lives are representative of God's Spirit, then we will feel what He feels, hurt when He hurts, and rejoice when He rejoices.

First Corinthians 12:25-26 says: "That there should be no schism [division] in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it." That is talking about the body of Christ, the church (Colossians 1:18). We read in 1 Corinthians 12:12, "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ."

Christ is a part of that same body; He is the head, and we are "the members," but it is all "one body." When one rejoices, we all rejoice; when one hurts, we all hurt. When we hurt, God hurts, and when He hurts, we hurt. It is in the spirit that these things manifest themselves. The spirit of man is for the communion between God and man. It is how we have a consciousness of God, a witness in our spirit of how God thinks and feels.

In John, Chapter 11, Lazarus died, and then Jesus came on the scene. John 11:31-33 says: "The Jews then which were with her in the house, and comforted her, when they saw Mary, that she rose up hastily and went out, followed her, saying, She goeth unto the grave to weep there. Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled."

Why did Jesus groan "in the spirit"? Verse 35 states, "Jesus wept." Some say He wept because His friend passed away, but that is not so. Jesus knew He was going to raise Lazarus up. He was not weeping and groaning in His spirit

because of Lazarus' condition; Lazarus was in Paradise, sitting with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He probably did not desire to be recalled. Jesus groaned in His spirit and was troubled because of their unbelief. John 13:21 states, "When Jesus had thus said, he was troubled in spirit." When we are in communion with Christ, when our spirit is truly a conduit for the Holy Spirit, we will feel what He feels. If you have been around people who were engaged in activities that grieved your spirit and you felt like groaning, that was the Holy Spirit operating through your spirit and giving you the communion of how God feels.

Before the truth came into Licking County, Ohio, Brother W. A. Wilson attended the Church of Christ in Rocky Fork, a community outside of Newark. He did not know the truth at that juncture, but he got a *Gospel Trumpet* magazine that was printed in Anderson, Indiana. He was so impressed with the articles that he said, "Do you suppose we could get one of those men to come down here?" His daughter replied, "Well, Daddy, we could write and see." After they wrote and requested a brother to come, Brother Andy Byers came to Rocky Fort and held a meeting. God showed Brother W. A. Wilson the truth—what Babylon was, that they needed to come out and take a stand for truth. They did and started a congregation in the Rocky Fork community.

Sometime later, there was a revival meeting at the Church of Christ where Brother Wilson had come out of. Brother Wilson thought he would visit because he had been there most of his life. The evangelist preached, "Nobody can live above sin; everybody sins more or less every day; you cannot live a holy life in this world." Brother Wilson came out of the service feeling whipped and beaten. He went back the next night, and the evangelist said, "The kingdom is not here yet; the kingdom is a coming reality."

Again, Brother Wilson came out of that service whipped and beat. He was in bed one night after the service, groaning and hurting. God spoke to him: "Alan, where do you hurt? Do you have any bruises and cuts?" He said, "No, I do not have any bruises or cuts." God said, "Anything broken?" Brother Wilson said, "No, nothing is broken." God asked, "Where do you hurt?" Brother Wilson said, "Well, I do not know."

God said: "That is Me you are hurting. Are you going to take Me down there tomorrow night for another beating?" Brother Wilson never went back. He came away from the meeting grieved every night because the Holy Spirit was grieved; therefore, he was grieved and did not even know why. If our spirit possesses His Spirit, then we will have a witness in our spirit of how God thinks and feels.

Wholly Sanctified—Spirit and Soul and Body

Our text declares, "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly" (1 Thessalonians 5:23). There is much misconception about sanctification. The word "sanctify" in this text in the Greek is *hagiazo,* which means "separate from things profane and dedicated to God; to consecrate." Sanctification is being set apart, separating as God enlightens the eyes of our understanding. John 17:17 says, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." As we hear the Word of God and the truth comes, the Spirit of God enlightens the eyes of our understanding.

When I got saved, there was much I did not understand. I was born and raised in Kentucky, the second-highest tobacco-producing state in the Union. It seemed like everyone smoked. My parents smoked, and my grandparents smoked. I went to services at a sectarian organization, which had Sunday school in one building and the morning service in another. There was a little grassy knoll in between, and many of the Sunday school teachers came out and took a smoke break before they went into the morning service. That is how I was raised; so when I first got saved, I had difficulty understanding that tobacco was wrong. All my life, I had never heard of it being wrong. I did not lay cigarettes down as soon as I got saved because I did not understand. God had to send His Word, and then, as His Word and the Spirit brought understanding, I saw it was wrong. When I walked in that light, I put those cigarettes down and separated myself from them. In so doing, I set myself more apart for God.

Again, 1 Thessalonians 5:23 says, "And the very God of peace sanctify [or separate you from profane things, dedicate you to God, consecrate, set you apart] you wholly [completely]; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body ...." That is what constitutes "wholly": the whole, complete, entire, composite man. This reveals we are not completely sanctified until all three components are consecrated ("set apart"). We must not only "keep under" our "body, and bring it into subjection" (1 Corinthians 9:27), but we must also "sanctify" our body. My body is what took me to the store to buy cigarettes. I had to bring under my body. I have heard people say that God delivered them from smoking; the minute they got saved, they lost all desire for that. I am thankful it worked that way for them, but it did not work that way for me.

First, I did not understand why smoking was wrong. Once God revealed that to me and I decided to lay it down, there still was a battle because there was a physical craving in my body, just as with any other drug. I carried candy around to eat when the craving came. I had to pray, divert my mind, and keep it busy on something else. I would say, "I am not going to do it; God help me,

I am not going to." I had to keep under my body if I wanted to be sanctified. Jesus said in Luke 9:23, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself." The "himself" is the soul. To be truly sanctified, our self consciousness *must* be brought into subjection because desires can rise up. Romans 8:13 reads, "For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify ['put to death'; *The Emphatic Greek Diaglott*] the deeds of the body, ye shall live." You have to deny yourself.

Jesus said in Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith." Seven times, he repeated that (Christ does not stutter; repetition in the Scriptures is for divine emphasis) in each of the seven letters, representing seven periods of the Gospel Day. Every period had the same admonition: He made it more clear in Matthew 13:10, when the disciples asked him, "Why speakest thou unto them in parables?" Jesus answered in verses 16-17: "But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them." They all saw with the natural eye and heard with the natural ear, but truth does not come through the natural senses; it comes through divine revelation to the spiritual senses.

Hebrews 5:14 states, "But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age [or have spiritual maturity], even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." How do you reach "full age" or spiritual maturity? By "reason of use," by using your spiritual senses, by "having an ear to "hear what the Spirit saith," by letting your spirit (be an open channel of communication) be that conduit for the Spirit of God to have communion with you. The only way this takes place is through use and exercise; you must get your spirit, your God consciousness, sanctified, set apart for God. Never reach a point of feeling you have achieved or arrived. Paul said in Philippians 3:12-13: "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect [complete or mature]: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended." There are deeper depths and higher heights that the Lord wants to take us to. Our spirit will not be truly at peace unless we keep our spirit sanctified and sink deeper and more wholly into this God consciousness.

The body is our world consciousness; the soul is our self consciousness; and the spirit is our God consciousness. God desires all three to be sanctified. This is not an option or a luxury; it is a dire necessity. Again, 1 Thessalonians 5:23 says, "And the very God of peace sanctify [set apart, separate from anything that is unlike God] you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul

and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." The only way that we can be "preserved blameless" all the way to "the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" is by having this sanctifying work operating in our whole composite being: "spirit and soul and body." Verse 24 tells us how we can do that, stating, "Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it."

We must "Quench not the spirit" (verse 19), and let the Holy Spirit have free flow through our spirit. If we have an ear to "hear what the Spirit saith," He will enlighten the eyes of our understanding, and we will become more set apart in our spirit, soul, and body. This is an utter necessity if we are to remain protected from the hellish forces that are working against us, "and be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." The spirit of man is the part of man that God gave so that He could commune with man. When our sojourn here in this world is over, our spirit will go back whence it came. It "shall return unto God who gave it" (Ecclesiastes 12:7).

CHAPTER 5

DEATH AND THE INITIAL BEYOND

1 Kings 2:1 Now the days of David drew nigh that he should die; and he charged Solomon his son, saying,

2 I go the way of all the earth.

Hebrews 9:27 And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.

The common truth that unites these two Scripture texts is the universality of death. The texts are succinctly and soberly clear. First Kings 2:1 says, "The days of David drew nigh that he should die." In verse 2, David proclaimed to Solomon, "I go the way of all the earth," letting us know this is a universal experience; death is universal to all. Here is one whom 2 Samuel 23:1 styles as "the sweet psalmist of Israel." He penned many beautiful psalms and was greatly used of God, but there came a day when he had to die. In our companion text, we see that death is a divine appointment. You may have an appointment with a doctor, a lawyer, a banker, or an accountant, but you can cancel those. However, no one cancels their appointment with death. It is not in our power to cancel this appointment. Our companion text in Hebrews states, "It is appointed." Ecclesiastes 8:8 says, "There is no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit; neither hath he power in the day of death: and there is no discharge in that war." No one is going to be exempt.

If Jesus tarries, death will come to every one of us. It is a universal experience, which is not commonly debated; it is accepted as fact. There is one notable exception to this divine appointment of death. The Apostle Paul, when dealing with the Second Advent of Christ, wrote in 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17, "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." The only exception to death is if we "are alive and remain" when Jesus parts the clouds and the Second Advent occurs; then we will have escaped death because we will "be caught up" on that day. Other than that, "it is appointed unto men once to die." Those who are alive on that fateful day will escape this experience we call death, but none other shall.

At Death, the Body Returns to the Earth

The question that minds of men muse upon and where confusion enters in is, What occurs at and after death? First, let us consider what occurs at the time of death. We have established man is a threefold being. Genesis 2:7 tells us man is "of the dust of the ground." Ecclesiastes 12:7 states, "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was." The first thing we see when death occurs is our world-consciousness (our body, which is made from the dust of the ground) ceases. Verse 7 continues, "And the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." The spirit is our God-consciousness. When we go into the eternal realm where God dwells, we will no longer need a God-consciousness.

First Thessalonians 5:23 reads, "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly [completely, entirely]; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body ...." The whole composite of man is spirit, soul, and body. Second Corinthians 5:1 states, "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved ...." What does "dissolved" mean? Ecclesiastes 12:7 states it turns back to "dust," a process called decomposition. What is this "earthly house"? Second Corinthians 5:4 says, "For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened [the *burden* is the gradual process of aging as recorded in Ecclesiastes 12:3-6 and the deterioration of physical abilities]: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality ...." This earthly house is the mortality, the mortal portion of our being, the body, our world-consciousness. Once we leave this world, we will not need this body until the Resurrection.

When our body dies, it is referred to as "sleep" because it will be raised up, awakened, on the Resurrection Day. We read in 1 Corinthians 15:6, 18: "After that [speaking about those who saw the Risen Christ after His Resurrection], he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep.... Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ." Verse 20 states, "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and became the firstfruits of them that slept." First Thessalonians 4:14-15 tells us: "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep."

What was Paul talking about? Jesus made it clear in John, Chapter 11, when Lazarus had died. Verses 11-14 read: "These things said he: and after that he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep. Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well. Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest

in sleep. Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead." When the Scripture talks about sleep in this context, it is talking about death. This sleep is not a soul sleep, but a sleep of the body. The soul *never* sleeps.

Many times, the death of the body is referred to as sleep because "our Saviour Jesus Christ ... hath abolished death" (2 Timothy 1:10). Romans 6:23 states, "For the wages of sin is death." Salvation abolishes that. First Corinthians 15:54-57 says: "So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immorality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory [over sin] through our Lord Jesus Christ." Death lost its sting. In reality, to a saint, it is no longer death; it is sleep, but it is just our body that sleeps.

Cremation

Jesus said in John 12:7, "Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this." When life ceases to occupy the physical body, that body enters a state which the Scriptures refer to as sleep, and we bury it. We are living in a society today where you hear much about cremation. Many may not consider this topic to be an issue; nonetheless, it is one upon which the Scriptures are plain. It is important to address questions such as, When did this practice originate? Among which societies has it been prevalent? Is there a reason or a meaning behind it? and What do the Scriptures teach concerning this matter?

The Origin of the Practice: The Cremation Association of North America states in an article entitled *The History of Cremation:* "Scholars today quite generally agree that cremation probably began in any real sense ... around B.C. 3000 and most likely in Europe and the Near East. ... Prevalent though the practice was among the Romans, cremation was rare with the early Christians who considered it pagan." The definition of "cremation," according to *The Concise Columbia Electronic Encyclopedia*, is the "disposal of a corpse by fire, widely practiced in some societies, notably India and Ancient Greece and Rome. The rise of Christianity ended the custom in Europe." Thus, the practice originated in ancient times among pagan cultures.

Funk and Wagnells New Encyclopedia, Volume 7, page 133, says: "Cremation was widely practiced in antiquity.... the early Jews forbade cremation, believing it was a desecration of the work of God. Similarly, later Christians prohibited the practice." This practice originated in pagan cultures; both Judaism and the early morning church stood against it. Why? Note that it was

prevalent in India, Greece, and Rome, in cultures that were highly superstitious and pagan. The Apostle Paul told those in Greece in Acts 17:22, "Ye are too superstitious."

The Belief Behind Cremation: *The Illustrated Columbia Encyclopedia*, Volume 6, page 1624, reads: "[Cremation's] use is often related to a belief in the properties of fire as a purifying agent. Its object may also be to light the way of the soul to the other world, or to prevent the return of the dead." Hindus in India and other heathen religions cremate in the belief that the dead are not resurrected. They believe that the dead will be reincarnated; therefore, to destroy the body is to release the spirits of the deceased, allowing them to come back in another form. Also, some who practice cremation among the heathen think by destroying the body of the deceased, the fear of that individual staying in the vicinity and haunting the loved ones is diminished. Can you see how heathenish and pagan such a practice is?

What Do the Scriptures Say? First, look at some general principles such as, "Abstain from all appearance of evil" (1 Thessalonians 5:22). A true saint of God should not want to be associated with the mythologies of the Greeks or the paganism of the Romans and the Hindus of India. Second Corinthians 6:17 admonishes, "Be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing." Sadly, with the decline of time-honored Christian values in American society, this practice is becoming more prevalent. Yet, the Scriptures plainly teach, "Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil" (Exodus 23:2). In all ages, the Lord has wanted His people to be a separate and distinct people who followed Him and His will and not the customs or practices of the heathen. In Jeremiah 10:1-2, this principle is reiterated when the Prophet Jeremiah penned: "Hear ye the word which the LORD speaketh unto you, O house of Israel: Thus saith the LORD, Learn not the way of the heathen."

On the basis of general Biblical principles, this practice should be avoided as heathenish and pagan, one with which the saints of God should not want to be associated but rather one from which we want to be separate. Is the Bible specific about this? What is God's will in this matter? What do the Scriptures specifically teach? Jesus taught in Matthew 19:8, if one desires to know the perfect will of God, he needs to go back and view that which was from the beginning. Genesis 2:7 reads, "The LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground."

In Genesis 3:19, the Lord revealed His perfect will when He said, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." Here we see vividly expressed that man is to "return unto the ground," alluding to the act of burial. God Himself instituted the practice of burial as His will. This text also

reveals to us that God's design is that, just as man was "formed of the dust" (Genesis 2:7), "unto dust shalt [he] return." The divine will is for man to return, through natural processes, to the original state from which he came. To negate or circumvent this process is to circumvent the will of God. This divine will is reiterated in the writings of Solomon in Ecclesiastes 12:7, which states, "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." When the body is buried, it returns to dust—the normal process of decomposition begins to work. Cremation is diametrically opposed to this process.

BIBLICAL EXAMPLES: Let us consider the Biblical practice concerning the dead. Nowhere in the annals of Scripture is cremation practiced by the people of God. The Biblical practice has always been burial. In Genesis 25:8-10, we find the account of the death of Abraham, the father of the faithful. Verse 9 says, "And his sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him." Burial is recorded as the only method practiced throughout the Scriptures by the people of God. Consider the references to the burial of not only Abraham but of Sarah (Genesis 23:1-4), Rachel (Genesis 35:19-20), Isaac (Genesis 35:29), Jacob (Genesis 49:33, 50:1-13), Joseph (Genesis 50:26), Joshua (Joshua 24:29-30), Samuel (1 Samuel 25:1), and David (1 Kings 2:10).

Burial was an Old Testament practice, and the New Testament saints regarded it as the only proper procedure. Among those mentioned are John the Baptist (Matthew 14:10-12), Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:5-10), and Stephen (Acts 8:2). We are instructed in 1 Peter 2:21, "Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps." What was His example regarding the handling of the dead? He said in Matthew 26:12, "For in that she hath poured this ointment on my body, she did it for my burial." Christ was buried, and He is our example in all things.

Biblically, for a person not to have a proper burial was considered a dishonor. First Kings 21:23-24 records: "And of Jezebel also spake the Lord, saying, The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel. Him that dieth of Ahab in the city the dogs shall eat; and him that dieth in the field shall the fowls of the air eat." Not being afforded a proper burial was considered a curse and a dishonor.

Even in adverse circumstances, the people of God practiced burial. Consider the case of Joseph. His body was kept for more than four hundred years in Egypt, transported for forty years in the wilderness, and then buried in the promised land (Genesis 50:24-25; Exodus 13:19; Joshua 24:32). How much easier it would have been for them to have cremated Joseph and carried his remains in a small urn, but they never even considered that. Why? Joseph was a

follower of the one true God and had hope of the resurrection. Thus, he was afforded an honorable burial. This illustration conveys a great and practical truth to us: even if cremation is easier, more convenient, and less expensive, it is still to be rejected, just as the Israelites rejected its more convenient and more economical way of transporting Joseph's body.

The Scriptures denounce the treatment of a body being burned or cremated. Amos 2:1 declares, "Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of Moab, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because he burned the bones of the king of Edom into lime." Here we can see that this action (cremation) invited severe punishment from God.

Consider the body of a child of God. The Apostle Paul said, "What! know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). The body of a saint is the temple of the Holy Ghost and should be accorded special reverence and respect as befitting a temple. Notice that verse 19 says that "ye are not your own." Since we do not rightfully have ownership of our bodies, it is not a matter of our will but that of the Owner—God; it is a matter of His divine will. Romans 14:8 says, "For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's."

Christian burial portrays the truth of the resurrection. Acts 24:15 tells us, "There shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust." When one dies, the body is sown, or planted. The physical body is called the seed for the resurrected body. When a literal seed is planted, the seed decomposes and a new plant comes forth; so it is spiritually. When the body of a child of God is buried, the seed is planted for the resurrected body that shall come forth one day.

Look at the words of the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:35-38: "But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come? Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die: And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain: But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body." Verse 42 says, "So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption."

When a farmer plants his crops, he does not destroy the seed or burn the seed, but he plants it in the hope of a harvest. So it is with Christian burial: the body is sown in hope and serves as a testimony of unwavering faith in the belief of a harvest, the resurrection. Contrast this with the cremation practiced by the

heathens. They have no hope of a resurrection and no knowledge of a God who allows the holy to be "sown in weakness ... raised in power" (1 Corinthians 15:43). The heathens are a people steeped in darkness and superstition, but "we are not of the night, nor of darkness" (1 Thessalonians 5:5); therefore, let us not practice deeds or acts that would associate us with those that have no light and no hope. Ephesians 4:20 says, "But ye have not so learned Christ."

We need to do as Christ our example did and, even in our death and burial, show forth our faith in Christ and the resurrection which is to come. Thank God, we have a glorious hope of a coming resurrection, and should death overtake us, let our burial, the seed being sown, serve as a witness of our hope and faith in the words of Jesus in John 5:28-29: "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life." We have a blessed hope and should not desire to do anything that would associate us with those who do not. Cremation is heathen and pagan, and it should be shunned by every believer. We should portray our blessed hope of the resurrection to the world, not only in life but in burial.

At Death, the Spirit Returns to God Who Gave It

Ecclesiastes 12:7 lets us know, "The spirit shall return unto God who gave it." The spirit is our God-consciousness. At death, we enter into our "long home" (Ecclesiastes 12:5), or the *Septuagint* says "our eternal home." We no longer need a God-consciousness because God inhabits eternity (Isaiah 57:15). At death, we enter an eternal realm where God is; therefore, we no longer need that aspect of our nature. Christ is "an example" of that (1 Peter 2:21). Hebrews 2:17 states, "Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren." Christ had a spirit and a body. Jesus said in Luke 23:43, "Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise." Verse 46 reads, "When Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." Ecclesiastes 12:7 says, "The spirit shall return unto God who gave it." Jesus was giving His spirit back to God. He did not need a spirit in eternity, and He is our example.

We see a clear distinction. Notice, in Luke 23:43, Jesus said, "To day shalt thou be with me in paradise." Jesus' body went to the sepulcher, His spirit went to God, and the "me" that went to Paradise was the self-consciousness—the soul, the real person. Death does not end it all, as many in this ungodly world like to advocate. Rather, it releases the soul to another realm. What occurs *at* the time of death reveals what will occur *after* death.

Since man is a moral creature, a creature of choice, there must of necessity be the consequences of choice. There have always been only two choices. In the second giving of the Law to a new generation, before he left the stage of action and they entered into Canaan, Moses told Israel in Deuteronomy 30:19, "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death [the two choices], blessing and cursing [the two choices]: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live." This was not just an admonition for that day, but the principles are based in timeless moral principles, or laws, applicable to every day, every time, and every age. Life and death and blessing and cursing are the two choices. Blessing goes with life; cursing goes with death.

Jesus came along centuries, yea even millennia, later and presented mankind with just two choices. In the inaugural message of His public ministry, the Sermon on the Mount, where He set down the basic tenets of the New Testament economy, He said in Matthew 7:13-14, "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." It is not few that find the "gate," but few that find the "life." There are two ways—broad and narrow. Jesus likened all humanity to a "good tree" or a "corrupt tree" (Matthew 7:17-20). He said you are either "with me" or "against me" (Matthew 12:30). In reality, man has only two choices, and there are only two fates.

Ecclesiastes 11:3 states, "If the clouds be full of rain, they empty themselves upon the earth." We will not deal with the symbolism in this, but Hebrews 12:1 reads, "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses." God is faithful to give witnesses to every man, woman, and child who grace the shores of time. Deuteronomy 32:2 says, "My doctrine shall drop as the rain." Titus 2:11-12 reads, "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world." Throughout life's way, at some point, there have been clouds and rain.

Ecclesiastes 11:3 states, "They empty themselves upon the earth [man]: and if the tree fall toward the south or toward the north ...." Though every man is presented with opportunity, has had clouds of witnesses, has had the doctrine of God's Word presented (the "rain"), and the grace of God has appeared, he still has a choice. There are only two. The tree is man, and he only falls in one of two directions—to the "north" or to the "south," lost or saved. There are only two choices, two positions. Ecclesiastes 11:3 continues, "In the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be." There is no alteration of man's spiritual state after

death. There is no limbo, no purgatory where people go for a while.

Some pay a priest to perform masses in the hope of getting their departed loved ones out of purgatory and sent to Heaven. That is a lie from the pits of hell and a money-making scheme! When Johann Tetzel went through Germany, selling indulgences to build St. Peter's Basilica in the 1500s, he carried a money can with an inscription. The English translation of that inscription was, "As soon as the coin in the coffer rings, the soul from purgatory springs." Tetzel was making merchandise out of the souls of men, telling them if they gave well, not only could their loved ones get out of purgatory, but they could also be forgiven their sins (past and future). What a damnable doctrine! "The place where the tree falleth, there it shall be." There is no change, no alteration of man's state after death.

At Death, Where Does the Soul Go?

In Luke, Chapter 16, Jesus gave us a glimpse into eternity and what occurs while time is yet standing. When an individual dies, the body decomposes, going back to the earth, and the spirit goes back to God who gave it. Then, the soul, according to the choice it made, goes to one of two places. Luke 16:19-31 reads: "There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.

"And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence. Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither

will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead."

Let us gain some salient points pertaining to our study. In this passage, Jesus uncapped the realm beyond life and allowed a glimpse into eternity. Many dismiss this passage as a parable, but there are at least three evidences against that thought. Number one: nowhere in or surrounding this passage indicates it was a parable, such as the verbiage, "He spake a parable unto them." Number two: Jesus mentioned Lazarus by name. No parable in the New Testament uses a personal name as this passage does. Number three: Jesus commenced with verse 19, saying, "There *was* a certain rich man." I trust we can see that this is not a parable.

In this glimpse into the realm beyond time, we see the universality of death. Verse 22 tells us, "The beggar [*The Emphatic Greek Diaglott* says 'the poor man'] died," and "The rich man also died." Death is a great equalizer; it comes to all—rich or poor. However, after death is where much of the distinction begins. In reality, that distinction begins with the choice made during life because Father Abraham told the rich man, "Between us ... there is a great gulf fixed" (verse 26). There is always "a great gulf" between the righteous and the unrighteous, but while time is still in our favor, while we still occupy this time world, there is a chance to bridge that gulf because Jesus Christ is the "High Priest of our profession" (Hebrews 3:1). The word "Priest" in Latin is *pontifex*, which means "bridge builder." Jesus built a bridge from sin to salvation, and while time is standing, through Jesus Christ, we can cross the bridge from death to life, from sin to salvation. However, at death that great gulf is "fixed." No one crosses after death.

Both Lazarus and the rich man died, and then the distinction between the two men became much more drastic. Verses 22-23 say, "The rich man also died, and was buried; [Notice that ends with a semicolon. The sentence is not complete.] And in hell he lift up his eyes." Immediately upon death, as soon as the rich man left this time world, he closed his eyes here and opened them there. There is no soul sleeping. The body was put away in some sort of burial place—a shroud or casket—and it sleeps until the Resurrection; but the minute the rich man's eyes closed here, "in hell he [the soul] lift up his eyes." Notice the verbiage. It does not say he *lifted* (past tense) his eyes. It says "in hell he *lift*" (present tense). The rich man is still lifting those eyes up today. It is still a continual reality. Jude 7 speaks of "Sodom and Gomorrha," which were destroyed in approximately 1898 B.C. Yet, the sacred writer tells us they are still "suffering [present tense] the vengeance of eternal fire."

Luke 16:23 says, "And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom." In this verse, the rich man

immediately recognized Abraham "afar off" and called him, "Father Abraham" (verse 24). Yet, Genesis 25:8 tells us, "Then Abraham gave up the ghost, and died in a good old age, an old man, and full of years; and was gathered to his people." That was approximately 1853 B.C. Although the rich man had never seen Abraham, he knew who Abraham was when he saw him.

There Is Intelligence in Eternity

Abraham knew about the rich man's life. Verse 25 reads, "Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things." I want to clarify, this is not common practice. Just as Abraham occupied in life a unique position, in death he occupies a unique position. We see him charged with being the caretaker in the eternal realm over Paradise. We do not see anyone else charged with that. He knew the lifetime of the rich man. He was also familiar with Moses and the prophets (verse 29). Moses wrote from 1491 to 1451 B.C., some four hundred years after Abraham died. Yet, he knew all about Moses and the prophets, which takes us up to 434 years before John the Baptizer.

Another occasion is found when Jesus was on the Mount of Transfiguration. Luke 9:30-31 reads, "And, behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias [Greek for the Hebrew Elijah]: Who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem." Here were two men who had been dead for hundreds, maybe even over a thousand years, but they knew all about what was going to happen at Jerusalem. They knew Christ was going to be crucified. Again, that is not the common practice; all these men occupied special positions: Abraham, the father of the faithful; Moses, the great lawgiver; and Elijah, considered in Hebrews to have been the greatest prophet. They occupied unique places in time and in eternity. The point I want to make is that they were fully awake and fully cognizant with their mental faculties fully functioning. They were even aware of the upcoming divine plan because they "spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem" (verse 31).

In Luke, Chapter 16, there were two men and two destinies, and they were immediately dispatched although no judgment had occurred. (We will study the Final Judgment later, but the Judgment is not to determine man's destiny. Your life and the choice you make determine your destiny.) These men were appropriately dispatched as soon as they died. The rich man was in Hell (verse 23). The Greek word is *Hades*. It is important to keep that in mind because other places in the Scripture speak of *hell* (a totally different place). Converse to that, Lazarus was in Abraham's bosom (verse 23). That does not mean that he had his

head on Abraham's chest all the way through eternity, but that "bosom" indicates a place of repose, a place of rest, a place of comfort. We find one was in Hades, and one was in Abraham's bosom (or what Jesus called "paradise"; Luke 23:43). Both Hades and Paradise are temporary, or intermediate abodes of the dead until the Judgment Day.

There is a great distinction between *Hades* and the other Greek word *Gehenna*, which is referred to in Revelation as "the lake of fire." Revelation 20:14-15 states: "Death and hell were cast into the lake of fire .... And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." Hades is where the lost souls are when they die, while time yet stands, but when the Resurrection reunites the body and the soul and brings us to the Judgment Seat of Christ, then those who are lost will go to "the lake of fire," or *Gehenna*. There is a symbolic aspect to that "lake of fire" (and we will deal with that later), but we are trying to tie it together in the sense of what will occur in the eternal aspect.

Jesus said in Mark 9:43-44: "And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm ['man'; Job 25:6 and Psalm 22:6] dieth not." Everywhere 'hell' is used in verses 43-47, it is the Greek word *Gehenna*, which is a totally separate word from the word *Hades*, used in Luke, Chapter 16. Verses 45-46 state, "And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell [*Gehenna*], into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not." Man continues to exist, and one thing that tortured the rich man were two words—"Son, remember" (Luke 16:25). All souls who are in hell will remember every opportunity they had, every message they spurned, and every invitation they resisted. It will play over and over in the corridors of their mind through the ceaseless ages of eternity where "their worm dieth not." Part of that "worm" is that gnawing memory.

Mark 9:47-48 reads: "If thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." Let me clarify the admonition given in these verses. Jesus was not advocating we maim or hurt the body, for "your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost" (1 Corinthians 6:19). When Jesus spoke in these verses of "cut it off" (verses 43, 45) or "pluck it out," He was using expressions familiar with the teachings of Judaism. He was telling us we need to separate from anything that would hinder us spiritually.

Everywhere hell is spoken of in Mark, Chapter 9, it is the Greek word

Gehenna. It is an allusion to a place in Jerusalem called the Valley of Hinnom. It was a place there for refuse, and they kept that fire constantly burning. It was as if Jesus was saying, "Do you see over there in the Valley of Hinnom where nothing goes but refuse when it is no longer any good, and it cannot be used for what it was intended?" He was telling them that is the way hell is.

Revelation 20:13 says, "And the sea gave up the dead which were in it." It does not matter whether you are buried at sea or whether the sharks ate you. Regardless of the manner of death, everything is going to give up the dead. Verse 13 continues, "And death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them." Death is going to deliver up the bodies, and Hades will deliver up the souls. They will be rejoined at the Resurrection, and both will come to the Judgment. Speaking of the unsaved, verse 14 tells us, "Death and hell were cast into the lake of fire." This will be *after* the Judgment takes place.

There is also a distinction between Paradise and Heaven. When Christ was on the Cross, some of His last words were uttered to the repentant thief. He said, "*To day* shalt thou be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:43). It is beyond any fear of contradiction that Christ went to Paradise as soon as He died. When He resurrected three days later, Mary Magdalene was at "the sepulchre" (Matthew 28:1). At first, she did not know Him. John 20:15 states, "She, supposing him to be the gardener," but when she recognized Him, she was ready to grab Him. Jesus said in John 20:17, "Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father [the Father is 'in heaven'; Matthew 6:9]." Jesus had been in Paradise for three days, but He had not yet gone to Heaven; so this clearly reveals Paradise and Heaven are two separate places. There is a distinction between them.

What about this Hell or Hades we read about in Luke, Chapter 16? We want to dispel a great misconception or falsity. *Expanded Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* says, "It never denotes the grave, nor is the *permanent* region of the lost; in point of time it is, for such, intermediate between decease and the doom of Gehenna." We just read that in Revelation 20:13-14. There is a clear distinction between Hades (that temporary abode of the lost) and the lake of fire (*Gehenna*). We need to understand that Hell (Hades) is a place, not just a state; it is a literal place.

When the disciples were trying to decide who should take Judas' place, Acts 1:25 says, "That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell [he was not predestined; he chose], that he might go to his own *place*." Hell is a place of torment, not just a state of mind. In Luke 16:24, the rich man said, "I am tormented in this flame," letting us know it is a literal place because he went on and said in verse 28, "I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment." Hell

is a literal place of torment, and it has a literal flame.

We read in Jude 7, "Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering [present and continuous tense] the vengeance of eternal fire." The fire and brimstone that fell on Sodom and Gomorrha and burned them then is still burning them today. That fire was "eternal fire," and they are still "suffering [present tense] the vengeance of eternal fire." We read in Genesis 19:24, "Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrha brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven." The Hebrew word for "brimstone" is *gophrith,* which is a literal, organic substance. That literal, organic substance which fell on them is still causing them suffering today. It merely went from the realm of the seen to the unseen, but they are still, according to Jude 7, "suffering the vengeance" of this same fire.

Notice other features portrayed in this passage in Luke, Chapter 16. All the rich man's faculties were functional without a body. His body was "buried," but "he lift up his eyes" (Luke 16:22-23). His eyes were buried; they were not even attached to him, but he still had eyes. All his faculties were functional. Although his body was buried, he had sight, intelligence, recognition, and memory.

- sight—"seeth Abraham" (verse 23)
- recognition—"he cried and said, Father Abraham ... send Lazarus" (verse 24)
- memory—"Son, remember" (verse 25) and "I have five brethren" (verse 28)

The rich man also still had desire—"send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue" (verse 24). He did not have a tongue; the tongue was in the grave. Yet, just as we previously studied, we found that feelings and emotions are all in the soul. Though his body was buried, he still had all the same feelings, emotions, and desires. He had physical features without a physical body. He talked about Lazarus dipping "the tip of his finger," but Lazarus did not have a body either. These Scriptures reveal the soul must somewhat take on the form of the body. They also reveal Abraham and Lazarus were both recognizable. Lazarus must have looked as he did here in this time world. How did the rich man recognize Abraham, whom he had never seen or had a picture of? Our minds are somehow divinely enlightened when we reach that realm of eternity.

Notice, while the rich man was fully aware of Lazarus (which added to his torments), there is absolutely no mention of Lazarus having any awareness of the rich man. It would not have been Paradise if he could have seen the rich man tormented. Away with this thought that Grandma is over in Heaven seeing

her loved ones getting saved and being pleased. Is she going to see them three months later if they backslide? Those in that realm do not, as a rule, see anything in this realm. It would not be Paradise. There is no mention of Lazarus having any awareness of the rich man. He had no awareness, as far as that Scripture indicates, of anything beyond Abraham's bosom. It was Paradise.

Many Realities Span the Two Realms

When death seizes you, if you are saved, you enter Paradise. Jesus told the thief, "To day shalt thou be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:43). Revelation 2:7 talks about being able to enjoy paradise right here in this life. It talks about the kingdom in this world that we are able to enter into through real salvation (Romans 14:17-18), and it talks about the heavenly kingdom (2 Timothy 4:18); there are two aspects to the kingdom. Ephesians 3:15 describes "the whole family in heaven and earth"—again, two aspects, two phases, two places, two positions, but only one family. The lake of fire is the same way; it spans two realms. (See Appendix B for more information concerning the dual nature of the lake of fire.)

There are many more truths contained within this passage in Luke, Chapter 16, but we have attempted to confine ourselves to address the question, After death—what then? Death is not debatable. Hebrews 9:27 says, "It is appointed unto men once to die." It is universal, without exception, except for those who are alive and remain when the Lord comes. There is no real question concerning death, but the question lies in what happens after death. It is based on two choices: "life and death" (Deuteronomy 30:19); the "broad" and "narrow" ways (Matthew 7:13-14). It is life or destruction—two choices and two destinations.

The reason the first destination is a temporary, intermediary place is because the Judgment cannot truly take place until time ends. Revelation 14:13 reads, "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." Every time we receive a benefit from Paul's, Luke's, or John's writings, or every time we sing a song by Brother D. S. Warner or Brother B. E. Warren and it gives a spiritual benefit, it is added to their reward. Judgment cannot occur until time stops. There cannot be an ultimate destiny or determination of degree because the Judgment has not occurred, and it cannot occur until the influence and the benefits of an individual's works have stopped (when time ceases). So there is an intermediate place to which man goes until that fateful Day of Judgment.

It is also evident that Christ currently has some presence in Paradise. Paul

wrote in Philippians 1:23, "For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be *with Christ*; which is far better." Evidently, there is some presence of Christ in Paradise, because we know saved souls go to Paradise. We read in 2 Corinthians 5:8, "We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be *present with the Lord*." Since we will not be absent from the body after the Judgment, this is saying we are "present with the Lord" while time is still standing but after our demise. Isaiah 57:15 describes God as "the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity." Paradise is part of eternity. Man is an eternal being, and even though removed from these time shores, there is still much ahead of him. For those who die and go into Paradise or Hades, there is still a Resurrection, a Judgment, and an ultimate destiny yet to come.

CHAPTER 6

THE DIVINE SCHEME OF TIME AND ETERNITY

Psalm 8:4 What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?

2 Corinthians 6:1 We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.

2 (For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.)

There is one word in our text we would like to focus on—"time." In 1 Corinthians 7:29, the Apostle Paul said, "But this I say, brethren, the time is short." When we think of "time," several questions arise, such as: Was there anything before time? If so, what? What occurs after time? and What is the divine scheme of time and eternity?" *Webster's New World Dictionary* defines *scheme* as, "A carefully arranged and systematic program of action; an orderly confirmation of things or a definite plan system." God is a God of order (1 Corinthians 14:40). From the vast uncharted galaxies to the most minute molecular structures, everything is carefully arranged, orderly, and systematic.

What is time? Genesis 1:1 reads, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." This is not speaking of the celestial Heaven (where God lives) but of the aerial, firmamental heavens. Verse 5 states: "And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day." Here time is recorded as having a beginning. Time is measured in increments called *days.* There was indeed a "first day." Then, we progress to what Jesus said in John 6:40, "And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day." There will be a "last day." John 6:44 reads, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day." Biblically, there was a "first day," and there will be a "last day."

Since time is temporary, what was before the "first day"? Again, Genesis 1:1 says, "In the beginning God created." Evidently, God preceded the Creation, the "first day." Psalm 90:1-2 says: "LORD [this is a prayer of Moses], thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world [before the first day],

even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God." Time had its commencement on the "first day," but before that, there was God and eternity past. Micah 5:2 reads, "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." Too many people cannot see Christ any further back than the Incarnation, but He is an *eternal* Christ, from everlasting to everlasting. In the council halls of eternity past, there were the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

In John 17:5, Jesus said, "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." Christ was enjoying the glory with the Father "before the world was," before time, before there was a "first day." Verse 24 states, "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." Christ was with the Father in eternity past, "before the foundation of the world."

What else was in eternity past? Ephesians 1:4 says, "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world." Eternity past was not only inhabited by the Triune Godhead, but in the mind's eye of God, redemption's plan was formulated. God had us in mind before we were ever created. Isaiah 46:10 says He knows "the end from the beginning." Before God ever made man, He made a plan because He knew what would occur. God did not foreordain the man, or the individual, to be saved. He foreordained the plan to enable man to be saved. Second Timothy 1:9 reads, "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began."

What Took Place in Eternity Past?

What was before the world began? Psalm 90:2 says, "From everlasting to everlasting, thou art God." Everlasting or eternity preceded time. We read in Titus 1:2, "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began." In eternity past, God formulated the hope of eternal life for mankind to enjoy. He ordained the plan of how that would occur. First Peter 1:19-20 states, "But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you." God had Christ figured into the equation as "a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Peter 1:19) to offer His life's blood as the redemption for man. When? "Before the foundation of the world." Before time, there was eternity (eternity past). Both

God and Christ were there.

The messianic prophecy in Isaiah 9:6 tells us two distinct things. It says, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given." The "son" who was "given" was the eternal Christ who was with God in eternity past, and the "child" who was "born" was the physical body of Jesus that the Son moved into at the Incarnation. Jesus had a birth; He had a beginning, but Christ is the eternal Christ who is "from everlasting to everlasting." God, Christ, the Holy Ghost, and the plan of redemption were all back in the council halls of eternity past.

Again, Psalm 90:2 speaks of "from everlasting [or eternity past] to everlasting [eternity future]," revealing before time was eternity and after time is eternity. Time is a small slice cut out of never-ending eternity. Time is temporary. It had a "first day," and it has a "last day." Likewise, human beings have a first day and a last day. Galatians 4:4 says, "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law." What is "the fullness of the time"? Time is made up of two segments: the Old Testament and the New Testament. Hebrews 8:6-7 reads: "But now hath he [Christ] obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises. For if that first covenant [the Old Testament] had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second."

Verse 10 says, "For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people." Verse 13 states, "In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away." Time is a temporary position between eternity past and eternity future, consisting of two segments: the first covenant (the Old Testament) and the second covenant (the New Testament). In the last day, there will be no more calendars, clocks, or watches, for there will be no more time to measure. Every one of us are creatures of time. Psalm 90:12 says, "So teach us to number our days" because God has them numbered.

Previously we found man is a threefold creature: "spirit and soul and body" (1 Thessalonians 5:23). When death occurs during time, the body goes to the grave, to the earth, back to its original element (Ecclesiastes 12:7). The body is our world-consciousness. When we die, we are no longer in the world; we no longer need a world-consciousness. So the body is laid to rest in a grave, and it sleeps. The spirit is our God-consciousness; it is how God relates to us in this time-world. In eternity, where God is, we will no longer need a God-consciousness. Thus, "the spirit shall return unto God who gave it" (Ecclesiastes 12:7).

The soul is our self-consciousness, which is the real you and the real me. The saved soul goes to Paradise, and the unsaved soul goes to Hell, or Hades.

"Their Works Do Follow Them"

Paradise and Hades are temporary abodes of the dead because time is yet standing. The Judgment is not designed to determine man's destiny but to determine man's degree. In Luke, Chapter 16, Lazarus and the rich man were not in Heaven or the ultimate Hell because time had not stopped, and man cannot be fully judged until time stops. Our works do not stop just because we do. Revelation 14:13 tells us, "Their works do follow them." During life and following our life, we have an influence. Therefore, we need to "give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard" (Hebrews 2:1) and "walk circumspectly [*akribos*, defined as 'exactly, accurately, diligently, to live carefully'; *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon*]" (Ephesians 5:15) because there is coming a day when "every work [will be brought] into judgment" (Ecclesiastes 12:14), even our works after we are gone.

We read in 1 Kings 15:25-26: "And Nadab the son of Jeroboam began to reign over Israel in the second year of Asa king of Judah, and reigned over Israel two years. And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the way of his father, and in his sin wherewith he made Israel to sin." Nadab's father was dead, but Nadab "walked in the way of his father." His father's influence remained, and his father will have that added to his degree of punishment when the Final Judgment comes.

Parental influence is just one avenue of influence, but this can be widened to the influence you have in the workplace, in your extended family, in the community, etc. First Kings 22:52 reads, "And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the way of his father, and in the way of his mother [their influence continued], and in the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin." Oh, the power of influence! John Donne famously wrote, "No man is an island, entire of itself." We do not live unto ourselves. We each have an influence. We read in 2 Chronicles 22:3, "He also walked in the ways of the house of Ahab: for his mother was his counselor to do wickedly." There are wicked mothers yet today who teach their children to smoke, to drink, to take illegal drugs, and to have illicit sex. Many children were influenced by their mothers and fathers. Parents will be judged for that.

Jeremiah 9:14 says, "But have walked after the imagination of their own heart, and after Baalim, which their fathers taught them." Their fathers had an influence on them. Amos 2:4 lets us know, "Thus saith the LORD; For three

transgressions of Judah, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because they have despised the law of the LORD, and have not kept his commandments, and their lies caused them to err, after the which their fathers have walked." The people of Judah went that way because it was the way "their fathers have walked." Children follow their parents more than they think they do.

Influence has tremendous power. Perhaps you have seen the picture of the little boy out in the snow, trying to walk in his dad's footprints. He told his daddy, "Go a little slower; I am following in your footsteps." How true that is! Speaking of Herodias' daughter, Matthew 14:8 says, "And she, being before instructed of her mother, said, Give me here John Baptist's head in a charger." This evil woman instructed her daughter to request the death of a godly man. The daughter followed her mother's instructions, and John died.

There are also examples of good influences in the Bible. First Kings 9:4 reads, "And if thou wilt walk before me, as David thy father walked, in integrity of heart, and in uprightness, to do according to all that I have commanded thee, and wilt kept my statutes and my judgments." Also, 2 Chronicles 17:3 says, "And the LORD was with Jehoshaphat, because he walked in the first ways of his father David, and sought not unto Baalim." Furthermore, 2 Chronicles 26:4 tells us, "And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father Amaziah did." Uzziah did right because he saw his father do right. That is the power of influence. A good example in the New Testament is found in 2 Timothy 1:5. Paul wrote to the young minister Timothy, "When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also." Timothy's "unfeigned faith" was due to influence.

There is a need for a temporary abode of the dead (either Paradise or Hades) until the Judgment because influence can live on for generations—for good or bad. To see what happens when that last day occurs and time ceases, look at the writings of the Patriarch Job. These were written in 2058 B.C. (some eight hundred years prior to the writing of the Mosaic books Moses received from God in 1491 B.C.). Job had no Bible, no indwelling of the Holy Spirit, no pastor, and no teacher. Yet, Job 14:1-2 states: "Man that is born of a woman is of few days and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not." Our days have already been determined. God knows when our last day is; we do not, but He does. It could be tomorrow, next week, next month, or next year. This is why we must live continually in a state of readiness. Jesus told us in Matthew 24:44, "Be ye also ready" (continually be in a state of readiness).

A Change Is Coming—The Mortal Becomes Immortal

Job 14:5 reads, "Seeing his days are determined, the number of his months are with thee, thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass." God numbers our days. Not one of us can pass the "bounds" God has set for us. The only notable exception was Hezekiah who prayed and was given additional years. This was the Lord moving the "bounds." Regardless of the number of doctors, the amount of money, or the sophisticated equipment, you will not move past your "bounds." Just as God has set the bounds of the ocean (the tide comes in so far, stops, and then goes back), so He has set our "bounds." A host of Scriptures substantiates the truth that the "bounds" have been divinely set, including man's bounds. (See Job 26:10; 38:8, 11; Psalm 104:9; Proverbs 8:29; Jeremiah 5:22.)

Job 14:10 states, "But man dieth, and wasteth away [He returns to the dust, the earth]: yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he?" Man's body "wasteth away" (man's body returns to its original element), "the ghost" (his spirit) goes back to God who gave it, and "he" (his soul) goes into its temporary place in eternity—Paradise or Hades.

Job 14:12 reads, "So man lieth down ['dieth'; verse 10], and riseth not: till the heavens be no more." Here the Patriarch Job envisioned the Final Resurrection. He said that a dead man will not rise "*till* the heavens be no more." When will that occur? Second Peter 3:10 says, "But the day of the Lord [the Second Advent] will come as a thief in the night [not to steal anything, but He is coming at an unguarded, unexpected hour]; in the which the heavens shall pass away." Job 14:12 continues, "So man lieth down [death], and riseth not: till the heavens be no more [the Second Advent], They shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep." The body, not the soul, sleeps, and at the Second Advent, man's body will rise. Verse 14 states, "If a man die, shall he live again? all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come." To the question, "If a man die, shall he live again?" Job answered, "Yes, when the change comes."

First Corinthians 15:50 says, "Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption." This is not talking about people's spiritual state, but of "flesh and blood"—the body, which is currently composed of flesh, blood, and bone. First Corinthians 15:51-54 says: "Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep [sleep is physical death, and it is the *body*, not the *soul*, that sleeps], but we shall all be changed. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible [a corruptible body was sown in the grave, but when it is raised, it will be an

incorruptible body], and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory."

The "change" (Job 14:14) is when "corruptible" puts on "incorruption." First Corinthians 15:42-44 states: "So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption [speaking of the physical body]: It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: Is is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body." The body dies because it is corruptible. In this time world, the body is mortal; it will die and decay. But when it is raised on Resurrection Day, it will be raised incorruptible, immortal. It will be a spiritual body "fashioned like unto his [Christ's] glorious body" (Philippians 3:21). That glorious body will live for the ceaseless ages of eternity and never get sick, die, or get tired.

In Job 14:14, the "change" Job was talking about is when corruptible becomes incorruptible, when mortal becomes immortal. Job 19:25 tells us, "For I know that my redeemer liveth." Think about that! There were no written prophecies and no Scriptures, yet in 2058 B.C. Job knew his "redeemer liveth." Where did he hear that from? It must have been some truth passed orally from generation to generation. It was the same reason that "Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God" (Hebrews 11:24-25). Who taught him any of that? His mother did.

Job 19:25-26 continues: "I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth [he saw the first coming of Christ, but he went further]: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God." Job not only saw the first coming, but also saw the Resurrection at the Second Coming, when his flesh would come out of that grave. He knew he would see God with his own eyes in his own flesh after there was no body left. If you could find Job's grave after all this time, nothing would be left but a little pile of dust; but Job knew on that day, there would be a change. He would come out of that grave, and his flesh would be in a glorified state.

When Christ came out of the grave with a glorified body and appeared to the disciples, Thomas, who missed that one service, missed seeing the resurrected Lord. (When you miss a service, you are going to miss something; you will miss the presence of God.) When the disciples told Thomas about Jesus, Thomas said, "Except I ... put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe" (John 20:25). The next Sunday, Thomas

was there, and Jesus walked in. He walked over to Thomas and said, in so many words, "I want to show you something; put your finger into My hands [those nail prints were still there] and put your hand into My side where that sword went [the wound was still there]" (verse 27). The same flesh that Christ went into the grave with was the same flesh that He came out with. We will have the same flesh (Philippians 3:21), only it will be in a glorified state so it can withstand the rigors of eternity.

There Will Only Be One Resurrection

Job 19:26-27 states: "And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another, though my reins be consumed within me." Job knew although his body would be consumed by the worms in that day of time, he knew he would be coming out of the grave. He understood he would have a fleshly body with good eyesight, able to see Christ for himself. What a beautiful picture! The Resurrection will occur when time ceases. Paul said in 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17: "For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep [those who have passed away].

"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout [no secret rapture, no quiet stealing away], with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: [This is not teaching two resurrections as false religion would advocate. This sentence is not complete; there is a colon.] Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up." The dead in Christ will rise before "we which are alive and remain."

There will only be one Resurrection. Acts 24:15 says, "And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be *a* resurrection [singular] of the dead, both of the just and unjust." When Christ splits the clouds, there will be "*a* resurrection." The graves will burst forth, and all those corruptible bodies will be instantly changed to incorruptible bodies; all those mortal bodies will be changed to immortal bodies. Jesus will bring the souls who are in Paradise and Hades with Him to reunite them with their bodies. Jude 14 reads, "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints." All this will take place "in the twinkling of an eye" (1 Corinthians 15:52).

As souls and bodies are reunited, and they come up out of the grave, when they get about the level where "we which are alive and remain" are, we will *all* be caught up "to meet the Lord in the air" (1 Thessalonians 4:17). Christ will never touch His foot on this earth again. We will be caught up "in the air"

because there will not be any earth left. Christ's Second Coming will overtake sinners "as a thief in the night" (2 Peter 3:10) because it will come when they are unprepared, but if we are prepared, if we live as we ought, as "children of light" with eternity in view, that day will not "overtake you as a thief" (1 Thessalonians 5:4-6). Every act we commit and every work we do must be done in the light of eternity, with this question ever before our minds: "How will I answer for this in the Judgment?"

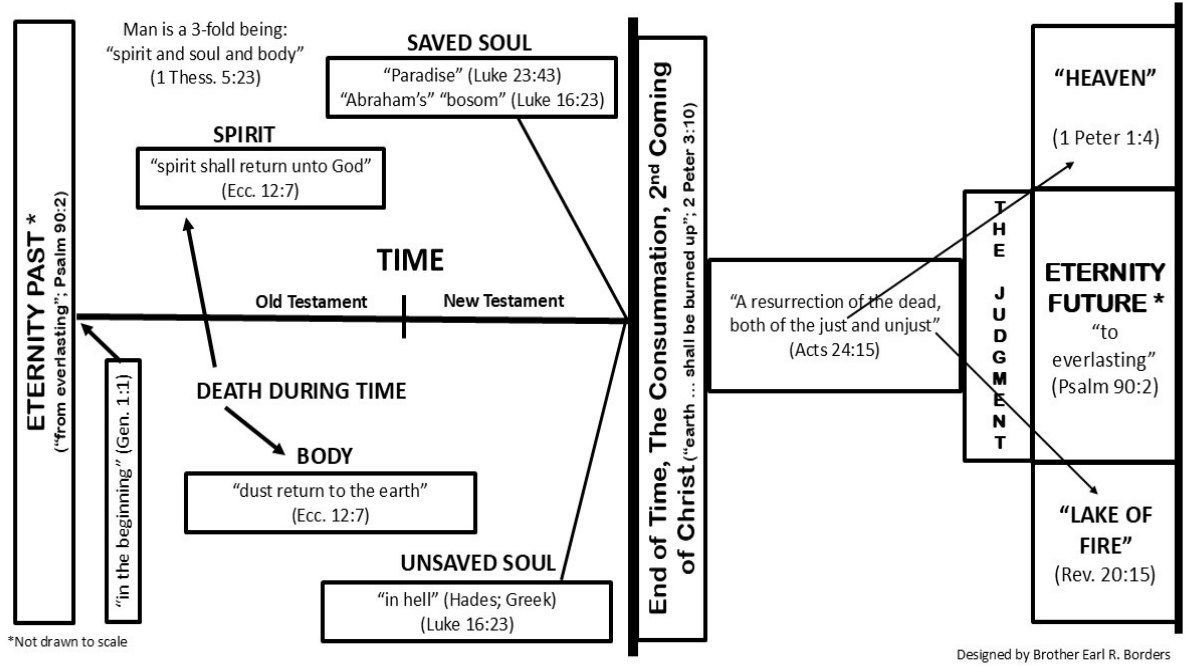
Second Peter 3:10 reads, "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens [the firmamental heavens] shall pass away with a great noise [once the graves are empty and the souls are reunited with the bodies, everything else will pass away], and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, and the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." This will be a supernatural fire, which will burn up "the earth" and all "the works that are therein."

After the Resurrection and the Consummation

What happens after the Resurrection and the Consummation, after this world is completely burned up? Second Corinthians 5:10 reads, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." We get a body back so that "every one may receive the things done in his body." The body is an instrument of the soul; the actions of the body are because of the state of the soul. My body used to hold cigarettes, but now it holds a Bible; it is the same fingers, the same body. This mouth that used to drink liquor now drinks lawful things, like water. Since the body was the instrument of the soul, both soul and body will be judged and "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Galatians 6:7). After the Judgment, the ultimate dispatching of that body and soul will take place, either to Heaven or to the lake of fire (*Gehenna*, translated into English as Hell), that permanent, eternal abode.

I hope we can begin to understand the divine scheme of time and eternity. Second Corinthians 5:11 says, "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men." We persuade men because there is an eternal destiny on the horizon—either reward or retribution, according to the deeds done in the body. Man will be rewarded or punished on the Day of Judgment and dispatched for the ceaseless ages of eternity future. Therefore, we need to "give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard" (Hebrews 2:1). Every one of us is Judgment bound—saved and unsaved. There will be no court of appeals and no review of the trial or the sentence. It will be final and eternal. That is why we need to exercise the "carefulness" repentance has "wrought in you" (2 Corinthians 7:11), living and walking with eternity in view.

The Divine Scheme of Time & Eternity



CHAPTER 7

THE PHYSICAL RESURRECTION

Psalm 8:4 What is man, that thou art mindful of him?

John 5:24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come unto condemnation, but is passed from death unto life.

25 Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.

26 For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself;

27 And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.

28 Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice,

29 And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

Man is only in this time world for a small space of time, and then death seizes upon him. Concerning death while time is yet standing, Ecclesiastes 12:7 reads, "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was." That "dust" is the original element from which man's body came. When we die, we no longer need a world consciousness because we are no longer living or functioning in the world; so our body goes back to its original element. The spirit, which is our God consciousness, is no longer needed because we will be in the eternal realm that God inhabits. Ecclesiastes 12:5 reads, "Man goeth to his long home ['eternal home'; the *Septuagint*]." That is talking about the eternal portion of man, the soul. We found in Luke, Chapter 16, when men die, they are as the rich man and land in hell (*Hades* in the Greek), or are as Lazarus and reside in Abraham's bosom (Paradise), where the soul stays until the last day.

The Last Day

Let us see what actually occurs concerning man on that fateful day. We previously looked at an overview and saw that the last day ushers in a host of

events: the resurrection, the Judgment, and the ultimate dispatching of souls with a reunited body into either the lake of fire or Heaven. Now we will look more specifically at the physical resurrection. In viewing our text, we must understand that the Scriptures teach two types of resurrections: the physical and the spiritual. We will examine the physical resurrection first. Then, to eliminate confusion, we will study the spiritual resurrection. Thus, we can understand the distinction between the two. Whether one has experienced that spiritual resurrection will determine his ultimate destination in eternity.

John 5:24 reads, "Verily, verily [or truly, truly], I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life." This reveals that everlasting life, or spiritual life, is contingent and conditional on hearing God's Word and believing. The Scriptures are not talking about this easy believism that is out in the nominal religious world. The Apostle Paul penned in Romans 10:16: "But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias [Greek for the Hebrew Isaiah] saith [quoting Isaiah 53:1], Lord, who hath believed our report?" The "report" is the Gospel. Believing the report is actually obeying the Gospel. That is what believing is in the New Testament. Many people make a mental ascent, a verbal confession, but there is no change in their lives. That is not believing the report; believing the report is obeying the Gospel, which will make a change in their lives.

Again, John 5:24 reads, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me [there are contingent actions required on man's part], hath everlasting life." Everlasting life is not something we receive after passing from these time shores; it is something we receive when we hear and believe. John 3:36 states, "He that believeth [a present, continual tense that indicates a continual obeying] on the Son hath everlasting life [not going to have, but has it now]: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth [not going to abide but already abides] on him." The "everlasting life" is conditional on hearing and believing (or obeying); thus, this everlasting life is not all-inclusive. Not everyone enjoys this life because they need to hear and obey, and not everybody will do that.

John 5:25 tells us, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is." We are dealing with two different things in this passage: (1) present tense, the thing that "now is," and (2) future tense, "the hour is coming" (verse 28); that which has not occurred yet. Verses 24-25 are a reality—that is now. Verse 25 continues, "The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead ...." This is speaking of those who are spiritually dead, spiritually separated from God. We read in Ezekiel 18:4, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die."

John 5:25 finishes by saying, "The hour is coming, and now is, when the

dead [all who are 'dead in trespasses and sins'; Ephesians 2:1] shall hear the voice of the Son of God." Verse 24 explains you hear the voice of the Son of God when you "heareth my word." When you come to an assembly, sit in a service, and hear a man bring the Word, you are hearing the voice of Christ because bringing the Word is how God ordained we hear the voice of Christ. Verse 25 describes a choice: "They *that hear* shall live." It indicates you can choose whether to hear (to take heed). "They that hear" have made the proper choice; they "shall live." These verses deal with a spiritual resurrection, which we will cover in our next study.

The Body in the Grave Sleeps

Jesus spoke of something totally different in John 5:28, saying, "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming [future tense], in the which all that are in the graves *shall* hear his voice." This is about the dead bodies that have been consigned to their original elements (placed in a tomb or a grave). Verse 29 reads, "And shall come forth [no exercise of choice]; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." When Jesus said "the graves" (verse 28), He let us know this is a physical resurrection. Verse 29 is portraying the same resurrection. Acts 24:15 reads, "And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be *a* resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust." They are in different states (some are "just" and some are "unjust"), but it is the same resurrection—the resurrection of all the dead who are in the graves. Some sleeping bodies will be awakened to "life" and others to eternal "damnation" (John 5:29).

When Jesus comes on that fateful day, there will "*a* [singular] resurrection." When He splits the clouds, 1 Thessalonians 4:13 states, "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep [while there is no soul sleeping, there is something that sleeps—the body when it is placed in the grave], that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep." Paul made a distinction between what would occur to those who were asleep and to those who were alive. There will be people physically alive when Jesus comes, but that does not give them any precedence over those who are asleep (physically dead).

First Thessalonians 4:16-17 reads: "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout [that is a shout that will wake the dead], with the voice of

the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: [The sentence is not complete. There is a colon there.] Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up." The dead will rise before "we which are alive and remain." This text is used by some religious teachers to supposedly support the teaching of a rapture, saying the saints will be taken and the sinners left behind. That is not what Paul was dealing with in this passage. The dead in Christ (those who are buried and in the grave) will rise out of the grave first, before "we which are alive." As the resurrected come up to ground level, "we which are alive and remain" are all going to go up together, at the same time.

Again, there is no soul sleeping. The physical, or human, part of man might experience physical death while time is yet standing, but the soul is ever awake, ever aware, and ever cognizant (just as the rich man was in Luke, Chapter 16). When Paul talked about "them which are asleep" (1 Thessalonians 4:13) and them "which sleep in Jesus" (verse 14), he was talking about the bodies that are dead, not the souls. When Jesus received word that His friend Lazarus was sick in John, Chapter 11, Jesus did not immediately attempt to go to Lazarus. God has a purpose for everything He does or does not do. After Lazarus died and Jesus arrived, Martha chided Him, saying, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died" (John 11:21).

It is possible that Jesus thought: "That is why I did not come. I did not want to heal a sick man; people already know I can do that. I wanted to raise a dead man. They do not know so much about that." Jesus intentionally tarried. We read in John 11:11-14: "These things said he: and after that he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep. Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well. Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep. Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead." Jesus made it plain—"Lazarus is dead." They understood that.

This thought of sleep refers to the body. First Corinthians, Chapter 11, talks about eating and drinking of the communion observance without being in a fit shape, spiritually. Verse 30 reads, "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep." He was not talking about sleeping in the worship service; he was talking about being dead. First Corinthians 15:51-52 states: "Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep [not all shall experience physical death; 1 Thessalonians 4:15], but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound."

What is that "trumpet"? People have composed songs that say, "Gabriel, go blow your horn." Nowhere does the Bible say anything about Gabriel blowing a horn. However, 1 Thessalonians 4:16 tells us, "For the Lord himself [Jesus

Christ] shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice [the 'shout' and the 'voice' are the same thing] of the archangel [singular; the word 'archangel' is only used twice in the entire Bible, and both times referring to Jesus Christ], and with the trump of God." The "trump" is the "voice" of Christ. John, on the isle of Patmos, penned in Revelation 1:10-11, "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, Saying, I am Alpha and Omega." The same expression is used to close out the Book of Revelation. Revelation 22:13 reads, "I am Alpha and Omega." Of whom is this speaking? Verse 16 says, "I Jesus." The "trump" is His voice. We read in Isaiah 58:1, "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet." The voice of Christ's ministry is like a trumpet.

Sleep Is Temporary

First Corinthians 15:50-52 says: "Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption [not talking about spiritual corruption, but the corruptible nature of the body] inherit incorruption. Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet [the voice of Christ] shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." The death of the body is referred to as "sleep" because sleep is temporary. You do not sleep all the time. There will come a day when the bodies from all the ages—from Adam on throughout time—are all going to be awakened. What a day that will be! All will come forth—princes and paupers, rich and poor, literate and illiterate, the famous and the unknown.

Let us back up to 1 Corinthians 15:20, which states, "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept." Christ's soul was in Paradise. He told the thief, "To day shalt thou be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:43). Although His soul went to Paradise, His body went to a sepulchre. There it slept for three days and three nights. Then He was resurrected, becoming "the firstfruits," meaning there are more coming.

Let us try to clarify some of this. We read in 1 Corinthians 15:21-22: "For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." This is not talking about being spiritually alive because spiritual life is a choice. This physical resurrection is not a choice: "All shall be made alive." Verse 23 states, "But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming." Christ was "the firstfruits," but He was not all. At His coming, there will be a resurrection.

What will actually occur on the day that Jesus termed as "the last day"? Jesus said in John 6:39-40: "And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day." Verse 54 states, "Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day." Jesus was not preaching cannibalism. When He spoke about "eateth my flesh," John 1:14 explains, "The Word was made flesh." Jesus was talking about eating His Word. What did He mean when He talked about "drinketh my blood"? According to Deuteronomy 12:23, "the blood is the life," and Romans 8:10 tells us that "the Spirit is life." Jesus was talking about the Word and the Spirit that produce and maintain eternal life.

On that "last day," when Jesus comes with "the voice of the archangel" (1 Thessalonians 4:16), sounding out the trump, there will be "a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust" (Acts 24:15). I agree that there is a spiritual resurrection, but that is not what is being referred to in these Scriptures. Those of whom Jesus was speaking in John, Chapter 6, those who are eating His flesh and drinking His blood, already have experienced the spiritual resurrection. In John 5:28-29, Jesus said, "The hour is coming [future tense], in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." It is not the spirit nor the soul that is in the grave, but the body.

We read in Job 19:25-27: "For I know that my redeemer liveth [written in 2058 B.C., confirming that Christ was preexistent], and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth [Christ's First Advent]: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God [the Second Advent, the time when the body is going to come out of the ground]: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me." In other words, Job was saying, "Though my body is completely deteriorated, I will come out with a resurrected body, and I am going to see Him with my own eyes." At the Second Advent, we will be taken to meet Christ "in the air" (1 Thessalonians 4:17). It was in the First Advent that He stood "at the latter day upon the earth." Christ will never stand upon this earth again; it will be dissolved (2 Peter 3:10-11) as soon as we are off the ground.

Speaking of the physical resurrection, Job 14:12 says, "So man lieth down, and riseth not: till ...." It does not stop with "riseth not." Many people deny a physical resurrection, but this verse does not deny it. It is describing *when* it will

occur. Verses 13-14 tell us: "O that thou wouldest hide me in the grave, that thou wouldest keep me secret, until thy wrath be past, that thou wouldest appoint me a set time, and remember me! If a man die, shall he live again? all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come." When will that "change" come? First Corinthians 15:52 reads, "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." The change occurs at the resurrection. Second 2 Peter 3:10-11 says: "The day of the Lord *will come* [future tense] ... the heavens *shall pass away* .... all these things *shall be dissolved*." The Second Advent is an event yet on the horizon, and it will make drastic, permanent changes.

Why Should a Dead Body Be Raised?

First Corinthians 15:35 poses some questions: "Some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?" Those are good questions. How is it possible that a dead man can be raised up? Concerning Lazarus, Jesus told Martha, "Thy brother shall rise again" (John 11:23). Martha said in verse 24, "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day." She had a good understanding of Biblical doctrine. In verse 25, Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection, and the life." That addresses the question of how it is possible that the dead are raised up. Jesus is "the resurrection, and the life," so when He comes with the voice of a trumpet, those bodies that are sleeping in the grave, the dead, shall rise. Lazarus came forth because "the Resurrection and the Life" was doing the speaking. When Christ comes on that "last day," it will be the Resurrection and the Life who will be speaking. All humanity will come forth. That is how the dead are raised.

The next question asked was, "And with what body do they come?" That causes another question to arise, which is, Why should a dead body be raised? We found in our studies, the body is an instrument of the soul. The state of the soul determines the actions of the body; when the final reward or retribution comes, both the soul and the body will receive it. Second Corinthians 5:10 states, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ [why?]; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." Again, the body is the instrument of the soul, and it is going to be rewarded or punished accordingly. That is why a resurrection is necessary.

First Corinthians 15:36-37 reads, "Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened [made alive], except it die: And that which thou sowest

not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain." Consider planting potatoes. You take a potato with several eyes (sprouts) and dice it up. Then you put the pieces in hills of dirt. Every one of those eyes produces a hill of potatoes. You did not expect to harvest one little piece of potato with an eye when you planted it. You expected it to come up differently.

Likewise, when this physical body dies, and we commit it back to its original element, we tell people: "This is not the end. A day is coming when this body will come out of the grave, and it will come out in a different state than what it went in as." It may have gone into the grave weak and sick, but it is not coming out that way! Paul used that analogy to bring understanding. Jesus told the same thing when He said in John 12:23-24: "The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." Verse 33 explains what He was talking about, stating, "This he said, signifying what death he should die."

Sown a Natural Body—Raised a Spiritual Body

First Corinthians 15:37-39 tells us: "And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain [you do not harvest 'bare grain'; you sow it], it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain: But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body [corn looks one way, wheat looks another way, and barley looks another way]. All flesh is not the same flesh [why?]: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds." Just as wheat, corn, and barley are all different, not all flesh is the same. There is the flesh of men, the flesh of beasts, the flesh of fish, and the flesh of birds.

Verse 40 states, "There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another." It is a beautiful thing to walk out and see the sun during the day, but you cannot chew that and eat it; you cannot make bread out of it. There is a terrestrial glory when you go by a cornfield and see the corn coming on. It has a glory, not like the sun, but it has its own type of glory. There are celestial bodies (the aerial bodies—the sun, the moon, the stars), and there are terrestrial bodies (things on this terrestrial earth).

First Corinthians 15:41-54 states: "There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead [our body will not

be exactly the same]. It is sown in corruption [things occurred inside the body—ailments, diseases—and it began to manifest its mortality]; it is raised in incorruption: It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power [it is going to come out a timeless body that will never age, decay, or get sick]: It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body [the body that is coming forth on that day has an entirely different quality; it is a spiritual body].

"And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam [speaking of Christ] was made a quickening spirit [a spirit that can make people alive]. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man [Adam] is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.

"Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep [be physically dead when Jesus comes], but we shall all [whether we be physically alive or dead] be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written [quoting Isaiah 25:8], Death is swallowed up in victory."

The spiritual body is incorruptible, immortal. Philippians 3:21 states, "Who ['Jesus Christ'; verse 20] shall change our vile body [corruptible], that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body." When Christ was resurrected, He had a spiritual body, and "our vile body" will "be fashioned like unto his glorious [spiritual] body." First Corinthians 15:20 says, He is "the firstfruits of them that slept," and we are the rest of the fruits.

Christ's Glorious Body

What was Christ's glorious body like? Luke 24:36-39 states: "And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them [this body had the ability to just appear], and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit. And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not

flesh and bones, as ye see me have."

Jesus had hands and feet; evidently, there were also identifying factors in those hands and feet because when Thomas said, "Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe" (John 20:25). Jesus said to Thomas, "Handle me, and see" (Luke 24:39). Jesus had a body that could be handled. The same body that could walk through walls could be handled.

We read in Luke 24:39-43: "Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them his hands and his feet. And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here any meat? And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb. And he took it, and did eat before them." Christ's body must have had a stomach. Where would the fish and honeycomb go if He did not have a stomach?

I want you to get a picture of what Christ's glorified body was like because ours is going to be fashioned the same way. Notice the absence of the mention of blood. This is because the corruption is in the blood. A glorified body has no blood. When Paul talked about the body of Christ, referring to the church in reality, he said, "For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones" (Ephesians 5:29-30). Nothing is said about blood. Jesus had hands and feet, and flesh and bones. He was recognizable. The open side, the nail prints—they were all there. We are going to be fashioned like unto His glorious body. It will be recognizable.

The Sequence of Events Concerning the "Last Day"

First Thessalonians 5:2 and 4-5 read: "For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord [the last day] so cometh [future tense] as a thief in the night. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light." That day will not come in an unguarded hour for people who live in a guarded manner. First Corinthians 15:52 tells us it will be "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye." One scholar says, "In the time it takes to blink an eye, He will empty out both Paradise and Hades, call forth all the bodies of the dead, reunite them, and take them to the Judgment scene."

Jude 14 reads, "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints." The

word "thousands" in Greek is *myriads*, denoting an innumerable number. The Greeks did not have a word for anything higher than *myriads* at that time. First Thessalonians 3:13 states, "To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ will all his saints." Christ is going to empty out those temporary abodes. Revelation 20:13 says, "And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell [Hades] delivered up the dead which were in them." Death is where the bodies are held. *Vine's Expanded Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* says this about Hades: "It never denotes the grave, nor is it the permanent region of the lost. In point of time it is for such an intermediate between decease and the doom of Gehenna."

On that fateful day, John 5:28 reads, "All that are in the graves shall hear his voice." Verse 29 tells us they "shall come forth." There will be no choice. Death will deliver up every soul in Paradise and Hades. On that day, 1 Thessalonians 4:16 explains, "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout [no quiet, secret rapture or stealing the saints away], with the voice of the archangel [Gabriel is not an archangel, and the devil was never an archangel; there is one Master of Angels—Jesus Christ], and the dead in Christ shall rise first." The "first" are they who are "asleep," or physically dead.

Our text and Acts 24:15 let us know "there shall be [future tense] a resurrection [singular] of the dead, both of the just and unjust." I trust it is plain. Many deny it, some try to discount it, and others try to twist it, but the Scriptures are explicitly clear. On that "last day," there will be "*a* resurrection of the dead." Christ will empty out Paradise and Hades and reunite the souls with the bodies. The bodies will be changed while simultaneously being reunited with the souls. All this will happen "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye." The body needs to be resurrected because it was the instrument of the soul. For its deeds, it will receive either reward or retribution. This cannot be done until the end of time because man's influence continues as long as time continues.

Some try to spiritualize the Scriptures concerning the resurrection and discount any thought of a literal resurrection. While there is a spiritual resurrection (and we will deal with that), the Scriptures are clear concerning the truth of a literal, physical, general resurrection. From the oldest book of the Bible, Job (2058 B.C.) all the way through, this truth is found. It is a final event, divinely ordained, in which man has no choice whatsoever.

The day of the Lord is coming, the last day, when there will be "*a* resurrection." All mankind's bodies will be changed; "corruptible must put on incorruption ... mortal must put on immortality" (1 Corinthians 15:53). All bodies will come out of the grave intact, in full, and be changed to have a spiritual lasting

ability. Some will be dispatched to that terrible place called *Gehenna* in the Greek. Revelation 20:15 calls it "the lake of fire." It will be a body of such quality that it will never burn up. The question arises, How could that be? In Exodus 3:2-4, Moses saw a bush on fire. That was not a new thing. It was not uncommon in that climate to see a bush on fire, but this one was not being consumed. That is why Moses turned aside to see. It was a divine fire. Likewise, in eternity, it will be a divine fire, and the bodies will not be consumed.

May God help us live in such a manner that we are prepared for the last day, the resurrection. Christ will come like a thief, at an unguarded, unexpected hour. Life will be going on normally. There will be no indications, and then suddenly, He will split the clouds, the graves will burst, and we will be caught up and changed. There will be no time and no opportunity to get right with God. If things are not right when that happens, it will be too late. That is why Jesus said, "*Be* ye also ready" (Matthew 24:44) because there will be no time to get ready then. We need to live in that state of readiness.

CHAPTER 8

THE SPIRITUAL RESURRECTION

Psalm 8:4 What is man, that thou are mindful of him?

John 5:24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

25 Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.

26 For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself;

27 And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.

28 Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice,

29 And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrections of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

Concerning man's destiny, or the concluding portion of the plan, the Scriptures are very clear and explicit concerning a physical resurrection. On that last day, that great day, when Christ splits the clouds and comes back, there will be a resurrection of the dead. In some minds, there is great confusion concerning the resurrection because the Bible indeed speaks of two resurrections. Yet, there is only one *physical* resurrection. Paul wrote in Acts 24:15, "Have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be *a* resurrection of the dead [singular], both of the just and unjust." The "just and unjust" will both be resurrected from the dead at the same time. Again, there is only one physical resurrection on the horizon, but when we look at other Scriptures, we find they speak of two resurrections. Revelation 20:5-6 reads: "But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power." This speaks of more than one resurrection and more than one death.

Let us return to the question posed in Psalm 8:4, "What is man?" Another aspect previously dealt with that needs to be reiterated is that man is a creature of choice with free moral agency. Repeatedly throughout the Scriptures, man

is enjoined to make the proper choice. It is necessary to understand, man's destiny is determined by his choices. Man's destiny is not predestined or foreordained. That choice is exclusively in man's hands. No one but you can determine your spiritual welfare or your eternal destiny.

Spiritual Life Is a Choice

Moses was faithful to the people of Israel for over forty years. The old generation, because of unbelief, wandered in the wilderness until they died. In Deuteronomy 30:19, Moses admonished the new generation, who was ready to go into Canaan land and receive the promise, "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live." Moses did not want them to suffer the same fate as their fathers and have the judgments of God exercised on them and experience physical death. But he was not solely speaking about physical life. The choice also concerned their spiritual life. Also, when people make their choice, they are not making a choice for themselves only but for their "seed" (children) as well. When people's lives are based on wrong choices, when they choose spiritual "death" and "cursing," that often follows down through the generations.

Joshua, coming to the end of his earthly sojourn, challenged the people of Israel, saying in Joshua 24:15, "And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve." Throughout the ages, man has been presented with a choice. When Israel was overcome by idolatry at the hands of Ahab and Jezebel, 1 Kings 18:21 reads, "Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him." Elijah let the people know they needed to make a choice. Some people *think* they are riding on the fence. The only problem is that there is no fence to straddle. There must be a choice. Even the act of saying, "I will not make a choice for Christ," is a choice against Christ.

In the dawn of Creation, when man was placed in the garden, he was told in Genesis 2:17, "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." The tree was placed there to afford man a choice, and when he made the wrong choice, he died. The death verse 17 speaks of was not physical death. Adam physically lived long after that choice. Genesis 5:5 reads, "And all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years: and he died." This is germane to our study because Revelation 20:6 says, "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power." There is a

first resurrection, and since there is a second death, there must of necessity be a first death.

The First Death

Why does the first death occur? This is why we need to understand that man is a creature of choice. Acts 10:34 tells us, "God is no respecter of persons." When we take that principle and go back to that which was from the beginning, we read in Genesis 1:26, "And God said, Let us make man [the physical portion, or 'the body'; 1 Thessalonians 5:23] in our image [the new man, the new creation in Christ Jesus]." When we gain a real experience of salvation, that "new man ... is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him" (Colossians 3:10).

What is the image? Ephesians 4:24 talks about the same experience, stating, "And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created [then Paul defined that image] in righteousness and true holiness." That is important because Genesis 1:26 says that man was made "in our image" ("in righteousness and true holiness"). Since Acts 10:34 says, "God is no respecter of persons," if Adam came into this time world in a spiritual state of "righteousness and true holiness," then every child by justness, fairness, and equity must come in the same way. The Scriptures confirm this.

Paul, testifying about his experience in Romans 7:9, said, "For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died." We need to stop and consider that. The commandment came on Mount Sinai in 1491 B.C. and Paul was speaking at least fifteen hundred years later. He was talking about when the commandment came to his awareness, to his knowledge. There was never a day that Paul lived when the old Levitical Law was not in force until after Christ. So when he said, "For I was alive without the law once," he was talking about being in a state of innocence as a child. He had no knowledge of the Law because it was before the age of accountability. Paul said, "I was alive"; he had spiritual life until the commandment came.

Romans 7:7-9 reads: "What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead. For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came [to his understanding], sin revived [came alive]." That is when Paul died. He tells us why in Romans 5:6. "For when we were yet without strength ...." A child may have the image of God (righteousness and true holiness), but he is

"without strength" because he does not possess the Holy Spirit (the power to *maintain* holiness). Then when the child comes to the age of accountability, Isaiah 53:6 says, "All we like sheep have gone astray [why?]; we have turned every one to his own way."

Every child is born in that righteous state. Ecclesiastes 7:29 tells us, "Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright [the Hebrew word is *yashar,* which means righteous]." This was written in 977 B.C. approximately 3,027 years after Creation, well subsequent to the Fall of Man in the garden. What happened? Whose fault is it that they went into sin? It was because "they have sought out many inventions." In Ezekiel 28:15, the Prophet Ezekiel said to the king of Tyrus (around 588 B.C., some 389 years later), "Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, *till* iniquity was found in thee." He "wast perfect in thy ways" until he exercised an improper choice.

According to Ecclesiastes 7:29, prior to the age of accountability, children are "upright," or *yashar* (righteous). According to Paul in Romans 7:9, they are "alive" spiritually, but when the commandment comes to them, they are without strength because they do not have the indwelling power of the Holy Ghost and they have "turned every one to his own way" (Isaiah 53:6). Then, Romans 7:9 says, "I died." Paul did not experience a physical death at that juncture. He died the same kind of death that Adam experienced when the Lord told him, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Genesis 2:17). It obviously was not a physical death for either Adam or Paul, but a spiritual death. The first death mankind experiences is a spiritual death.

Sin Causes Spiritual Death

Ezekiel 18:4 says, "Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die." We do not die for anyone else's sins. Ezekiel 18:2-3 reads: "What mean ye, that ye use this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying, The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge? As I live, saith the Lord GOD, ye shall not have occasion any more to use this proverb in Israel." We do not die because of something we inherit from our fathers or because of an inherited sin received from Adam. God said not to say that anymore. He said, "The soul that sinneth, *it* shall die." The life or death of any soul is totally contingent on the individual and the choices he makes. We are talking about a spiritual death, which is the first death that man experiences.

Romans 6:23 states, "For the wages of sin is death." Revelation 20:6 tells us, "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection." Here is a

resurrection that has a spiritual quality. Nothing in the physical resurrection of a man's body makes him holy. Ecclesiastes 11:3 lets us know that as the tree falls, so shall it lie. There are no alterations of man's spiritual state at death, and the physical resurrection does not change anyone's spiritual state.

The first death man experiences is a spiritual death because he violated the knowledge that came to him at the age of accountability, and he chose his own way. Adam experienced it on the day that he partook of the forbidden fruit. Paul talked about how he "was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came" to his understanding, he "died" (Romans 7:9). It was not a physical death. The first death is a spiritual death; so the first resurrection is a spiritual resurrection. Again, Revelation 20:6 states, "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection." The songwriter penned a song entitled "From Death to Life." Verse 3 says, "*A resurrection I confess, Has taken place within my breast; I've been awakened from the dead, And now I live with Christ instead*."

This first resurrection changes man's spiritual state. It makes man holy (and I am using man in the broad sense of mankind, not gender-specific). The *Amplified Bible, Classic Edition,* renders Revelation 20:6 as, "Blessed (happy, to be envied) and holy (spiritually whole, of unimpaired innocence and proved virtue) is the person who takes part (shares) in the first resurrection!" This resurrection changes a man's spiritual state.

The Apostle Paul described salvation as "buried with him in baptism" (Colossians 2:12). He was not talking about the baptismal pool, or water baptism, which symbolizes the spiritual baptism. Colossians 2:12-13 continues: "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened [made alive] together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses." When verse 12 talks about being "risen with him," it is talking about a spiritual resurrection.

Spiritual Life Requires Hearing God's Word

In our text, Christ clearly set forth the two deaths and two resurrections. John 5:24-25 reads: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live." When Jesus said, "He that heareth my word," it indicates a power of choice: you can choose to hear or you can choose

not to hear; you can choose to heed or you can choose not to heed. It is a matter of personal choice. Those who "heareth" Christ's Word are "passed from death unto life." In verse 25, Christ told us, "The hour is coming, and now is [present tense; right then in approximately A.D. 30], when the dead ...." What kind of dead was he talking about? This kind of "dead" can choose to "heareth my word, and believeth" and pass "from death unto life." It all rests within the power of his own choice.

When verse 24 says, "He that heareth," it is a present and continual tense. If you want to maintain this life, you have to continue to hear. That word *heareth* could better be rendered as "heeds." It is not just talking about hearing with a natural ear, but it is talking about having an ear to hear as Jesus spoke of seven times in the Revelation: "He that hath an ear, let him hear." A clearer rendering could be "heed what you have heard." Verse 24 also says "and believeth." Too often people say, "I believe Jesus is Christ," and some preacher is right there, saying, "You are saved." That is not how the word "believeth" is used in Scripture. The Apostle Paul wrote in Romans 10:16: "But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias [Greek for Isaiah] saith, Lord, who hath believed our report [quoting Isaiah 53:1]?" The "report" is the Gospel, and to believe it means to obey it. Obeying the Gospel that you have heard is when you pass from death to life.

What "dead" is verse 25 of our text talking about? Ephesians 2:1 tells us, "And you hath he quickened [made alive], who were dead in trespasses and sins." That is exactly where every one of us was. We came into this time world as newborn babes, in the image of God (which is righteousness and true holiness), just as Adam came in. God is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34). Thus, every child subsequent has come in upright (*yashar*, righteous; Ecclesiastes 7:29) in that same image. When we come to the age of accountability, when the commandment comes to us, since we are without strength, we choose to go contrary to God's Word, following our selfish will. That is when we die spiritually. "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way" (Isaiah 53:6). The root of all sin is selfishness. The first death we experience is spiritual death; we are dead while we are alive. Paul spoke of it in that manner in 1 Timothy 5:6, saying, "But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth." He was talking about "the pleasures of sin" (Hebrews 11:25).

Jesus gave that same illustration in the Parable of the Good Samaritan. Luke 10:30 reads, "A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead." There is significance in going *down* from Jerusalem (a holy place) to Jericho (a fallen city). John 10:1 tells us who those

"thieves" were, stating, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door ['Jesus'; John 10:7, 9] into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way [the 'way which seemeth right' (Proverbs 14:12), which is the 'way' of false religion], the same is a thief and a robber." That is talking about false religion. This man (going from Jerusalem to Jericho, from a holy state to a fallen state, and being stripped of his garments of salvation and left half dead) is a picture of being dead spiritually but alive physically.

We need to understand what the lesson in our text (John 5:25) is teaching when it says, "The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead [in trespasses and sins] shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live." Again, you have a choice to hear it or not hear it, to heed it or not heed it. When the day of the general resurrection comes, you will not have the power of choice. You will not be lying in the grave, saying, "I hear, but I do not think I will go." Yet, in verse 25, there is a choice: "They that hear shall live." The clear implication is, if you do not hear, you will not live.

Verse 25 reads, "The dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God." We hear His voice through His Word. When we hear the Word and see we are dead in trespasses and sin, lost, undone, and on the road to a devil's hell, then we realize we are spiritually dead and need a resurrection. The Gospel not only reveals that we are spiritually dead, but it also reveals we can have a resurrection. We can pass from death unto life. We can spiritually become a new creature and have God's image restored.

The First Death Is Spiritual

The physical resurrection does not give man any change in his spiritual nature; neither does the physical resurrection present man with a choice. John 5:28 states, "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming [future tense], in the which all that are in the graves [dead bodies] *shall* hear his voice." There is no power of choice here—"all ... *shall* hear his voice." The first death man experiences is spiritual; therefore, the first resurrection man is ordained to experience is spiritual. The physical resurrection does not alter man's spiritual state because the physical resurrection will find mankind in one of two different states. John 5:29 says, "And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." If the physical resurrection altered man's spiritual state, no one would be resurrected to "damnation."

Revelation 20:6 reads, "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power." This lets us know that

"the first resurrection" is what makes man "holy," and "the second death" either does or does not have "power." That is determined by man's spiritual condition. What is the "second death"? God told Adam in Genesis 2:17, "The day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." When Adam ate the fruit, he died spiritually. He was expelled from the garden and could no longer enjoy the presence of God. There was a spiritual separation; that is what spiritual death is. Genesis 5:5 reveals Adam lived 930 years; then he died. The second death man experiences is physical death. When you come to the age of accountability and you choose sin and your own way, you die spiritually (the first death). You may live for many more years, but there is going to come a second death. "It is appointed unto men once to die" (Hebrews 9:27). We are all going to die if Jesus does not split the clouds first. The "second death" is physical, but if you had a part in that first resurrection, "the second death hath no power."

The Second Death Is Physical

Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 15:55-57: "O death, where is thy sting? ... The sting of death is sin ... thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory [over sin]." When you have victory over sin, death does not have any sting. I have used this illustration: now and then a fly will get in the church sanctuary, and no one pays it any attention. However, if a wasp gets in, instead of listening to the message, the people keep an eye on that wasp. What is the difference between a wasp and a fly? The wasp has a sting. Likewise, sin has a sting. "The sting of death is sin," but when the sting is removed, there is no fear. The second death that man experiences is physical death. It either can or cannot, does or does not have power. It is all determined by man's spiritual condition.

The book *Voices From the Edges of Eternity* contains accounts of men dying in a lost state. Some men were screaming at the top of their lungs: "My feet are in the fire! Pull me out! I feel the fire; pull me out!" Others are recorded screaming: "Can't you see them? They are coming to get me. Don't let them take me!" Sin is the sting of death, but when sin is removed, the sting is gone. Then you can say, as D. L. Moody did when stepping from these time shores, "Earth recedes, and Heaven opens." The dread is gone; the sting is gone. The first death is a spiritual death, but if you have had the first resurrection, then the second death has no power.

The second death, physical death, seals man's spiritual state. Whatever state he is in when he dies, that is his permanent spiritual condition. Ecclesiastes 11:3 tells us a tree can fall in one of two positions: "toward the south, or toward the north." In Matthew, Chapter 7, Jesus reduced all mankind to either a "good tree"

or a "corrupt tree." Some say: "I am pretty good; I am not too bad. I am better than he is. If he makes it, I will make it." Those are all faulty measurements. You are either a good tree or a corrupt tree, and when death seizes you, you are in one state or the other. You either fall to the north or to the south. "In the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be" (Ecclesiastes 11:3). When death seizes any of us, our eternal destiny is forever sealed. That is why we are so enjoined throughout the Scriptures, "Now is the day of salvation" (2 Corinthians 6:2) because "now" is the only time we know anything about. People can say, "Well, I am going to get saved next Sunday," but they could die tomorrow.

I remember a revival service when a man stood under so much conviction. His knuckles turned white from gripping the pew so hard in front of him. He was fighting the conviction. The altar call continued, but he did not make a move. The next night, while getting ready to attend the service, he had a fatal heart attack. He never made it to another worship service. His day of visitation had passed. That is why "now is the accepted time" (2 Corinthians 6:2). That is why Proverbs 27:1 says, "Boast not thyself of to morrow." We do not know if there will be a tomorrow, and if there is, we do not know if we will rise to see it. Thus, it is needful to make our calling and election sure while we have time and opportunity. When death seizes us, it is forever sealed. The second death can or cannot have power over us. It is determined by the choice we make concerning our eternal destiny. It is based on our spiritual condition.

The First Resurrection Is Spiritual

Much confusion arises between the physical and the spiritual resurrections. Some people hyper-spiritualize it (make it all spiritual) and do not believe in a physical resurrection. There is a spiritual resurrection, but that does not negate the fact of a physical resurrection. How does a spiritual resurrection occur? Is it indeed the first? In our text, Jesus mentioned it first. John 5:24-25 reads: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth [indicating a power of choice] my word, and believeth [indicating a power of choice] on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is [present tense], when the dead ['dead in trespasses and sins'; Ephesians 2:1] shall hear the voice of the Son of God ['heareth my word'; verse 24]: and they that hear shall live." You "hear the voice" and "live" when you hear the "word" of God.

On the isle of Patmos, John received a vision of Jesus. He described Him in Revelation 1:16, saying, "And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword ['the word of God'; Hebrews 4:12]."

The Word of God went "out of his mouth," and you hear His voice by hearing the Word of God. The spiritual resurrection occurs when you respond appropriately to the sound of the Gospel. Romans 1:16 states, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." Romans 10:16 tells us believing is obeying the pure, unadulterated Gospel. which is "the power of God unto salvation."

When we hear the Gospel, submit our lives to it, and obey it, then John 5:25 says, "They that hear shall live." Jesus was not talking about physical life. He was not preaching in the graveyard to dead bodies. He was preaching to people who already had physical life. He was talking about spiritual life. This is the purpose for which Christ graced the shores of time and implemented the redemptive plan. He said in John 10:10, "The thief [those who want to come in some other way than the door, such as church membership, handshaking, card signing, pledging money, or being baptized] cometh not, but for to steal [trying to seal your most priceless possession—your soul], and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." Again, the people Jesus was addressing had physical life; He was talking about spiritual life.

Jesus said in John 3:36, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." It does not say *going to* have everlasting life, but "*hath*." It is a present-tense reality. We pass "from death unto life" (John 5:24) when we hear Christ's Word and obey the Gospel. What kind of life? It is "everlasting life." It does not begin in eternity; it begins here. One hymn we sing says, "*Start the everlasting song*." The "everlasting life" starts here and now.

John 3:36 continues, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth [present tense] on him." God's wrath is already on the one who does not believe. The only thing holding him from a Christless eternity is the mercy of God. If God snaps the thread of life, he is sealed for time and eternity. Spiritual life is called "everlasting life" because it is the only life that has eternal benefits. Revelation 20:6 reads, "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection." This resurrection makes a man "holy," and only spiritual life can do that.

The Second Resurrection Is Physical

Notice one drastic distinction between the first resurrection mentioned in John 5:24-25 and the second resurrection mentioned in John 5:28-29. The resurrection available to man now (verse 25) is optional while time is standing. Man, the creature of choice, has the option to accept the message or not. "They that

hear" (verse 25) indicates a personal choice because Jesus said in verse 24, "He that heareth my word." *He* is a personal pronoun. The *Amplified Bible* frames verse 24 in this way: "The person who hears My word [the one who heeds My message], and believes and trusts in Him who sent Me, has (possesses now) eternal life."

While time is standing and we are physically alive, we have a choice to hear and to accept. That determines whether we experience this first resurrection. However, look at the words of our Lord concerning the next resurrection. We know this is a different, distinct resurrection because He proclaimed in verse 28, "The hour is coming [future tense; it has not arrived yet], in the which all that are in the graves." In verse 25, when He talked about the first resurrection, they were not in the graves. In this second resurrection, He let us know, "All that are in the graves shall [not an option, no power of choice] hear his voice."

Concerning that fateful day, 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 reads, "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first [first before what?]: Then we which are alive and remain ...." The dead are going to rise. There is no exercise of choice. Our text is expressly clear: "*All* that are in the graves *shall* hear his voice" (verse 28). Verse 29 states, "And shall come forth." Again, there is no power of choice. It is readily apparent that these inspired words of our Lord are speaking of two distinct resurrections in our text.

It is the Lord's desire, as well as ours, that all mankind responds appropriately to the call of Christ to salvation. Second Peter 3:9 tells us the Lord is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." Man must exercise the proper choice. There will not be any time to exercise choice when the trump sounds and the skies are split. It will be just as the day when the Lord shut Noah in the ark. I imagine when the rain started coming, many people made their way to that ark, knocking on the door. That is why the Lord shut the door. No doubt, Noah would have opened it. As that water rose, people would have gone from knocking to clawing and screaming and panicking, but the door was shut. Time and opportunity were gone. There is going to come a day when time is no more. Opportunity will be ended. That is why "*now* is the accepted time; behold, *now* is the day of salvation" (2 Corinthians 6:2). "Hear his voice, [and] harden not your hearts" (Hebrews 3:15). He is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9). But whether men do or not, this "day of salvation" will end. Then, "The day of the Lord so cometh" (1 Thessalonians 5:2).

Indeed, there is a spiritual resurrection. However, James 1:16 admonishes, "Do not err, my beloved brethren." There are those who have given place to "the

spirit of error" (1 John 4:6). They have erroneously attempted to do away with the literal resurrection. Because there is a spiritual resurrection, do not be carried away with the falsity that there will not be a physical resurrection for there will be. The Scriptures teach two resurrections. Not two physical resurrections, as dispensationalists advocate, but a *spiritual* resurrection and a *physical* resurrection. We have a choice concerning one (the spiritual), but concerning the other (the physical), we have no choice. The only way to be properly prepared for the physical resurrection is to experience the first resurrection, which is blessed and makes man holy.

We have been studying the question David posed in Psalm 8:4, "What is man?" One thing man is, is a creature of choice, a free moral agent. His destiny is not predetermined beyond his consent. His eternal destiny lies in his own hands, in the choice he makes. This is why Moses said, "Choose life" (Deuteronomy 30:19). Whether we have spiritual life is totally our choice. Whether we maintain spiritual life is totally our choice. It rests within us as creatures of choice. How vital it is to experience the first resurrection! When you have that first resurrection, the second death has no power. It takes the sting out and gives you victory. Then death will not be a dreaded foe, but can become a welcomed friend.

CHAPTER 9

THE TRUTH CONCERNING THE FINAL JUDGMENT

Ecclesiastes 12:13 Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.

14 For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.

2 Corinthians 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

Hebrews 9:27 And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.

There is much confusion about the Final Judgment. Yet, God never sent His Word to be confusing (1 Corinthians 14:33). Sadly, some hyper-spiritualize and dismiss any thought of a corporate Judgment. We do not deny that while we live, there is a time of judgment. Writing at the dawning of this Gospel Day (in the morning time), Peter said, "For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God" (1 Peter 4:17). The "house of God" is not a physical building but is "the church of the living God" (1Timothy 3:15). Peter was saying that judgment is necessary. The prophetic utterance of Isaiah 1:27 states, "Zion shall be redeemed with judgment." Laying down judgment has been needed throughout the Gospel Day to enable the church to be what she needs to be in God's sight.

While there is a spiritual element to judgment, that does not negate the fact that there is going to be a Final Judgment. The unifying fact of all three Scripture texts is the thought of the Judgment. Hebrews 9:27 says, "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." The truth that unites these texts is the truth concerning "the Judgment."

Regarding the thought of the Judgment, there are at least seven distinct truths necessary to be understood. First, the erroneous proponents of the thought that *all* judgment takes place during time. Hebrews 9.27 says, "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but *after this* ...." There is something beyond death, beyond time. Although there is a type of judgment that transpires while we are living, these Scripture texts refer to something that occurs *beyond* time. "After this [after death] the judgment" clearly refers to an event that occurs after we die, not during our lifetime.

The Judgment Takes Place Beyond Time

Second Corinthians 5:10 tells us, "For we [plural] must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ." The only way everyone could appear and all could receive judgment is *after* the wheels of time have stopped. "All" takes in all ages—all people throughout all the ages of humanity. This verse also says we will "receive the things done in his body." The only place this Judgment can occur is beyond time, after the resurrection of the body. You could not receive judgment for "the things done in [the] body" if your body was still in the grave; it has to be following the resurrection.

Someone may say, "Then it must be speaking of a judgment that immediately follows death." No, judgment cannot immediately follow death because Revelation 14:13 says, "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." Judgment cannot be truly assessed until time ceases because "their works ... follow" their earthly life. Their works continue to have an influence and an impact. Until time reels into eternity, there cannot be a fair assessment or measurement. Therefore, judgment does not immediately follow death. While time stands, the soul abides in either Paradise or Hades (the temporary abodes of the dead). When time stops, there will be a resurrection, and following that will be the Judgment.

Seven Major Features Concerning the Judgment

(1) The First Principle: there has been an age-old expectation of the Judgment. It is not merely a New Testament doctrine; it is as old as the Book of Genesis. The Patriarch Abraham had no Bible, no Old Testament, no indwelling Holy Spirit, and no written Scriptures in any form from which to draw, but as he prayed that importuning prayer to the Lord for Sodom and Gomorrah, who was he praying to? Who was he importuning to? Who was it that visited him? Genesis 18:1 states, "And the LORD appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre: and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day."

In Genesis 18:17-18, the Lord said, "Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do; Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation?" As God revealed to Abraham what was going to occur in Sodom and Gomorrah, Abraham began to importune. Verse 25 reads, "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?" How did Abraham know about "the Judge of all the earth"?

When the Lord appeared to Abraham, theologians call it a *Christophany*, which means a pre-Christian era appearance of Christ. That is why Jesus told the Jews in John 5:39, "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me." Jesus is throughout the Old Testament. He appeared to Abraham at the tent door; He appeared to Joshua as the Captain (Joshua 5:13-15); and when the three Hebrew boys were in the fiery furnace, He showed up (Daniel 3:25).

In approximately 1898 B.C., Abraham knew the Lord would be "the Judge of all the earth." He knew a Final Judgment was coming when Christ would be "the Judge of all the earth." Abraham had no Bible; it came through divine revelation. Only after time has stopped will Christ be able to judge "all the earth." Our text in Ecclesiastes 12:14 (written by Solomon in approximately 977 B.C.) reads, "For God shall bring every work into judgment." Verse 13 says, "This is the whole duty of man," revealing that Judgment takes place *after* man has done his "whole duty," *after* life has ended. When time has reeled into eternity, and all work and influence have ceased, is the only way "every work" can be judged.

The New Testament is replete with references to the Final Judgment. Romans 14:10-12 reads: "But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God." Verse 11 speaks of "every knee" and "every tongue," and verse 12 says it will be "every one of us." That can only occur *after* time has ceased.

Jesus said in Matthew 16:27, "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works." When He comes with His angels, it will not be something that occurs during time. We read in 1 Thessalonians 3:13, "To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, with all his saints." He will come "with all his saints" at the Second Advent, when He empties the graves, Paradise, and Hades and reunites the bodies with the souls. Jude 14 reads, "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints." The thought of the Judgment is throughout the annals of Scripture.

Matthew 25:31 states, "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory." The "throne" is the Judgment Seat of Christ. Verses 32-34, 41, and 46 tell us: "And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from

another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world .... Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels .... And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal." This describes an event that will occur when time reels into eternity. There, Christ will assume the Judgment Seat and make the ultimate dispatching of souls.

Many attempt to spiritualize this passage, saying it transpires during time, but notice some particular words of Christ. Verse 31 states, "When the Son of man shall come ...." That is a future tense expression, not something in time. With "all the holy angels" does not occur when judgment is brought during life. This refers to a particular event that will occur during the ushering in of the Judgment. The implications are definitely beyond time—verse 41 speaks of "everlasting fire," and verse 46 says "everlasting punishment" and "life eternal." This takes us beyond time.

(2) The Second Principle: the Judgment is repeatedly referred to as a specific day. When talking about the Judgment, the Scriptures indicate singularity. During life, there may be many judgments; God has put out judgment many times. However, we are talking about the Day of Judgment. Part of Paul's message, preached on Mars Hill in Athens, Greece, is found in Acts 17:31. It says, "Because he hath appointed *a day* [a specific day; *The Emphatic Greek Diaglott* says 'established a day'], in the which he will [future tense] judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained." The phrase "hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge" indicates something on the horizon, in the future; it is not something in the present tense.

If the Judgment occurred immediately after a man died, there would be a judgment every day because people die every day. However, the Bible does not speak of the Judgment in that manner; it speaks of the "day." We read in Romans 2:5, "But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against *the* day [singular and specific] of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God." Verse 16 states, "In *the* day [singular and specific] when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ." Paul said in 2 Timothy 4:8, "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that *day*: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." Second Peter 3:7 states, "But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against *the day* of judgment and perdition of ungodly men." The

Day of Judgment will take place when Christ appears; it is a specific day.

Some people say there is no Day of Judgment and no Judgment to come. They think the only judgment we receive is now during time through the Gospel. Peter said in the first century, it is time "that judgment must begin at the house of God" (1 Peter 4:17). The Lord does send judgment through His Word because we are in a time of preliminary judgment, but that does not negate the fact that there is coming "the day" of Judgment: a specific day. It is on the horizon. First John 4:17 tells us, "Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day [singular] of judgment." Obviously, these sacred writers believed it was a "day" yet coming. Jude 6 reads, "And the angels [*aggelos,* which means 'a messenger'; this is a picture of a fallen ministry] which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation [the 'habitation' they left is the true church; Ephesians 2:22], he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day [singular]." Every one of these verses talks about a "day" in the singular and uses the exclusive article "the."

Jesus spoke of it as a singular "day" in Matthew 11:24, saying, "But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in *the day* of judgment, than for thee." In Matthew 12:36, He said, "But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in *the day* of judgment." It is clearly a specific, exclusive day that yet lies in the future, beyond time.

Jesus brought up those who were already in the eternal realm. Matthew 12:41 reads, "The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment." The referenced event in Nineveh occurred in approximately 862 B.C. Those people had been dead for almost nine hundred years when Christ said they would "rise in judgment." This singular event is coming, and those who have already passed are going to come to that Judgment. Verses 41-42 continue: "The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here. The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here." The Queen of Sheba came to Solomon in approximately 992 B.C. At that point in time, she had been dead for almost a thousand years. She was in eternity, but Jesus said when time reels into eternity and the Judgment Day takes place, she will "rise up in the judgment," letting us know the Judgment Day is a specific day, and it is a day beyond time. The Judgment will take place in eternity when the last day occurs. It is the last day because after that, time will be no more.

(3) The Third Feature: Christ will administer the Judgment. He will rise

off the mercy seat and take a place on the Judgment Seat. In John 5:22, Jesus said, "For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son." Acts 10:37-38 reads, "That word, I say, ye know, which was published throughout all Judaea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached; How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him." We are talking about "Jesus Christ" (verse 36), "Jesus of Nazareth" (verse 38).

Verse 42 tells us, "And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead." Someone may ask, "Do you mean the meek and lowly Galilean?" No, I mean the one in Revelation 1:14-16 whose "eyes were as a flame of fire," whose "feet [are] like unto fine brass," and who has "a sharp twoedged sword" coming "out of his mouth." Jesus is going to mete out judgment. Romans 2:16 states, "In the day [singular] when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ." Also, we read in 2 Timothy 4:1, "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick [alive] and dead at his appearing." Christ will be the Judge on that fateful day.

(4) The Fourth Feature: all mankind will be judged—saved or unsaved. An erroneous teaching is, if you are saved, you will not go to the Judgment. However, Romans 14:10 tells us, "But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we [Paul included himself] shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ." He was writing, "To all that be in Rome ... called to be saints" (Romans 1:7). Salvation does not exempt us from the Judgment. Too many people have a false conception of the purpose of the Judgment. It is not to determine man's state nor eternal destiny. It is to determine the details and the degrees.

Romans 14:11-12 reads: "For it is written [quoting Isaiah 45:23], As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself." Again, Paul used the plural pronoun "us." He did not say every one of *you*, but "every one of *us*," which included himself. Our text in 2 Corinthians 5:10 states, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ." Who was the "we" to whom Paul was writing? In the introductory verse of this Epistle (2 Corinthians 1:1), we read, "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, unto the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints which are in all Achaia." Achaia was a province, what we might refer to as a state. The "we" he was writing to was all—himself, Timothy, the Church of God congregation, and all the saints out there in the province.

Some things are inescapable and unalterable. Paul wrote, "We must *all* appear before the judgment seat of Christ." Hebrews 9:27 says, "It is appointed unto men once to die [death is inescapable], but after this the judgment [the Judgment is also inescapable]." This indicates all who die will experience the Judgment. It is a certainty; it is universal for all humanity. Some may escape death if they "are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord" (1 Thessalonians 4:15), but no one escapes the Judgment. Thus, we must ever live with eternity in view, realizing we are Judgment bound just as fast as the wheels of time will take us.

I have had the experience of being in a courtroom a number of times. I have been involved in lawsuits as the plaintiff, as a witness for the defense, and serving on juries. There is a soberness and somberness in the courtroom when all rise and the judge comes in dressed in a black robe and takes his seat on the bench. Even if you are not the one on trial, there is a solemnity in that room. Think about the day when "we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ." Time will be over; the wheels of time have stopped. That will be the last day. After the scene at the Judgment, there will be never-ending eternity. I cannot begin to paint the solemnity and sobriety of that terrible day, even for those who are spiritually where they should be. In one lawsuit, I was the plaintiff and served as my own counsel, which you may do. While sitting at the plaintiff's table, looking up at the judge, a bit of trepidation, a real seriousness came in. On that day, we must all appear before the One Abraham called "the judge of all."

We must recognize the importance of always living with the Judgment in view. Everyone will "give account of himself to God" (Romans 14:12). Although we do not know the intricacies and specifics of how that will occur, giving an "account" indicates certain deeds will be brought up, and we will have to give an account. My understanding of giving an account is when someone asks you, "Why did you do that; why did you participate in that?" they are asking, "Can you explain this activity?" God has all the facts and all the records; there are no errors in those records. Sometimes, in earthly legal trials, there are errors and sometimes unfairness takes place because the judge is human and fallible. However, a day is coming when we will all stand before the Judge who knows all, sees all, and who makes no mistakes. No one will escape the Judgment. We must all appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ.

(5) The Fifth Principle: God is a God of justice. Justice demands a Judgment. God has a moral nature from which moral law emanates. As a consequence of that law, justice and judgment must be meted out, or it would not be just. There must be some type of retribution or reward. Psalm 22:28 reads,

"For the kingdom is the LORD'S: and he is the governor among the nations." God is the moral governor of the universe. Before any Mosaic Law was ever established or any Levitical law was given, God had a moral law in place. It *preceded* the Mosaic Law, was *incorporated* into the Mosaic Law, and has *succeeded* the Mosaic Law because it is based on the moral principle of right and wrong. That does not change. Moral Law is timeless and all-inclusive for all ages. The word *moral*, as used in this context, means "that which is right or just."

Isaiah 45:21 says, "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." He is a *just* God, the God of *justice*; *just* and *justice* work together. In Genesis 18:19, the Lord spoke to the two angels about Abraham before sending them to Sodom. He said, "For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment." The way of the Lord is "to do justice and judgment." Psalm 89:14 reads, "Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne." To be just and to have justice requires judgment. If there is no judgment—no consequence, no retribution, no reward—then it is not truly just; thus, it is not justice.

In the Patriarchal Era, moral law governed man. After Noah and his family came off the ark, society needed to be reestablished. Genesis 9:6 states, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." That is a moral law, and that moral law has never changed. God instituted capital punishment, and He has never repealed it. We read in Proverbs 26:27, "Whoso diggeth a pit shall fall therein: and he that rolleth a stone, it will return upon him." Both Genesis 9:6 and Proverbs 26:27 say the same thing Paul wrote in Galatians 6:7, which reads, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

There is a Judgment because God is just and a God of justice. Proverbs 16:11 says, "A just weight and balance are the LORD'S: all the weights of the bag are his work." The old balances required the use of weights; sometimes, additional weights needed to be added to balance them. God puts the weights on. The weights are in His bag. He knows how to give a just balance.

(6) THE SIXTH TRUTH: the Judgment determines the *degree* of reward or retribution. There are many misconceptions concerning this principle. The Judgment does not determine man's spiritual state, nor his fate or destiny. When Christ comes on that "last day" (John 6:40), He is coming "with all his saints" (1 Thessalonians 3:13). At this point, the Judgment has not occurred; however, they have already been determined as "saints." Judgment takes place *after* the resurrection. Christ is coming back in His Second Advent, bringing the souls

of the saints with Him, and reuniting the souls with the bodies. Jude 14 tells the same truth, stating, "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints."

The Apostle Paul said in Philippians 1:23, "For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better." Verse 21 reads, "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." Paul readily acknowledged that when he died, he was going to be with Christ immediately succeeding his death, prior to the Judgment. Second Corinthians 5:8 says, "We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord." As soon as you are "absent from the body," if you are saved, you are "present with the Lord." That occurs prior to the Judgment, and whether you will be "present with the Lord" has already been determined by the manner in which you have lived and the experience you have gained.

When Jesus allowed a glimpse into eternity, Luke 16:22 tells us, "And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom." The minute the beggar died, he was carried into Abraham's bosom (Paradise), prior to the Judgment. It continues, saying, "The rich man also died, and was buried." Verse 23 explains, "And in hell he [the rich man] lift up his eyes." Again, this was prior to the Judgment. Consider what Jesus told the repentant thief in Luke 23:43. He said, "To day shalt thou be with me in paradise." Jesus did not say "after the Judgment," but He said "To day!"

If the Judgment does not determine man's spiritual state, what does it determine? What is it measuring? Our text in Ecclesiastes 12:13 states, "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter [let us sum up everything about life and see what really matters]: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man." Verse 14 tells us why, stating, "For God shall bring every *work* into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." The Judgment will be based on our works, or deeds. Ecclesiastes 11:9 says, "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment." Again, the Judgment is going to determine the degree of reward or retribution based on your "walk," your works, or your deeds.

Jesus expanded on this in Matthew 16:27, saying, "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works." He elaborated a little more in Matthew 25:31-36, which reads: "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a

shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.

"Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink. I was a stranger, and yet took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me." Nothing is said here about being saved or sanctified; this is all about works. We are saved by grace through faith, "not of works, lest any man should boast" (Ephesians 2:9). Works do not save us, but if we are saved, we will work.

Matthew 25:37-45 tells us: "Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Insomuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me."

Judgment does not occur as soon as we die because our works follow us. A true assessment or measurement of our works cannot be given until our influence stops, when time ceases. We read in Romans 2:3-6: "And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God? Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; Who will render to every man according to his deeds."

Second Corinthians 5:10 says, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath *done*, whether it be good or bad." The Judgment will be based on "things done in his body." Jesus said it is "not every one that *saith* unto me, Lord, Lord ... but he that *doeth* the will of my Father" (Matthew 7:21). We read

in Colossians 3:23-25: "Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ. But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons." The words "whatsoever ye do" determine "the reward." Those who "doeth wrong" will "receive" accordingly. God is "a just God" (Isaiah 45:21) and "no respecter of persons" (Acts 10:34).

In Revelation 22:12, Jesus said, "And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be." The purpose of the Judgment is to reward every man according to his "work." Matthew 16:27 reads, "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works." The Judgment will be different for every individual because every individual's works, or deeds, are different.

When death seizes an individual, based on the state of his soul—saved or lost—his destination is already predetermined. When the rich man and Lazarus died, there was no Final Judgment at that time. As soon as their eyes closed in death, one was in Paradise, and the other one was in Hades. Nevertheless, there will come a Judgment Day, and they will both be standing there. The Judgment not only looks at the works—the deeds, the actions—but also, based on that, there will be degrees of reward or retribution. Jesus said in Matthew 23:14, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation." That lets us know there will be a "greater damnation" for some.

We read in Luke 12:45-48: "But and if that servant say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming [talking about a time preceding the Second Advent]; and shall begin to beat the menservants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken; The lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers. And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes."

The descriptions "*many* stripes" and "*few* stripes" point to differences in degrees of punishment. Jesus made it clear what determines "many" or "few." The servant who knew his Lord's will and did not do it received "many stripes," but the man who knew not (who did not have the knowledge the other man had) received "few stripes." Hebrews 10:28-29 says, "He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment,

suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God." The words "sorer punishment" reveal a punishment that is more sore for some people.

There are degrees of reward as well. Second Corinthians 9:6 states, "But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully." Although in this context, the Apostle Paul was talking about offerings and giving, he brought up a moral principle to back up *why* we should freely give—we will reap what we sow. There is a distinction, a difference. We read in 1 Timothy 6:17-19, "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come ['a good foundation for the future'; *The Emphatic Greek Diaglott*], that they may lay hold on eternal life." What future is after life? Eternity.

Consider Jesus' words in the Sermon on the Mount. Matthew 6:20 states, "Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven." This reveals not everybody lays up the same amount. Our treasure depends on how much we lay up. Consider a young man who goes to work when he is fifteen. The minute he starts drawing a paycheck, he immediately pays himself first by putting a portion of every paycheck into a retirement savings account. Social Security will also be taken out of that paycheck. Compare that with another man who never invested any money. When both men reach retirement age, they will receive Social Security. However, the man who put money into the retirement account will have more than the man who only has a Social Security check. The reason is, he laid up for himself.

Matthew 6:20 continues, "But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal." A lot of the degree of rewards will be determined by how much you and I have laid up. Many people believe everyone who goes to Heaven will receive the same reward, but that is not just. I know people who were saved at the age of eight or nine and who are now in their eighties. They have worked for God all those years. Do you think the thief on the cross who was saved a few minutes before his last breath is going to receive the same reward as them? While they will both make it through the portals of Glory, the reward will not be the same.

Our works do not operate only during time, or during our lifetime. This is why the Judgment does not occur at death. Revelation 14:13 states, "And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, 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." Influence and works live on. Thus, there cannot be an accurate measure until time ceases.

Let us look at degrees and one factor that determines them. Jesus said to Pilate in John 19:11, "Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the *greater sin*." Jesus said there can be "*greater sin*." He gave insight into one major aspect that determines the degree of sin in John 9:41, which reads, "Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth." What we see (understand) determines what we are responsible for and what the degree of reward or punishment will be.

Matthew 11:20-24 reads: "Then began he ['Jesus'; verse 7] to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not: Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable [there must be more tolerable and less tolerable things in the Day of Judgment] for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you. And thou, Capernaum [Jesus' center of operation; Matthew 4:13], which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee." Jesus was saying, light and opportunity make the distinction. Those who had greater light, greater opportunity, will receive greater judgment, greater damnation.

The same truth is found in Luke 10:10-15, which reads: "But into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you not, go your ways out into the streets of the same, and say, Even the very dust of your city, which cleaveth on us, we do wipe off against you: notwithstanding be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you. But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable in that day for Sodom, than for that city. Woe unto thee Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon, which have been done in you, they had a great while ago repented, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. But it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment, than for you. And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shalt be thrust down to hell." Capernaum had greater light and opportunity than Sodom ever had. Therefore, the people of Capernaum will receive greater damnation.

(7) The Seventh-and-Final Truth: the criteria for the Judgment is

based on the spiritual enlightenment of the individual. Some might say, "If that is the case, then I am better to just be ignorant." Second Peter 3:5 tells of those who "willingly are ignorant of," speaking of the Antediluvians, and it did not save them. Failing to go and hear Noah preach did not save them from the Flood. You cannot be "willingly ... ignorant." People who miss a service and miss hearing the pastor preach on a certain topic, and then say, "I was not there; so, I am not accountable," are as accountable as if they were there. If you could have been in the worship service but you missed it, if you could have heard and known the preached truth but did not, you are "willingly ... ignorant." God will hold you accountable for what you could have known.

According to John 12:48, the overall criteria for the Judgment is, "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day." Not every age has had the same measure of understanding of the Word, even in this New Testament dispensation. It started out in Revelation with a vision—"A book written within and on the backside, sealed" (Revelation 5:1). Understanding was basic, without the understanding of the Gospel Day we have today. Revelation 5:5 tells us, "The Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof." Understanding has been progressive over the centuries.

People who lived prior to the New Testament dispensation, who were under the lesser light, are not held to the standard of greater New Testament light that we enjoy today. This is one reason Revelation 20:12 says, "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books [plural] were opened." Many times, this is thought to be the books of the Bible, and that is a portion, but that verse continues, "And another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works." The Judgment is based on what is "written in the books, according to their *works*." What "books" is this speaking about?

There is a spiritual and symbolic connotation to Revelation 20:11-14. (See *The Book of Revelation Explained, Volume 6,* for more information.) Most prophecies have a dual application; so it does here. These books are not solely referring to the sixty-six Books of the Bible, or even merely the Old Testament and the New Testament in the strictest sense. These are the Books of the Ages that governed the various times in which man lived. There are at least four. The first book was the Age of the Moral Law. That was the age when the patriarchs lived, a time without written Scriptures, a Bible, or the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. They were governed by the law of conscience. Because light (understanding) was meager, they did things we cannot do and remain saved today.

After God put out judgment and destroyed the entire world except for those eight souls, one of the first things Noah did after leaving the ark was get drunk (Genesis 9:21). God's people cannot do that and be clear with God today. Noah did not live in our day; he did not have the light, the understanding, the opportunity, the spiritual education of our day. That is why it did not impact his spiritual state. Look at Abraham. In Genesis, we find he lied twice, or at the very least, he was deceitful and deceptive. He told two different kings on two different occasions that Sarah was his sister, omitting the fact that she was his wife (Genesis 12:13; 20:2-5). Yet, this did not affect Abraham's stand with God. He had lesser light, lesser understanding, and lesser spiritual enlightenment.

The second book is the Age of the Mosaic Law, when God gave His Word to be written down. Man became more accountable. Yet, even under the Levitical law, David had at least eight wives and ten concubines (2 Samuel 5:13; 15:16; 1 Chronicles 3:1-9). Acts 13:22 says he was "a man after mine [God's] own heart." Again, he had lesser light and understanding. Too often, we look back and judge with the light of our day, but we must remember, God is "a just God." He judges with a true measure, a true and just weight, based on what was available and what they did with what was available to them in their day. The Judgment is based on opportunity and spiritual education.

The third book is the Age of the Law and the Prophets. When the prophets came on the scene, greater responsibility was produced, and greater enlightenment was given. The fourth book is the Age of the Law of Christ. A just God can only fairly judge a man based on what was available to him in his age. Fair measure can only be meted out based on opportunity and education. This is why Noah's spiritual state was not impacted by his drunken action. Abraham deceived two kings about his wife, but it did not change his spiritual stance. The criteria for Judgment and what determines whether it is many or few stripes is the availability of light and understanding, opportunity afforded, and the action taken in response to it.

We have looked at seven principles that pertain to the Final Judgment.

(1) There has been an age-old expectation of judgment in every age.
(2) The Judgment is repeatedly referred to as a specific day.
(3) Christ administers the Judgment.
(4) All mankind will be judged.
(5) God is a God of justness and justice.
(6) The judgment determines the degree of reward or retribution.
(7) The criteria for Judgment is based on spiritual enlightenment and availability to the individual.

I trust we can see the truth on this very vital subject and make certain we prepare for this event. Judgment is on the horizon, and "we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ" to give an account of "the things done in [this] body" (2 Corinthians 5:10). Therefore, we should always live with the Judgment in mind, with eternity in view, and make every decision with Judgment Day honesty.

CHAPTER 10

THE FINAL DISPATCH OF THE LOST—HELL (GEHENNA)

Matthew 10:28 And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

Matthew 23:14 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation.

15 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.

33 Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?

These two Scripture texts convey very serious and sobering truths. One truth that unites these texts is the expression "hell." In the previous chapter, we dealt with the thought of the Final Judgment. There will be a resurrection, and after that resurrection will be the Final Judgment. In this particular study, we will focus on what follows the Judgment and the ultimate dispatchment and eternal destiny of those who are lost. Concerning the lost, Jesus proclaimed in Matthew 25:46, "These shall go away into everlasting punishment." Conversely, He let us know, "But the righteous into life eternal." These are the two distinct destinies. Although a sad and sobering truth, it is Biblical. Sadly, there will be many who receive "everlasting punishment," many more than those who enter "into life eternal."

Jesus foretold of the final destiny in Matthew 7:13-14, saying, "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." That does not mean "few" will find the gate because Titus 2:11 tells us, "The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men." It is "few" who "enter" through the gate *and* enjoy "life." Sadly, the hordes of humanity are those who will comprise the "many" who go "to destruction." Therefore, we need to understand exactly what transpires.

The Necessity of Hell

Speaking through the prophet in Isaiah 57:15, God styled Himself as "whose name is Holy," and He continued, "I dwell in the high and holy place." Heaven is a holy place. It never has been and never will be defiled with sin. There is not an ounce of truth in the false teachings touted by religious advocates that the devil was once an angel in Heaven who rebelled, caused a war in Heaven, and was kicked out then to become the devil! John 8:44 says he was "a liar" and "a murderer from *the beginning*"; he has always been a devil. Matthew 4:3 refers to him as "the tempter." If the devil is "the tempter," then who tempted him if he was once an angel in Glory? The truth is, the devil never was and never will be an angel in Heaven. The songwriters said: "*Heaven is a holy place ... Sin can never enter there ... It will stop you at the door, Bar you out forevermore, Sin can never enter there*." Heaven is a holy place; God cannot and will not fellowship sin. It is totally reprehensible and incompatible with His nature.

In the Genesis account, God created and walked with man in the garden in the cool of the day (Genesis 3:8). God and man enjoyed great fellowship, but Adam's sin broke that fellowship. Genesis 3:9 reads, "And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?" God knew exactly where Adam was. He posed the question to draw Adam out to confession, so that Adam would realize his position. Genesis 3:10-11 says: "And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself. And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?" God knew the answer to that question as well. Again, He was drawing Adam out. The consequences were that Adam was expelled from the garden, from the presence of God. God will not fellowship with sin.

Likewise, God could not fellowship sin when Jesus became sin for the world. Speaking of Christ in 2 Corinthians 5:21, we read, "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." Christ was made "to be sin for us," and when that occurred, Jesus cried in Matthew 27:46, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Because a holy God will not fellowship sin, He had to turn His back on His own Son.

Jesus explicitly warned the first century Jews (as well as us by extension through its incorporation in the sacred canon) in John 8:21, "I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come." It does not matter if hundreds of preachers say you can live in sin and still go to

God's Heaven—you cannot do it. Jesus clearly said if you "die in your sins," where He is, "ye cannot come." Where was Jesus going when He said that? John 16:28 states, "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father." According to the formula for prayer given by Jesus in Matthew 6:9, the Father is "in heaven."

We must understand God is a holy, just God. Isaiah 45:21-22 says: "There is no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside me. Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else." Micah, speaking of this "just God," said in Micah 7:18, "Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy." God delights in mercy and is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9). However, sadly, all will not come to repentance. Many people will continue on the "broad" way until they reach the ultimate end of "destruction" (Matthew 7:13).

Although merciful, a "just God" must deal in justice; it is inherent to His nature. We are talking about the necessity of the terrible place called "hell." Psalm 89:14 says, "Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne." Justice demands that choices have consequences and that rebellion and rejection receive retribution. If there are no consequences, then it is truly not justice. Some say a loving God would not send a person to Hell. In the truest sense, He does not. He merely dispatches man to where he has chosen. Ezekiel 33:11 says, "Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die?" Man is the master of his own destiny. He is a creature of choice, a free moral agent with the choice to turn. Ezekiel 33:11 pleads, "Turn ye, turn ye."

Every Man Chooses His Own Destiny

In the closing days of Moses' life, old Israel was ready to go into Canaan. Moses gave the Law to the first generation in Exodus and Leviticus, but their "carcases" had died "in the wilderness" (Numbers 14:33). Now a new generation was ready to go into the Promised Land. At the close of his writings, Moses said in Deuteronomy 30:19, "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live." Moses was saying, in so many words, "You make the choice between life and death, between blessing and cursing." It is an individual choice.

When Joshua was coming to the end of his earthly sojourn, he issued much the same words, stating, "If it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve" (Joshua 24:15). It is man's choice. We only get to determine whom we serve, and whomever we choose to serve determines how we live. Man can choose life, or he can choose death. Titus 2:11 says, "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men." Somewhere along life's way, the grace of God brings all individuals to a crossroad, to a place where they are presented with an opportunity to choose salvation. If they make the wrong choice, there will be consequences. The ultimate dispatch of man's soul results from man's choice, and justice demands that the consequence of choice be administered—thus the necessity for Hell.

On that Judgment Day, after Paradise and Hades are emptied of the souls therein, "The dead in Christ shall rise first [before 'we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord'; verse 15]" (1 Thessalonians 4:16). As they come out of the graves, they will be changed from mortal to immortal, from corruptible to incorruptible (1 Corinthians 15:54). The soul and body will be united, and then all will be ushered to the Judgment scene, and the Judgment will take place. After the Judgment, then the final dispatch of the lost will be ready to occur.

Revelation 20:13-15 says: "The sea gave up the dead which were in it [on the Resurrection Day, the bodies—regardless of whether they have been dissolved, buried at sea, or cremated—will ALL come forth as bodies]; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." What does the phrase "death and hell" mean? Certainly, there is a spiritual aspect, but this is one of those realities that has a duality. (See *Revelation Explained, Volume 6*, pages 60-61, for more explanation.) There is a literal aspect, which is that to close our eyes in "death" speaks to the physical portion of man, which in time goes to the grave. The souls of those in an unsaved state go to Hades (the Greek word for "hell" in this verse), that temporary abode of the lost while time yet stands (which will be emptied on Resurrection Day). Judgment cannot occur until time stops. When time is no more, the Judgment Day occurs. After that, there will be a final dispatch.

Many Realities Have Dual Aspects

Revelation 20:15 says, "Cast into the lake of fire." The lake of fire has a dual aspect. Revelation 20:10 says, "And the devil [in this context, 'the devil' is

speaking of 'the dragon, that old serpent' (verse 2), which is paganism] that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever." There is no "day and night" in eternity. Thus, this is talking about a torment that occurs during time. There is an aspect of "the lake of fire" that occurs during time. There is also a spiritual, eternal aspect to it as well. Revelation 20:15 tells us, "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."

The dual aspect is not unique to "the lake of fire." The Kingdom of God also has a dual aspect. Part of the kingdom is here in time (Luke 16:16; Romans 14:17), but Peter also talked about "the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 1:11). When Paul faced martyrdom and death, he said in 2 Timothy 4:18, "And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom." Therefore, there is a heavenly aspect of that same kingdom we enjoy here in time. Ephesians 3:14-15 reads, "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named." The "whole family" has two parts—a literal part in time on earth and an eternal one in Heaven.

Revelation 2:7 reads, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God." There is a "paradise of God" that we enjoy here when we are overcomers and partake "of the tree of life." So the kingdom, the family, Paradise, and the lake of fire all span two realms, but in this lesson, we are dealing with the eternal aspect. (This is covered more thoroughly in *The Revelation Explained, Volume 6*, pages 63-71.)

Our text (Matthew 10:28) tells us, "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." We are dealing with the final dispatch. If you die while time stands, your body goes to the grave and your soul goes to either Paradise or Hades; the body and soul are separated. When the resurrection occurs, they will be joined. The body will come out of the grave (it will be a glorified body), the soul will come out of Hades or Paradise, and they will be reunited.

Our Scripture texts talk about what occurs *after* the resurrection and *after* the Judgment when the body and soul are reunited. All three synoptic Gospel writers (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) speak of the body being in "hell." Jesus said in Matthew 5:29-30: "And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy

members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell." It talks about the "whole body" being "cast into Hell," which is *after* the resurrection and *after* the Judgment.

While time yet stands and people are in Hades, the body is in the grave. In Matthew 5:29-30, Jesus said the "whole body should be cast," just like Revelation 20:15 says—"cast into the lake of fire." Both are talking about after time, after the resurrection and after the Judgment. The word translated as *Hell* in these Scriptures is not Hades (the temporary abode of the lost), but *Gehenna* (a totally different Greek word because it is a totally different place).

Mark 9:43-48 reads: "If thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched. Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."

Jesus emphasized several truths. He brought up "two hands" (verse 43); "two feet" (verse 45); and "two eyes" (verse 47). He was not advocating harming or maiming our bodies (1 Corinthians 3:17), but He was teaching that anything that hinders your soul must be cut off. You must get rid of it. He repeatedly spoke about "into hell [Gehenna]," into the fire that never shall be quenched. This is speaking of a time after the resurrection and the Judgment, a time when the body will have been reunited with the soul. Before this, while time is still standing, the body goes to the grave, and the soul goes to either Paradise or Hades. While time is still standing, there is not yet anyone to send into that final hell, which in the Greek is the word *Gehenna*.

The Body Is the Instrument of the Soul

Luke 12:4-5 tells us: "Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him." Verse 5 says "hath killed," and verse 4 tells us what is killed—"the body." This lets us know He was speaking of *after* the resurrection. Each case speaks of the body being in the final Hell. Someone may ask, "Why will we need a resurrected body to go to hell?" Second Corinthians 5:10 states, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive

the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." The body is the instrument of the soul. Whatever is the state of the soul is reflected in the deeds of the body, and it is going to receive a reward or retribution.

Many bodies, lying in the graves for centuries, have turned to dust, but on that day, each will come out in the form of a glorified body—"fashioned like unto his glorious body" (Philippians 3:21). They will then be taken to the Judgment Bar to be judged for the deeds done in the body. The body with the soul will receive reward or retribution because the body is the instrument of the soul.

In every verse we have cited in this secion in the *King James Version* that says "hell," the Greek word is *Gehenna,* not *Hades*. The word *Gehenna* is found twelve times in the New Testament, eleven of which are in the Synoptic Gospels and were used by Christ. What other characteristics are described in our companion text? Matthew 23:33 says, "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell [*Gehenna*]?" *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon* gives understanding concerning the thought of damnation. He gives us the word *krisis,* which means "the sentence of condemnation, damnatory judgment, condemnation and punishment." Gehenna is a place of punishment. Choices have consequences. Rebellion and rejection require retribution.

What Form of Punishment Is Given?

Matthew 25:46 says, "These shall go away into everlasting punishment." Jesus repeated this for emphasis in Mark, Chapter 9:

- "fire that never shall be quenched" (verse 43)
- "fire is not quenched" (verse 44)
- "fire that never shall be quenched" (verse 45)
- "fire is not quenched" (verse 46)
- "cast into hell fire" (verse 47)
- "fire is not quenched" (verse 48)

There are no doors or escape hatches in hell. The duration is eternal. Punishment is eternal. What form does this punishment take? Second Thessalonians 1:6-10 states, "Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; 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."

Verse 8 speaks of "flaming fire" and "taking vengeance," and verse 9 describes those "who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord." We see three things of which this punishment will consist. The first thing is that there will be everlasting separation from the presence of the Lord. This is vast in its scope. First John 1:5 says, "God is light," but *Gehenna* is darkness. Matthew 8:12 reads, "But the children of the kingdom [those of the old literal kingdom who 'received him not'; John 1:11] shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Matthew 22:13 says, "Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer *darkness*, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Matthew 25:30 states, "Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer *darkness*: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Gnashing of teeth does not mean that someone is going to bite someone. It means they are gritting and straining; they cannot bear it. "Outer darkness" is a place with no presence of the Lord; it is complete, chilling darkness. What a terrible, terrible fate!

First John 4:8 says, "God is love." *Gehenna* is a place devoid of all love. There will be no babies, no small children, no love at all there. It will be full of weeping, wailing, gnashing, and suffering. It is a place "where the worm dieth not" (Mark 9:44, 46, 48). Job and Psalms both tell you man is that "worm" (Job 25:6; Psalm 22:6). When that rich man tried to appeal to Father Abraham, he heard two words that haunt him throughout eternity: "Son, remember" (Luke 16:25). The gnawing memory will be like a worm gnawing at you.

If you stood in the services under conviction, but you refused, in eternity, you will see yourself standing there, while the minister was pleading and you were resisting. You will be pulling at your hair, saying: "Oh, Lord, why did I do that? Why didn't I go? Why didn't I get saved?" But it will be too late. The "worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." That is the punishment. The rich man in Hades said, "I am tormented in this flame" (Luke 16:24). He wanted just the tip of Lazarus' finger dipped in water to cool his tongue, but his request was denied (Luke 16:24-26). It is beyond description. It is beyond full comprehension, but it is the fate of the lost.

The second thing this punishment consists of is that it will be "everlasting destruction" (2 Thessalonians 1:9). Some may ask, "If something has destruction, how can it be eternal?" The word in the Greek for *destruction* means "irrevocable ruin." It shows that a man had ample opportunity, but he made choices that became irrevocable when death seized him, and it was "ruin." While in "irrevocable ruin," your mind and memory will gnaw with the remembrance of

what could have been ("Son, remember"; Luke 16:25). I cannot begin to present it in all its horror. My vocabulary and my mental comprehension cannot take in the complete and absolute horror. Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 5:11, "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men." It is a "terror" to think of Hell, of *Gehenna*, of everlasting punishment.

In Mark 9:44, 46, and 48, Jesus said, "Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." The memory of man will gnaw like a worm with tormenting remembrance through the ceaseless ages of eternity. While we cannot fully understand all about it, we should know enough to understand that we do not want to go. It is our choice. No one has to go. It is the consequence of choice.

The third thing this punishment consists of is found in 2 Thessalonians 1:8, which reads, "In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." This is the "everlasting fire" Jesus made expressly clear five times in Mark 9:43-46, and 48. It is speaking of the fire of Hell (Gehenna) that never shall be quenched. People ask, "How can a body be in fire, yet never be consumed?" It is the same way as when Moses saw the burning bush that was never consumed (Exodus 3:2). That is incomprehensible to us, but "with God all things are possible" (Matthew 19:26).

We read in Isaiah 66:24, "And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcases of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh." Jesus certainly expanded on that in Mark, Chapter 9, when He said, "The fire is not quenched." Clearly, besides the spiritual and mental torment, there will be excruciating physical torment of the body. Jesus talked about hands (verse 43), feet (verse 45), and eyes (verse 47). In Luke 16:24, the rich man cried, "I am tormented in this flame," and those were just the flames of Hades not of Gehenna. Jude 7 tells us, "Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering [present tense verb] the vengeance of eternal fire." They are still suffering today from the same fire that fell from Heaven back in the Genesis account, and they will suffer with it throughout the ceaseless ages of eternity.

There Are Degrees of Punishment

This is a vast subject, much more than we can exhaust, but I trust we are gaining an insight into the terrible, eternal destiny of the lost. Jesus said in Matthew 23:14, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive

the *greater* damnation." When we consider the Judgment, there are degrees of punishment. Hebrews 10:28-29 states, "He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much *sorer* punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?"

Luke 12:47-48 says: "And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with *many* stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with *few* stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more." This teaches that the Judgment determines the degree and the dispatch before the administration of this terrible punishment.

Again, it is no wonder the Apostle Paul exclaimed in 2 Corinthians 5:11, "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men." We do not want to see anyone go to that awful place. We must do, as penned in Ezekiel 9:4, "sigh" and "cry" over the sad state of the souls of men and women who are going to fall into this terrible destiny if they do not turn. The message is, "Turn ye, turn ye ... for why will ye die?" (Ezekiel 33:11). Repentance is a change of direction; a turn.

The positive aspect is, no one needs to suffer such a destiny. That is why we must "persuade men." Fanny Crosby wrote, "*Rescue the perishing, Care for the dying, Snatch them in pity from sin and the grave; Weep o'er the erring one, Lift up the fallen, Tell them of Jesus the mighty to save*." False religion, Babylon, has fallen to such a state that Hell is never preached about. It is not held up before the minds of men by the religious advocates of this day, but it is at the end of a Christless life. The rich man was in Hades, not even the final dispatch, and he said, in so many words, "Send Lazarus to my five brethren, that they not come to this place" (Luke 16:27-28). Everyone in Hell does not want any of their family to come there, but the only way to avoid it is by obeying the Gospel of God now. Hell is a terrible destiny. The message is "repent" or "perish" (Luke 13:3, 5), but the sad fact is many are going every day into an irrevocable destiny. Our prayer is, if that is your impending destiny, "turn ye, turn ye ... for why will ye die?" (Ezekiel 33:11). You need not do so, dear heart, but the choice is yours.

CHAPTER 11

THE FINAL DISPATCH OF THE SAVED – HEAVEN

2 Corinthians 5:1 For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

1 Peter 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

4 To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you,

5 Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

In this final chapter of our study, we will consider the final destiny of those who are saved. We want to look at both the negative and positive aspects. The negative aspects are the erroneous positions held and the teachings being propagated that are not scripturally sound. Second Corinthians 5:1 says, "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved ...." We previously found when man passes away while time is standing, the body goes to the grave and dissolves (Ecclesiastes 12:7). A decomposition process takes place when the body returns to the earth. However, that is not the end. There will be a resurrection day when a new body will come forth.

When Paul spoke about "this tabernacle" (2 Corinthians 5:1), he was talking about our physical form. The same expression was used by the Apostle Peter. In 2 Peter 1:13-15, he said: "Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance; Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me. Moreover I will endeavour that ye may be able after my decease ...." Peter knew he would have a physical death. The "tabernacle" is the body in which we live in this current world and in which the presence of Christ (and other members of the Godhead) abide (John 14:16-17, 23). Second Corinthians 5:4 explains it further, stating, "For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life." This earthly tabernacle is our mortality, the mortal portion of man. We are housed in what is referred to as "earthen vessels" (2 Corinthians 4:7). Second Corinthians 5:1 reads, "We know that if our earthly house of this

tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens [several renderings say 'in heaven']."

Philippians 3:21 defines it a little more clearly, stating, "Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body." On that day of resurrection, our vile, corruptible body will be changed to incorruptible; our mortal will be changed to immortal. First Peter 1:4 tells us, "To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you." The ultimate destiny of God's people, those who are saved, is Heaven. When we look at the word "heaven" in 2 Corinthians 5:1 and 1 Peter 1:4, the Greek word *ouranos* is the same. The common truth that unites both texts is the thought of Heaven.

Heaven is the ultimate destiny for saved mankind, and Heaven is to where our Lord Jesus ascended. In Acts 1:11, the angel said, "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." Jesus' desire is that we share that same destiny. He said in John 14:3, "I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." (Certainly, there is a spiritual aspect to these words, but it applies physically as well.)

When Christ comes back, 1 Thessalonians 4:16 says, "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven." When this occurs, 1 Corinthians 15:52-53 tells us: "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality." On that day, those who are dead will come forth ("raised incorruptible"), and those who are alive will be "changed." The end result is that each will go from "corruptible" to "incorruptible," from "mortal" to "immortal." There will be a change, and then man will be ushered to the Judgment scene. After the Judgment, all will be dispatched to their final destinies—the lost to Gehenna and the truly saved to the bliss of Heaven.

Some Misconceptions Concerning Heaven

As we consider Heaven, a sad commentary on the state of religion causes the necessity of dispelling some falsities and misconceptions. We must take what God's Word says, not the concoctions and inventions of men. A notable fact is that in the King James Version, the word "heaven" is mentioned 327 times in the Old Testament and 255 times in the New Testament. Conversely, the word "hell" is mentioned 31 times in the Old Testament and 23 in the New

Testament. Not all are speaking of man's eternal destiny (whether it be of the saved or the lost). Some have said that the Bible talks more about Hell than Heaven, but that is not so. It is more accurate to say Jesus spoke more about Hell than Heaven, but not the Scriptures as a whole.

Some of the falsities that need to be dispelled are the thoughts of mansions, streets of gold, harps, crowns, and white robes as pertaining to Heaven. None of the Scriptures give any physical description of Heaven. I think it is similar to what Jesus told the disciples in John 16:12 when He said, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." I do not believe our minds could comprehend the glories of that eternal state, nor that there are relatable terms Jesus could have used to describe it. Just as there is no way to explain some things to a young child so that he could understand, we (as children of God) are also far too young to comprehend what Heaven is like. Thus, no physical description anywhere in the Scriptures can be found concerning Heaven. All Scriptures people use to describe Heaven either are not speaking of Heaven or are speaking symbolically.

Many Mansions

One of the most commonly used texts is John 14:1-3, which reads: "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." This Scripture is often taken out of context. Songwriters have written, "*I have a mansion just over the hilltop*." Some people say since Jesus was a carpenter's son, and He learned the carpentry trade, He is over in Glory building mansions.

Let us see what this Scripture is actually teaching. Jesus said in verse 2, "In my Father's house are many mansions." This is the only time the English word "mansions" appears in the Scriptures, and the Greek word is *mone*. The same Greek word is used in John 14:23, which states, "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." The same Greek word translated as "mansion" (John 14:2) is rendered as "abode" (John 14:23), which more accurately describes what is being conveyed. The interlinear portion of *The Emphatic Greek Diaglott* renders "abode" as "a dwelling."

Again, John 14:2 says, "In my Father's house are many mansions." Normally, a mansion is bigger than a house. So, if these "mansions" are all "in my Father's house," that would seem contrary to the normal course of events. What

is "Father's house"? In Luke, Chapter 15, when the prodigal came back to his father's house, we do not say he went to Heaven. He "wasted his substance with riotous living" (verse 13) and was so destitute he had to go and "feed swine" (verse 15). He was in a pitiful state. Verses 17-18 read: "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! I will arise and go to my father." Verse 25 tells us the prodigal son "came and drew nigh to the house." Did this son die and go to Heaven? No, it is talking about returning to his father's house.

Likewise, John 14:2 is not talking about Heaven either. *The Emphatic Greek Diaglott* (in the Interlinear Section) calls it "the house of the Father." Ephesians 1:3 says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." God is the father; the "house of the Father" is "the house of God, which is the church of the living God" (1 Timothy 3:15). The "house of God" is the Church of God. When Jesus said in John 14:2, "In my Father's house are many mansions," we could just as well say, "In the Church of God are many dwelling places."

What are the "dwelling places"? We read in John 14:23, "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 [or dwelling, which is the same Greek word] with him." A mansion is the dwelling place of a king, the place where he lives. We are the dwelling place where Christ (the King) lives, resides, dwells, abides. We are individual dwelling places that comprise the house of God, or the Church of the Living God. It is made up of the saints in whom God, Christ, and the Spirit of God abide (John 14:16, 23).

In John 14:2, Jesus continued, "I go to prepare a place for you." The disciples and Jesus had just observed the ordinances of feet washing and the Lord's Supper. Then Jesus began His last discourse to His disciples in John, Chapters 14-16. In Chapter 17, Jesus prayed that high priestly prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane, and in Chapter 18, He was seized and taken to trial. When Jesus said, "I go," He was speaking of going to Calvary. There He "purchased with his own blood" the "church of God" (Acts 20:28). It was on Calvary that Jesus prepared a place by purchasing the church. Nobody could get into the Father's house until He purchased it. You cannot move into a house until somebody buys it.

When Jesus said in John 14:3, "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again," in the truest sense of the word, this coming again is not speaking of His Second Advent. How did He "come again"? He let them know in 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." Verse 23 reads, "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."

Colossians 1:27 says, "To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." Jesus came "again" on the Day of Pentecost through the Person of the Holy Spirit and became an indwelling, abiding reality in the hearts and lives of men and women. However, this could not take place until He went to Calvary, paid ransom's cost, and instituted the redemptive plan. I hope it is plain that Jesus is not working in Heaven with a work crew and a tool belt, building mansions. He is sitting at the right hand of the Father (Hebrews 8:1). John 14:1-3 has nothing to do with Heaven. There is no sound, Scriptural basis that speaks of mansions being built in Heaven.

Streets of Gold and Gates of Pearl

Let us dispel another prevalent falsity. Heaven is not a city of gold with streets of gold and pearly gates. The word "streets" in the plural does not appear in the Revelation. Revelation 21:21 says that "the street [singular] of the city was pure gold." Revelation 21:18 says that "the city was pure gold," but what city are these Scriptures referring to? People often talk about Heaven as a city, but that is not what this city is. Revelation 21:2 reads, "And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven." It cannot be a picture of Heaven if it came out of Heaven. There must be a distinction between this "holy city" and "heaven" because this city came out of Heaven. Revelation 1:1 teaches that the nature of the language of the Revelation is "signified." The Greek word is *semaino*, which means "revealed by signs." *Webster's New World Dictionary* defines a *sign* as "a symbol." These symbolic expressions are not to be taken literally.

Revelation 21:9 tells us, "There came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife." John was going to be shown a "vision" (Revelation 9:17) of the bride, the Lamb's wife. Revelation 19:7-8 states: "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come [present tense reality; we are enjoying it now], and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her [His wife] was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints." If the wedding garment is "the righteousness of saints," it only stands to reason that the bride (or the Lamb's wife) in the garment is the

"saints."

In his second letter to the Corinthians, notice how many times Paul used the word "you." We read in 2 Corinthians 11:2, "For I am jealous over *you* with godly jealousy: for I have espoused *you* to one husband, that I may present *you* as a chaste virgin to Christ." The "husband" and the "bridegroom" (Luke 5:34-35; John 3:28-29) is "Christ." Who is the "you" Paul was addressing in this Epistle? Second Corinthians 1:1 tells us Paul was writing this Epistle "unto the church of God." That is who the "you" was. It is this "chaste virgin," the "bride" (the Lamb's wife), the Church of God. Revelation 21:9 says, "Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife [or the church]." Then, verse 10 states, "He carried me away in the spirit [the only way to truly get a vision of the church] to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city [the bride, the Lamb's wife, the church]."

Revelation 21:18 reads, "The building of the wall of it was of jasper." Isaiah 26:1 tells us, "In that day [a prophetic expression of this Gospel Day] shall this song be sung in the land of Judah; We have a strong city [talking about the same city]; salvation will God appoint for walls ['wall' (singular); the *Septuagint*]." Salvation—the 'wall' of this city—protects we who are on the inside and keeps those out who have not met Bible conditions and are on the outside. Again, Revelation 21:18 says, "The wall of it was of jasper," which is a translucent jewel. When we live a life of salvation, we are living epistles, "known and read of all men" (2 Corinthians 3:2). God wants our lives to be clear so everyone can see. Also, Revelation 21:11 speaks of "a stone most precious," which is symbolic of Christ (1 Peter 2:7) and styles Him "like a jasper stone," and the saints are "conformed to the image of his Son" (Romans 8:29).

Revelation 21:18 continues, stating, "The city [the church] was pure gold, like unto clear glass." This has no reference to Heaven. Revelation 3:18 states, "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire." This lets us know that this "gold" is a "tried" people who are inside the wall of salvation and who are living crystal clear lives. The "city" is comprised of a tried people who are living lives in such a way that they can say (just as Peter and John said in Acts 3:4), "Look on us." The saints (who are inside the wall of salvation) live tried-and-true lives that are clear and transparent ("clear as crystal"; Revelation 21:11). They do not live one way on Sunday and another way on Monday. The word for that is *hypocrite*. Saints live the same all the days of the week.

Revelation 21:21 says, "And the twelve gates were twelve pearls: every several gate was of one pearl." These gates of the city (the church) being "of one pearl" are representative of a very precious truth. In Matthew, Chapter 13, Jesus gave seven prophetic parables. The sixth parable, which correlates with

the commencement of the evening time (1880—the sixth period of this Gospel Day), says when this "merchant man" found the "one pearl of great price," he "went and sold all that he had, and bought it" (Matthew 13:45-46). A pearl is produced by the severe discomfort of a mollusk or an oyster. A grain of sand gets into that shell, and the oyster secretes a nacreous fluid. The grain of sand represents the human portion of man, and the nacreous fluid that the mollusk secretes is a type of the Holy Spirit. The combination of sand and that nacreous fluid forms a pearl.

That "one pearl of great price" (Matthew 13:46) is the truth concerning the message of the church that Jesus produced at a "great price." Such a "great price" that Isaiah 53:12 says, "He hath poured out his soul unto death." Jesus said in Luke 23:46, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit," and Hebrews 10:10 talks about "the offering of the body of Jesus Christ." Jesus gave His soul, spirit, and body, which was a "great price." The "pearl" represents the message of the church because a pearl is produced by an organic creature. It is not like jewels that are formed in the earth. Christ was that organic creature who produced the church by taking a people, putting the Holy Spirit in, and making that pearl. That pearl has nothing to do with the supposed gates of Heaven. It is talking about the message of the church and the truth people need to understand to *come out* from false religion and *come in* through the gates of the church (Deuteronomy 6:23).

We read in Isaiah 62:6, "I have set watchmen [the ministry] upon thy walls [salvation], O Jerusalem [the church; Hebrews 12:22-23]." Verse 10 says, "Go through, go through the gates; prepare ye the way of the people; cast up, cast up the highway." Isaiah 35:8 explains that "highway" is "The way of holiness." Notice that Isaiah 62:10 speaks of "the gates" in the plural. The watchman needs to herald the truth so people *go out* through the gates of Babylon and *come in* through the gates of the church. We read in Isaiah 26:1-2: "In that day [a prophetic expression that refers to this Gospel Day] shall this song be sung in the land of Judah; We have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks. Open ye the gates [the gates of the city, the church], that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in." The gates of pearl are not referring at all to anything to do with Heaven. It is all concerning the bride, the Lamb's wife, "that great city [the church]" (Revelation 21:10).

The Harps of God and White Robes

In Revelation 14:1, John said, "And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb." We know Who that is. In John 1:29, when John the Baptizer saw Jesus coming, he said,

"Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." Verse 1 continues, "A Lamb stood on mount Sion." We know this is not eternity because Christ is described as being a "Lamb" taking "away the sin of the world." When time reels into eternity, He will no longer be a Lamb. Salvation will no longer be offered. He will no longer be a sacrifice for sin. Hebrews 12:22-23 tells us "mount Sion" is "the church."

Revelation 14:1 continues, "... and with him an hundred forty and four thousand." That is not a literal number. Far more than that have already been saved (for example, the fifty million martyred in the Dark Ages). This is not a literal number; it is symbolic. One hundred and forty-four is a multiple of twelve, which is the Biblical number of perfection. Revelation 14:2 reads, "And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters [the voice of Christ; Revelation 1:15] and as the voice of a great thunder [whenever God spoke, it thundered; John 12:29]: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps." This is not in Heaven.

Psalm 137:1-4 reads: "By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion. We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof. For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion. How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?" When the Jews were in Babylonian captivity, they had to hang up their harps. They did not have songs. You cannot sing about victory when you do not have any; you cannot sing about glory when there is none.

When the saints came out of Babylon (Revelation, Chapter 14), with the "Father's name written in their forehead" (verse 1), meaning they understood the truth concerning the true church—it is the Church of *God*, not some sectarian organization—they picked their harps back up, and started singing. Revelation 14:3 tells us, "And they sung as it were a new song." This takes place in Mount Zion, the church, not in Heaven.

Revelation 15:1-3 reads: "I saw another sign [defined by Webster as 'a symbol'] in heaven [not God's Heaven but 'heavenly places in Christ Jesus'; Ephesians 2:6], great and marvelous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God. And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire [the Word; James 1:22-23;]: and them that had gotten the victory [by the anointed Word] over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass [took a stand on the Word of God], having the harps of God. And they sing the song of Moses." When Israel came through the Red Sea and God drowned Egypt's army, they sang songs of victory (Exodus 15:1-21). That is what these harps will

play—songs of victory. These harps are not something we will be playing in Heaven, but they are the rejoicing we have here and now by being able to enjoy what God has ordained—we enjoy by being *out* of Babylon and being *in* the church.

The robes of white are "the righteousness of [the] saints" (Revelation 19:8). Isaiah 61:10 states, "I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness." The robe of righteousness and the garments of salvation are what we are wearing now.

"New Heaven" Is Not Speaking of the Celestial Heaven

Revelation, Chapter 21, has nothing to do with God's Heaven. When verse 1 says, "I saw a new heaven and a new earth," it is not speaking of the celestial realm. First, there is nothing wrong with God's Heaven as it is that would require it to be "new." Deuteronomy 26:15 says, "Look down from thy holy habitation [from Heaven]." Heaven is a "holy habitation" where there is no sin. One songwriter penned: "*Sin can never enter there.... It will stop you at the door, Bar you out forevermore, Sin can never enter there*." Isaiah 57:15 tells us, "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place." Heaven is a "high and holy place." First Kings 8:30 says, "Hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place." Heaven is God's dwelling place.

Second Chronicles 30:27 reads, "Then the priests the Levites arose and blessed the people: and their voice was heard, and their prayer came up to his holy dwelling place, even unto heaven." Many more verses substantiate this truth: there is no need for a *new* celestial Heaven. The "new heaven" that the Revelation and prophecy speak of is presented in the Hebrew teaching style of parallelism, which is stating something in one manner and then restating it in another manner to give clarity. When John said in Revelation 21:1, "I saw a new heaven," he restated it in verse 2 as "new Jerusalem." That is explaining that the "new heaven" is the "new Jerusalem."

Ephesians 2:6 tells of "heavenly places in Christ Jesus." That is the "third heaven" the Apostle Paul talked of in 2 Corinthians 12:1-2, a place where he came "to visions and revelations of the Lord." It is an ecclesiastical position and is referred to as Jerusalem because Jerusalem was the capital where the king resided. Christ is king, and He resides in the capital. John saw Him in Revelation 1:13 "in the midst" of the seven golden candlesticks, right in the midst of the church. The word *Jerusalem* means "city of peace," and He is our "Prince

of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6).

Some people think there needs to be "a new heaven" because they believe there was a revolt, a rebellion, and a big war in Heaven, and the devil was cast out. However, none of that is true. John 8:44 says the devil was "a murderer from the beginning." Consider, if the devil could rise in rebellion and be cast out of Heaven, what surety do you have that you will not get kicked out after you get there? The devil never was and never will be in Heaven. There is no need for a new Heaven as there is nothing wrong with God's Heaven. It is not, has not, nor ever will be defiled. There has never been a rebellion in God's "holy habitation" (Deuteronomy 26:15). Rebellion cannot take place where there is holiness. The devil is a created spirit being made for a specific purpose.

To understand who created the devil, read Colossians 1:13-17, which says, "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: Who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature [Who? 'His dear Son']: For by him ['his dear Son'] were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers [different expressions for demoniac powers]: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist." The devil is a created being—created by Christ.

In Isaiah 45:6-7, God said: "I am the LORD, and there is none else. I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things." There was a purpose in creating the devil. God had legions of angels who served Him in Heaven. Angels are not creatures of choice. God, being love (1 John 4:8), desired a return of that love—to be loved back. God created a man, someone who would serve Him out of love. In order for that to happen, He had to present man with a choice. When God created the garden, He put the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil in it. He did it to give man a choice, to give man an opportunity to prove his love. God created the devil to present man with a choice. The devil is a very necessary creature. Although we wish he were not around, he serves a valuable purpose.

There are so many falsities associated with Heaven, and many times we do not realize some of the falsities that we have imbibed until we hear the truth. People have a picture of mansions, gold streets, gates of pearl, white robes, and harps, but these are all symbols of what we enjoy here and now as the church. The devil is robbing people blind of the benefits they could enjoy now by putting everything out to somewhere in a futuristic time.

Heaven Is Not Beulah Land or the Promised Land

Heaven is not Canaan land, the Promised Land. Songwriters talk about crossing the Jordan River to get to the Promised Land. Songwriters also pen about crossing old Jordan's swelling banks into Canaan land. We have to clear some ground first to bring understanding. When Jeremiah was commissioned, the Lord told him in Jeremiah 1:10, "See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant." You cannot build or plant until you clear some ground. Jeremiah had to "root out ... pull down ... destroy, and ... throw down." It is the same today. Much falsity is associated with many of these things. We have to clear off some ground before people can really understand the truth.

Let us consider "Beulah" briefly. We read in Isaiah 62:1, "For Zion's sake [he was talking about Zion, the church; Hebrews 12:22-23] will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp." He was talking about people who have salvation, who are in Zion, the church. He continued in verses 4-5: "Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken; neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate: but thou shalt be called Hephzibah [which means 'my delight is in her'], and thy land Beulah [which means 'married']: for the LORD delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married. For as a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee: and as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee." The Lamb's wife is the church; so Beulah Land is the church because she is married.

What about that Promised Land? In Exodus, Chapter 33, the Lord gave Israel a promise. In verse 1, He said, "Depart, and go up hence, thou and the people which thou hast brought up out of the land of Egypt." Verse 3 tells of "a land flowing with milk and honey." The Promised Land was originally the land promised to old Israel but is also a type of a New Testament spiritual reality. The first ten verses of 1 Corinthians, Chapter 10, speak of the Old Testament Exodus, but verse 11 says, "Now all these things happened unto them for *ensamples*." The Greek word is *tupos,* which means "a type." *Webster's New World Dictionary* defines a *type* as "a person, a thing, or an event that represents or symbolizes another, especially another that is to come." When Exodus describes "a land flowing with milk and honey," what is the antitype and the spiritual reality? Will we need milk and honey in Heaven? If not in Heaven, where is the milk and honey provided?

First Peter 2:2 states, "As newborn babes, desire the sincere *milk* of the

word, that ye may grow thereby." The Apostle Paul charged the young minister Timothy in 2 Timothy 4:2, "Preach the word." The Word is the milk. Psalm 81:16 says, "He should have fed them also with the finest of the wheat: and with *honey* out of the rock should I have satisfied thee." First Corinthians 10:4 tells us, "That Rock was Christ," and Romans 8:9 says, "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." The "honey out of the rock" is "the Spirit of Christ." The "milk and honey" are the Word and the Spirit. You will not need either of them in Heaven; the time and place we need them is here and now.

We read in Ezekiel 34:11-12: "For thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out. As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day." This is talking prophetically about the Protestant era. The message of the evening time is, "Come out of her, my people" (Revelation 18:4). Ezekiel 34:13-14 reads: "And I will bring them out from the people, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land, and feed them upon the mountains of Israel by the rivers, and in all the inhabited places of the country. I will feed them in a good pasture." For those who think this must be literal, what are they going to do with verse 16? The last phrase of that verse says, "I will feed them with judgment." That is spiritual. This whole text is speaking spiritually, not literally.

The "milk and honey" are the Word and Spirit, and the Promised Land is the church. Neither Canaan nor the Promised Land refers to Heaven. Neither does crossing the Jordan River to get there refer to God's Heaven. Once they entered Canaan, they were repeatedly faced with conflict and needed conquests. Will Heaven present these challenges? Certainly not! These are old sectarian teachings carried over from periods of lesser light, but now we are in that perfect day. Proverbs 4:18 says, "But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." We are in the seventh-seal period of time. God is shining light on these falsities and confusions that men have advocated. The truth today is "clear as crystal" (Revelation 21:11).

No Physical Description of Heaven in the Bible

There is no Biblical description of Heaven. When talking to Nicodemus in John 3:12, Jesus said, "If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?" Several renderings say "things in Heaven." Jesus let us know there is no physical description of Heaven because it is beyond human comprehension. Yet, man in his quest, using the natur-

al mind, tends to wrest Scriptures, causing them to say things they were never intended to say. This does a great disservice.

Isaiah 55:8-9 reads: "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." Descriptions of Heaven would be incomprehensible for our minds to grasp. God could not begin to relate it to us in a way that we could comprehend. It is reminiscent of the words Jesus spoke in John 16:12, which reads, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." While we realize it was because of their lack of the Holy Spirit at that point (the Holy Ghost had not yet been given), we are still human creatures. Because of that, there are things we cannot comprehend. Eternity and Heaven are two of those things. In our lives, everything has a start and an end. However, God did not have a start, and He never has an end. That is almost incomprehensible to us. Thus, to describe Heaven in a manner we could comprehend would be impossible due to our human limitations. When we, as human creatures, attempt to comprehend this, sadly, many Scriptures become misunderstood and are misapplied when they have no reference to Heaven whatsoever.

Heaven Is God's Throne

Having dealt with the negative aspects, things that have been mistaught, let us now look at the positive aspect. What does the Bible teach about Heaven? Again, dismiss from your mind any thought of a literal description because there are no literal descriptions of Heaven in God's Word. Heaven is the saved individual's ultimate destiny. It is considered God's throne. Matthew 5:34 states, "But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne." In John 3:13, Jesus said, "And no man hath *ascended up* to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man." When Christ was ready to make His Ascension, Acts 1:10 reads, "While they looked steadfastly *toward heaven* as he went up ...."

Then, verse 11 says, "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." On that great day that our text speaks of, that day when we will receive "an house not made with hands," it will be "eternal in the heavens [or in Heaven]." The "house" our text speaks of (2 Corinthians 5:1) will be designed for eternity and to forever occupy God's Heaven.

A Reservation Made in Heaven

Our companion text (1 Peter 1:4) says we have "an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you." With salvation, we have a reservation down in the Lamb's Book of Life. *Where* did our reservation get recorded? Luke 10:20 states, "Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven." Heaven is where our reservations are; that is where our names are written.

When are our reservations recorded? Jesus told Nicodemus in John 3:3, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again [the Greek says 'born from above'; in other words, a heavenly birth], he cannot see the kingdom of God." In verse 4, Nicodemus said to Jesus, "How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?" Just like people today, Nicodemus' mind went to literalism. Jesus answered him in verse 5, saying, "Except a man be born of water ['the washing of water by the word'; Ephesians 5:26] and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." When we have this spiritual birth, that is when our names are written down.

Psalm 87:5-6 says: "And of Zion [the 'church'; Hebrews 12:22-23] it shall be said, This and that man was born in her: and the highest himself shall establish her. The LORD shall count, when he writeth up the people, that this man was born there." When we are born again (or born from above), the Lord counts and writes us in the Lamb's Book of Life over in Heaven. When you make a reservation at a motel, which motel do you go to? The one that has your name on the list. We go to Heaven because that is where our name is written down; that is where our reservation is recorded. Philippians 3:20 states, "For our conversation [the Greek text says 'citizenship'; *The Expanded Greek* says 'the commonwealth of which we are citizens'] is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour [we look for Him to come from Heaven]." Our citizenship has its fixed location in Heaven.

Heaven Is Eternal

Our text tells us Heaven is eternal (2 Corinthians 5:1). Our destiny in Heaven is not for only a time. Our life on Earth is probationary. There are conditions that must be met. At any time, we could choose not to meet those conditions, and our reservation would be canceled. We are still creatures of choice. We do not have it made, but once we make it into the realms of eternity, thank

God, it is fixed, settled, sealed! We will be in a position where we are entering into an eternal reward that will never cease and never be in jeopardy.

Heaven is a place where we fully enjoy eternal life. We do not enter eternal life in Heaven. If you have not entered into it before you die, you are not going to see it. Eternal life comes with salvation. Romans 8:2 tells us there are only two laws—"the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" and "the law of sin and death." All mankind is under one or the other. When we get in Christ Jesus through the Spirit, we receive life. "The Spirit is life" (Romans 8:10). John 3:36 reads, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." It does not say "*going to have*," but "*hath* everlasting life."

First John 5:11-12 says: "And this is the record, that God hath given to us [present tense] eternal life, and [here is the probationary part] this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." So we have eternal life now, but it is only in "the Son." Only as long as we maintain the Son's presence in our lives do we have "eternal life." It is probationary because we could choose to no longer have Him in our lives. When He departs, the life departs. However, thank God, on that final day, the probation will be ended! Matthew 25:46 tells us, "And these [the goats] shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal." No longer will life be probationary; it will be "life eternal." Once time reels into eternity, that life has an eternal quality that is beyond probationary.

Our companion text says that our inheritance is "incorruptible, and undefiled" (1 Peter 1:4). The Greek word for "incorruptible" is *aphthartos,* which means "undecaying, not liable to corruption or decay." Thank God, when we get into that realm, there will be no more corruption, no more decay. The Greek word for "undefiled" is *amiantos*, which means "free from contamination." That is wonderful! Now, there are some places you cannot go without coming away contaminated, but thank God, there is a place free from all contamination. First Peter 1:4 also says that it "fadeth not away." Some things fade; as people get older, they start fading away, but there will be no fading away over there. The Greek word for "fadeth not away" is *amarantos*. It means "unfading, perpetual." *Strong's With Vines* says, "Our inheritance is without corruption from within itself, without defilement from outside itself, and will not wither or fade away." It is perpetual. It is eternal.

Hebrews 10:34 reads, "For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance." There is substance in Heaven. Although there are no physical descriptions in God's Word, Heaven is a literal place. When Christ came back with a glorified body, Thomas (who had not yet

seen Him) said, "Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe" (John 20:25). When Jesus appeared the next Sunday, He said to Thomas, "Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing" (verse 27). Jesus' body had the scars from the Crucifixion.

Additionally, Jesus' body could eat (Luke 24:37). When some saw Jesus, they "were terrified and affrighted," thinking "they had seen a spirit." Jesus let them know He was not a spirit but "flesh and bones" (verse 39). This lets us know we are going to have literal bodies. They will be glorified, but they will still be literal bodies. Jesus is our example. Philippians 3:21 explains, "Our vile body [will] be fashioned like unto his glorious body." Jesus' glorious body still had the nail prints and the place where the spear went into His side. It was a literal body, but it had spiritual qualities. Jesus could walk through walls and come right into a room (John 20:19). This is one reason God does not tell us much about Heaven and our new body. We would have a hard time comprehending that. Again, Hebrews 10:34 reads, "Ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance." Heaven is going to have some substance, and a literal body is going to have some substance around it. Heaven is not some mythical place or an entirely spiritual place. Although it certainly is spiritual in one sense, but not to the extent where it negates having "substance."

What Is in Heaven?

What do we have in Heaven? In general, what is there? Ecclesiastes 5:2 tells us, "God is in heaven." The first thing Heaven has is God. Think of that! We will be where God is. When Hebrews 10:34 speaks of what "ye have in heaven," our "Father" is "in heaven" (Matthew 6:9). Also, Christ will be there. First Thessalonians 4:17 states, "Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord." The Lord (Christ) will be right back in Heaven. We read in 1 Corinthians 15:23-24 that Christ will come ("at his coming"), and "then cometh the end." Verses 24-28 state: "When he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted [speaking of God], which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject

unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all."

What will be a predominant feature of Heaven? In Acts, Chapter 7, we read of Stephen, the first Christian martyr, on the precipice of death. Verse 55 states, "But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God." One of the most outstanding features will be "the glory of God." Have you ever been in services, perhaps a revival or camp meetings, when the glory of God came down in the midst in almost an indescribable way? That is going to pale compared to what we will see on that day.

Romans 8:18 says, "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." Second Corinthians 4:17 states, "For our light affliction [it truly is 'light' when weighed in the eternal scale], which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." Heaven will be a glory world. It will be more than what our minds can fathom. The Greek word for "glory" (in the context of Romans 8:18 and 2 Corinthians 4.17) is *doxa*, which is "the state of blessedness into which believers are to enter hereafter through being brought into the likeness of Christ."

First John 3:2 tells us, "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." While time stands and our lives remain, we are not finished products. Yet, a day is coming when we will be finished. It will be as Jeremiah 18:3 says, "He wrought a work on the wheels." God will be satisfied with us; He will smile and take us off the wheels. There will be a day when God says, "They are done." On that day, "we shall be like him," but right now, we are still on the potter's wheel. He is still forming us. We are not finished yet. Those wheels (the Word of God) are shaping us until God says, "That is enough!"

In the truest sense of the word, when Jesus comes back, He is only coming back for "Jesus." Only those who have been made in His image are going to make it to Heaven. That is why Heaven is going to be such a wonderful place! It will be full of little "Jesuses." That is all who will be there because "we shall be like him." Dear one, the glory of God is going to be beyond description. This, along with some other benefits, constitutes your reward in Heaven.

Heaven Will Be a Place of Great Reward

Jesus said in Matthew 5:11-12: "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my

sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad [not just glad, but 'exceeding glad']: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you." Heaven is where we will receive our reward, but the expression "great is your reward" lets us know that not all rewards are the same.

Matthew 6:20 tells us, "Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven." This reveals we have a responsibility, and not everybody lays up the same amount. It has much to do with how we live our lives, with our efforts, and with what we have to suffer because of our efforts. In Heaven, there is a "hope" (Colossians 1:5), there is a "reward" (Matthew 5:12), there are "treasures" (Matthew 6:20), and there is "an inheritance" (1 Peter 1:4). What does all this consist of? We found it is eternal, and there is no contamination within or without. We found we will be like Him (1 John 3:2). Also, in the resurrection, we "are equal unto the angels" (Luke 20:36). Jesus expressed it like this in Matthew 25:21, which reads, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord."

Verse 23 continues, "His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord." These verses not only indicate that Heaven is a place of reward, of treasures, of where men are equal unto the angels; but also that it is a place where we "enter into the joy." Each of these verses indicates that it varies by individual.

In the Parable of the Talents in Matthew, Chapter 25, the servants' degree of reward was based on their efforts. Matthew 5:12 states, "Rejoice ... for great is your reward." That indicates not everyone's reward is going to be great. It is speaking to those who were reviled and persecuted. Everyone in Heaven will certainly enjoy a reward, but not to the same degree. Do you think the man who was saved on his deathbed at eighty years of age will receive the same reward as the man who lived and worked for God all his life? No! There are degrees of reward.

The treasures we enjoy in Heaven have somewhat to do with how much we "lay up" now (Matthew 6:20). Consider the following illustration. A young man begins working at eighteen, and his company has a matching 401k for retirement. The young man starts contributing and continues until he retires. Another man spends all his money and never puts anything away for retirement. When that man retires, all he has to live on is Social Security. Will that man enjoy the benefits of retirement as much as the first man who put away possibly as much as a million dollars throughout his working lifetime? No. Why? The first man laid up more for himself. It is the same way spiritually.

Galatians 6:7 describes the immutable moral law of sowing and reaping. Second Corinthians 9:6 tells us, "He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully." That does not apply only to money. That is a moral principle that applies to many things. We have a lot to do with what we have laid up in Heaven. The degree of reward will vary by each individual. One reason for the Final Judgment is not to determine man's state or eternal destiny, but it is to determine the rewards and the degree of rewards each individual should receive. Many people do not think in these terms. They think everything will be equal. However, God is fair and just, and if everything were to be equal, that would not be fair and just. First Corinthians 3:8 says, "Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour." That is clear. The rewards are proportionate to the labor.

If you would like to have more rewards when you get to Heaven, send up more now. Get busy in the work of God; work harder for God; deny yourself; spend more time in His Word; and make a greater effort. No one else can do it for you. You must lay up for yourself. Matthew 16:27 tells us, "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works." Nothing is said about rewarding everyone equally.

Some of the More Common Rewards

Second Thessalonians 1:8-10 states, "In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; 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." Verse 8 deals with the negative aspect, but in revealing the negative, it also reveals *how* they will be punished and what we will enjoy. Four things are listed here.

- (1) "the presence of the Lord"—think about being in that eternal presence and enjoying it unfiltered, without a flesh to contend with that gets tired and sick.
- (2) "the glory of his power"—think of being where the power is totally raw and unfiltered.
- (3) "glorified in his saints"—when the saints are there in Heaven, God will receive some glory, and I would not be surprised if God honors some of His saints for what they did or endured; He glorifies Himself

through the work of His saints.

- (4) "admired in all them that believe"—these are some of the general, common rewards.

Heaven Will Be Perpetual Worship of God

The last point we want to consider is, what will the predominant activity in Heaven be? Nehemiah 9:6 tells us, "Thou, even thou, art LORD alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things that are therein, the seas, and all that is therein, and thou preservest them all; and the host of heaven worshippeth thee." Right now, "the host of heaven," the angelic host, is engaged in worshiping God. Again, Jesus let us know we will be made like unto the angels. Thus, one of the most predominant activities in Heaven will be "worshippeth thee." Notice the word "worshippeth" denotes a present and continual tense. We will enter perpetual worship. I have a hard time understanding why some people have difficulty being faithful to worship services. If you do not enjoy the worship services here, how will you enjoy them in Heaven? Heaven is full of worship. The Hebrew word for worship (*shachah*) means "prostrate." It describes the act of bowing down in homage. This is the destiny of all mankind who are saved.

Second Peter 3:9 says, "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." God wants everyone to enjoy salvation and to enjoy Heaven. This is why the Lord inspired Moses to lament and pen in Deuteronomy 32:29, "O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!" Man is an eternal being with an eternal destiny. Life is a one-way trip that we only travel through once. We are heading towards eternity. This is why man should cry, as recorded in Numbers 23:10, "Let me die the death of the righteous." Yet, to die the death of the righteous requires living the life of the righteous. The songwriter penned, *"Only one life, 'Twill soon be past, Only what's done for Christ will last*."

We are laboring for a crown—not a literal, corruptible crown. First Corinthians 9:25 encourages us, "And every man that striveth for the mastery [talking about this Christian race; verse 24] is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible." The winner of the literal races being run in Paul's day received a crown of laurel leaves. That would look attractive initially, but in time the laurel leaves would dry out, dissolve, disintegrate, and fall apart. That is "a corruptible crown." But God's people are striving for "an incorruptible" crown. First Peter 5:4 tells us, "And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away." While

Moses' glory faded away, this one will not. Before the Apostle Paul was executed, he wrote in 2 Timothy 4:8, "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." *The Expanded Greek* says "the victor's laurel wreath of righteousness."

We are not striving for a glittering, bejeweled, literal crown, but we are striving to receive the crowning achievement of this Christian race. Passing the finish line and knowing we have won the race, knowing the race is run—what victory! Our eternal destiny will be crowned with victory, the crown of righteousness, and our righteousness will be forever sealed for eternity. The ultimate eternal victory is the eternal glory of a victorious life of righteousness.

As we conclude this study of man—his origin (or creation), composition, and conclusion—the words of two songs come to my mind. I pray the words of these songs will be your desire as well.

I Wouldn't Miss It, Would You?

I have heard of a land
On a faraway strand,
I wouldn't miss it, would you?
Built by Jesus on high
Where we never shall die,
I wouldn't miss it, would you?

I wouldn't miss it, would you?
I wouldn't miss it, would you?
Up with Jesus on high,
Where we never shall die,
I wouldn't miss it, would you?

When our work here is done
And a life crown has been won,
I wouldn't miss it, would you?
All our sorrow will end
And our voices will blend.
I wouldn't miss it, would you?

In that beautiful home
Where we'll never more roam,
I wouldn't miss it, would you?
Happy praise to the King
Through eternity sing,
I wouldn't miss it, would you?

I'd Never Miss Heaven for the World

Beyond the borders of time
There's a beautiful land
The Word of God its glory unfurls
And by the grace of God
I someday will call it my home
I'd never miss Heaven for the world

As for me and my house
We will serve the Lord
Though things of earth may try to allure
For the smile of God means more
Than sin's brief glittering day
I'd never miss Heaven for the world

I'd never miss seeing Jesus
I'd never miss seeing loved ones,
Who've gone on before
I'd never trade forever
For a few days down here
I'd never miss Heaven for the world

I trust these songs are your testimony. Thank God, there is a "home of the soul," a beautiful place. The Bible does not describe Heaven, for (no doubt) words would fail. Dear one, we need to make our calling and election sure (2 Peter 1:10). We need to keep our experience right where it needs to be if we do not want to miss it. Time will wrap up one day, and it will not matter how long you have lived compared to eternity. Time will only be a drop in the bucket compared to never-ending eternity. Now is the time to make sure your reservation is in Heaven.

APPENDIX A

THE LAKE OF FIRE AND BRIMSTONE

Revelation 20:10 And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

Some Prophetic Rules

Revelation 20:10 describes the position and perdition in which the enemies of truth are placed. The preceding verses describe the consolidation of the forces of evil. Verse 9 refers to Satan, Gog, and Magog collectively as "they" and "them." This consolidation advances the prophetic time setting to the evening-time epoch, or the final epoch of the Gospel Day (from A.D. 1880 through to the consummation of human history). The forces of evil have not completely consolidated their power, as of yet (2026). We know that because we have not seen the complete formation of the eighth beast. The final battle is yet on the prophetic horizon; God's fire will intervene, as Revelation 20:8-9 reveals. However, that is the "fire" of His Word (Jeremiah 23:29), not the fire of consummation, as some suppose. It is the fire of His Word and its victory over all the systems, spirits, and falsities that have opposed truth. When that battle is completed and truth is vindicated, time will reel into eternity.

A portion of Revelation 20:8-9 is yet prophetic, speaking of that which yet lies ahead; so it is with our text. As our text enters a prophetic realm, we must recognize some prophetic rules. The first rule is that we must respect the place of prophecy. Prophecy is sure, or certain. The Apostle Peter wrote in 2 Peter 1:19, "We have also a more sure word of prophecy." Isaiah 42:9 says, "Behold, the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare: before they spring forth I tell you of them." Then Isaiah 44:6-8 states: "Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God. And who, as I, shall call, and shall declare it, and set it in order for me, since I appointed the ancient people? and the things that are coming, and shall come, let them shew unto them. Fear ye not, neither be afraid: have not I told thee from that time, and have declared it? ye are even my witnesses. Is there a God beside me? yea, there is no God; I know not any."

First 2 Peter 1:20 lets us know that "no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation." The second truth we must understand is that we cannot

isolate a text from the rest of the Scriptures. There is an overarching harmony and scheme to the Scriptures. We must lay "line upon line; here a little, and there a little" (Isaiah 28:13) and allow the Spirit of God to mate up the Scriptures (Isaiah 34:16). The third truth we must recognize is, as the songwriter penned, "*purer light is coming fast*," that the light of truth continues to be revealed as this seventh seal progresses. Jesus told us in Matthew 13:52, "Therefore every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old."

As we lay "line upon line," there will be some well-worn truths, what we may term (as Jesus did) as "old" truths, and there will be truths that may seem somewhat "new" to us. Brother F. G. Smith, in the Preface to his book *The Revelation Explained*, penned these words: "The future doubtless will witness a still greater development of this subject, for men of God will arise who, beginning where we have left off, will continue its investigation and throw upon it additional light as yet unrevealed." Also, the brethren who began to preach the seventh-seal message wrote in their book *The Revelation With Gospel and Prophecy*, on page 173: "Some of the things in these chapters we see only dimly. And if we should not be able to understand them entirely now, we will, perhaps, before the end, and when time is fulfilled, they will be made clear." God is ever revealing light, bringing understanding in this seventh-seal period of time. We must be willing to accept it.

A fourth prophetic rule we must bear in mind is that many prophetic texts have both a literal and a spiritual fulfillment. Many prophecies have a dual application. Let us consider a few passages to substantiate this truth. In Isaiah, Chapters 36-37, we find Sennecherib, the king of Assyria, was trying to discourage Hezekiah and the people of God through one of his leaders, Rabshakeh. He tried to make them feel that their resistance was futile, their defense was worthless, and there was no way God could protect them against his army. Isaiah 37:3 says, "And they said unto him, Thus saith Hezekiah, This day is a day of trouble, and of rebuke, and of blasphemy: for the children are come to the birth, and there is not strength to bring forth." That verse refers to a localized circumstance, but it also has a spiritual application that reaches into the New Testament dispensation. It fits the morning-time apostasy.

Next, Isaiah 1:21 tells us, "How is the faithful city become an harlot! it was full of judgment; righteousness lodged in it; but now murderers." This describes the apostate condition of old Israel, but it also refers typically to the morning-time apostasy, how the enemy overcame much of the morning-time church in the sense it went out of public view, and a harlot body replaced it. Again, we

see a dual application. Then, Isaiah 21:9 says: "And, behold, here cometh a chariot of men, with a couple of horsemen. And he answered and said, Babylon is fallen, is fallen." The literal application is the fall of Babylon by the hands of the Medo-Persians. We know there is also a spiritual application, because we see these same words repeated in Revelation 18:2, which tells us that "he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen." We see a *literal application* under the old economy and a *spiritual application* under the new economy, a dual application.

Jeremiah 51:34 states, "Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon hath devoured me, he hath crushed me, he hath made me an empty vessel, he hath swallowed me up like a dragon, he hath filled his belly with my delicates, he hath cast me out." This is talking about how Nebuchadrezzar besieged and overcame the people of God. He carried them away into captivity and spoiled their city. Verse 37 reads, "And Babylon shall become heaps, a dwellingplace for dragons, an astonishment, and an hissing, without an inhabitant." That tells of the judgment God poured out on literal Babylon, because they took His people away captive. However, these Scriptures have spiritual applications as well. They have dual applications.

Let us lift another one. Isaiah 44:27 prophesies of Cyrus and Darius, the Medo-Persian kings. It is astounding that it even names Cyrus approximately 176 years before it even happened. You can read how God put it in their hearts to overthrow the Babylonian Empire. Babylon was a seemingly impregnable fortress with a wall around it, and there seemed to be no way they could gain entry. The Euphrates River ran right through the middle of the city of Babylon, and there were leaved gates where the water ran through. God put it into the hearts of Cyrus and Darius to divert that water into another channel so that the riverbed would be dry.

That night God had seen to it that the gates were left open (Isaiah 45:1). When they diverted that water, Cyrus and Darius went in dry-shod and overthrew the Babylonian Empire. They slew Belshazzar that night, and the Medo-Persian Empire came into place as a worldwide power. Look at the prophetic words of Isaiah 44:27, which states, "That saith to the deep, Be dry, and I will dry up thy rivers." Why were the rivers to be dried up? So Cyrus and Darius could come in. The overthrow of the Babylonian Empire by the Medo-Persians was a literal fulfillment.

Consider Revelation 16:12, where the sixth angel is pouring out his vial in the seventh-seal period of time in which you and I are privileged to live. It says, "The sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east [spiritually, the

Word and the Spirit] might be prepared." This was to take place so that spiritual Babylon could be overthrown. So, we see a literal fulfillment and a spiritual fulfillment. We must keep that in mind, because when we look at certain texts, our minds are ever prone to run purely to the literal aspect. Much of prophecy has both a spiritual and a literal aspect to it.

Our text also has a literal and spiritual fulfillment. Traditionally, many have ascribed only a literal application to our text, but that poses several difficulties. Notice that "the devil," or the dragon, "was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are [or *The Emphatic Diaglott* says, 'were cast']." It implies the dragon was cast into "the lake of fire" at a different time than "the beast and the false prophet"; they were already there. If this were solely speaking of the end of time, they would all be "cast" in at the same time.

Revelation 19:20 tells us: "And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone." What about the dragon? It says "*both* were cast" with no mention of the dragon. Verse 21 says, "And the remnant ...." If this was at the end of time, who are "the remnant"? If time were reeling into eternity, there could be no "remnant." Consider the phrase in our text, "shall be tormented day and night." Is there "day and night" in eternity? Is there any measurement of time in eternity? There is certainly not! Therefore, we must conclude that our text has a broader application than conventional thinking. There are more truths being conveyed than we have previously considered.

Several Divine Realities Span Both the Time Realm and the Eternal Realm

Let us consider "the lake of fire and brimstone" in our text. This phrase is mentioned five times in the Bible, and all are in the Book of Revelation (Revelation 19:20; 20:10; 20:14; 20:15; and 21:8). The word "lake" appears ten times in the Bible, and all are in the New Testament (five times in Luke's Gospel and five times in the Revelation). This will take on more significance as we study.

Revelation, Chapter 20, is very condensed, and many of the expressions have been introduced in the preceding chapters. "Fire and brimstone" is mentioned in the Trumpet Series when the sixth trumpet began to sound (A.D. 1880). Revelation 9:17 says, "And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone: and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths

issued fire and smoke and brimstone." Horses were an article of warfare; they denote militancy (Zechariah 10:3).

The sixth-trumpet ministry went forth as a militant force, much as in the morning time (Revelation 6:2). They wore breastplates covering their hearts. The source of life was covered with "fire ... jacinth, and brimstone." Their heads were like "the heads of lions." Each of these ministries had "the Lion of the tribe of Judah" (Revelation 5:5), Jesus Christ, as their head. Christ had been restored to His proper place as the Head of the church. "Fire and smoke and brimstone" came "out of their mouths." Their power was in their message. The prophetic time setting for this verse is the sixth seal (A.D. 1880-1930). Therefore, the "fire" and "brimstone" in Revelation 9:17 have nothing to do with eternity.

"Fire" is a dual symbol. Jeremiah 23:29 lets us know it is God's Word. Then Acts 2:3-4 says: "And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire .... And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost." The fire that came "out of their mouths" was a Holy Ghost-anointed message of truth. The fire produced "smoke." What was the smoke? Revelation 15:8 tells us that "the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God." The message they preached produced the glory of God. I have an old tape that purportedly is of Brother D. S. Warner leading some singing. There was so much glory in the camp, you could hardly hear some words for all the people shouting.

What is the "brimstone" that came "out of their mouths"? Brimstone represents judgment. Luke 17:29 states, "But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all." Isaiah 1:27 lets us know that "Zion shall be redeemed with judgment." The sixth-seal brethren had a fiery message of truth that put "fire" on Babylon. One songwriter wrote, "*We'll shout as her city doth burn.*" A message of truth will still produce some "brimstone." From the perusal of these verses, fire and brimstone in the sixth seal is a symbolic picture. It has no reference to the eternal realm.

In Revelation, Chapter 14, we see "fire and brimstone" mentioned again. Revelation 14:1 says, "And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion." Again, the prophetic time setting is in the sixth seal. Revelation 14:10 says, "The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone [now hold that thought] in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb." Christ is only a Lamb while time is still standing. Verse 11 states: "And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night." Again, is there any day or night in eternity? "Fire and brimstone" is a symbolic expression of the realities that happened in the sixth seal—the fiery message of judgment on false religious

systems.

We need to recognize another truth that has particular relevance in the New Testament. There are several divine realities that span the two realms. They span the time realm and the eternal realm. Let us consider a few. In Ephesians 3:14-15 the Apostle Paul penned, "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family [one family, singular] in heaven and earth is named." There is only one "family," but it spans two realms: some of the family are here on earth and some are over in the eternal realm; but it is the same family. Look at the kingdom.

Colossians 1:13 says, "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son." The Kingdom of God is a present reality in the realm of time. We enjoy the realities of the kingdom now (Luke 16:16; Romans 14:18). However, 2 Timothy 4:18 states, "And the Lord ... will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom." There is an aspect of the kingdom over in eternity as well. In Luke 13:28, Jesus spoke of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all the prophets "in the kingdom of God."

Jesus told the dying thief in Luke 23:43, "To day shalt thou be with me in paradise." Not much later, He "gave up the ghost" (verse 46). Where did He go? He went to Paradise; the dying thief went there as well, beyond the realm of time. Jesus said in Revelation 2:7, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God." That verse says nothing about dying; it just said overcomers will enjoy Paradise. Some think Revelation 2:7 is talking about ones being faithful until they die, but let us look closer at the "tree of life" in the "paradise of God."

Revelation 22:1-2 tells us: "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. 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." Will there be months in eternity? Are you going to need any *healing* in eternity? Will there be different *nations* and *boundaries* set up in Heaven? This is not talking about eternity. Where is the "paradise of God"? Verse 2 says, "In the midst of the street of it ..." What is the "it" referred to in this verse? If you read Revelation 21:9-27, you will see that the "it" is the "great city," the church. That is where the "paradise of God" is and where the "tree of life," Jesus Christ, is while time yet stands. Paradise also spans two realms: time and eternity. So many divine realities span two realms: the family, the kingdom, paradise, and the church. Likewise, the realities of our text span two realms.

Second Corinthians 5:1 says, "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." We know there is a Heaven in eternity, but let us see what Jesus said to Nicodemus. John 3:13 states, "And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven." Jesus was standing there talking to Nicodemus, yet He said He "is in heaven." *The Englishman's Greek New Testament* offers the Greek as "the Son of man which is in *the* heaven." Ephesians 2:6 says we "sit together in heavenly places [or the original Greek says 'the heavenlies'] in Christ Jesus." Thus, Heaven is in two realms.

Our text is spoken of in the same vein of truth. There is an aspect of "the lake of fire and brimstone" that is in the realm of time, and there is another aspect in the realm of eternity. Revelation 20:10 says, "And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night [the realm of time] for ever and ever [the eternal realm]." It also spans two realms.

The Realm of Time

First, let us consider "the lake of fire and brimstone" during the realm of time. Just as a real experience of salvation allows God's children to enjoy peace, those who are devoid of that experience and fight truth have torment. That is why they do not want to be in the church services. That is why they do not want to hear the preaching. The same Word that produces joy for the child of God torments them.

In John 14:27 Jesus said, "Peace I leave with you, my peace [a divine peace] I give unto you: not as the world giveth." The only peace the world knows about is the absence of trouble. However, Jesus' peace works right in the middle of trouble. Philippians 4:7 tells us, "And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

How will "the devil" (the dragon) be "tormented day and night"? Malachi 4:1 says, "For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch." What is going to "burn them up"? Verse 2 reads, "But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise." The "Sun of righteousness," Jesus Christ, is the Word of God. That Word burns up the works of darkness and the workers of darkness. Some people make the expression, "Well, you can go anywhere, but don't go to the Church of God." That is because they

get "tormented." Many times the remark has been made, "That preacher just burns me up!" This is how the "fire" works during time, and there is a progression of it as it intensifies.

In 1 Corinthians 3:11-15, Paul said: "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones [these will take the fire], wood, hay, stubble [these will not]; Every man's work shall be made manifest: [How? Titus 1:3 tells us the Lord has 'manifested his word through preaching.' This is what tries man's works.] for the day [the Gospel Day] shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire."

The fire of God's Word is what tries people's works. It will reveal what they are building their life out of, what they are building their experience out of, and of what they are building their organization. It will show whether it is built out of the Word of God, precious things like gold and silver, or out of something that will not stand up, like wood and hay. This "fire" is put on "man's work" during "the day," the Gospel Day, while time is still standing!

Let us consider Jesus' words in the second of the seven prophetic parables, which correlate with the seven periods of the Gospel Day. The Parable of the Tares depicts the morning-time apostasy. Jesus said in Matthew 13:24-25: "The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: But while men slept [the apostasy], his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat." Verses 28-30 read: "He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn."

Notice that it was not time to separate the tares in that period (A.D. 270-530). They were to grow together with the wheat "until the harvest." When did the "harvest" begin? Revelation 14:15 tells us, "And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe." That commenced in A.D. 1880; thus, "the harvest" is the evening time.

Jesus explained the Parable of the Tares later in the chapter. Matthew 13:41-42 says: "The Son of man [Jesus Christ] shall send forth his angels [the ministry], and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and

them which do iniquity; And shall cast them into a furnace of fire." The "furnace of fire" does the separating. That same expression is used in the seventh-and-final parable, corresponding with our day (Matthew 13:50). What is the furnace of fire? Isaiah 31:9 tells us the Lord's "fire is in Zion, and his furnace in Jerusalem."

The fire is God's Word (Jeremiah 23:29). Deuteronomy 33:2-3 states: "And he said, The LORD came from Sinai ... from his right hand went a fiery law for them. Yea, he loved the people; all his saints are in thy hand: and they sat down at thy feet; every one shall receive of thy words." The "fiery law" is God's words. Psalm 18:8 says, "There went up a smoke out of his nostrils, and fire out of his mouth devoured." Verse 13 reads, "The LORD also thundered in the heavens, and the Highest gave his voice; hail stones and coals of fire."

Someone may say, "Well, the furnace of fire and the lake of fire are not the same thing." That is correct, as far as the comparison between a furnace and a lake is concerned. However, as the furnace increases and expands during the seventh seal, it will become a "lake." Notice with what the word *lake* is associated in Luke 5:1, which says, "And it came to pass, that, as the people pressed upon him to hear the word of God, he stood by the lake of Gennesaret." It is associated with the Word of God. Next, Luke 8:33 tells us, "Then went the devils out of the man, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the lake, and were choked." So, those possessed with evil spirits went into the lake.

Jesus told of the conditions preceding the end. He let us know it will be "as it was in the days of Lot" (Luke 17:28). Luke 17:29 says, "But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all." Notice that verse 28 says "days," which is plural, but Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed in *one* day. What happened in the "days of Lot"? Genesis 19:24 tells us, "Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven." Verse 28 says, "And he [Abraham] looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain, and beheld, and, lo, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace." The "fire and brimstone" is associated with the "smoke of a furnace."

What occurred after the fire and brimstone descended on Sodom? Genesis 14:3 describes "the vale of Siddim, which is the salt sea." This is referring to the Dead Sea. Moses wrote Genesis years after it happened. He was writing about a location known as the Valley of Siddim, but after the "brimstone and fire" fell on Sodom and it quit smoking as "a furnace," it became the location of the Dead Sea. Scholars tell us the Dead Sea is not really a sea; it is a landlocked lake. So, we have gone from a furnace to a lake. When Jesus said, "in the days of Lot,"

that reveals to us it will start as a "furnace of fire," but it will intensify and become a "lake of fire."

During time, the "furnace of fire" and the "lake of fire" are the same. The "fire" represents the Word. Our text in Revelation 20:10 lets us know they were "tormented." Does the Word, or the "fire," torment? Matthew 8:28-29 tells us: "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?" The presence of Christ (who is the Word) is a torment to people possessed with devilish spirits.

Remember what motivates "the devil," or the dragon, in our text. Revelation 16:13-14 says: "And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon [paganism], and out of the mouth of the beast [papalism], and out of the mouth of the false prophet [Protestantism]. For they are the spirits of devils." Devilish spirits motivate those systems. People who possess those spirits are tormented by the Word, or by the presence of Christ.

When sinners come to the Church of God, they may get uncomfortable, they may get under conviction, they may hang their head, and they may grab the pew until their knuckles turn white, but they will not normally fight you. However, those who have a religious spirit, a devilish spirit, will get hateful, they will get nasty, and they will get mad. They will run their mouths all over the country because the Word torments them; it burns them up.

What does "brimstone" represent in our Scripture text? It is also commonly associated with Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19:24). The Hebrew word for "brimstone" is *gophriyth*, which comes from a root word meaning "resin." *Webster's New World Dictionary* defines *resin* as "an organic substance." So, it represents a physical representation of God's judgment. What or who in the New Testament is a physical representation of God's judgment? First Corinthians 6:2 states, "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?" Saints are a physical, organic manifestation of God's judgment when they hear the truth, put it on, and live it out. That puts judgment on other people; it makes them uncomfortable, and it works conviction.

What is the picture being portrayed in our text? As the battle (Revelation 20:8) intensifies (we have not yet reached that point), God is going to send a fiery message that will reveal where the true prophets of God are. "The beloved city" will then be seen more clearly. The "fire" (the message) and the "brimstone" (the saints who embrace and live the message) will cause the powers of falsity to be burned up. Then truth will shine in a more glorious manner, and

those who are deceived will be "tormented day and night," while time stands.

Was there any "fire and brimstone" in Stephen? Those who possessed a religious spirit were tormented by him, and he just gave them a light dose. Acts 6:15 says, "And all that sat in the council, looking stedfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel." Then he preached. Afterward, Acts 7:57 tells us, "Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord." They were being "tormented"; the preaching was burning them up.

The Realm of Eternity

The "brimstone and fire" in Genesis, Chapter 19, went from the realm of the seen to the unseen, from the realm of time to eternity. Genesis 19:24-25 tells us: "Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven; And he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground." That was visible, but it is still burning. Jude 7 states, "Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering [present and continual] the vengeance of eternal fire." They are still suffering. For that verse, *The Emphatic Greek Diaglott* interlinear says "are undergoing the vengeance of eternal fire."

The "lake of fire" in our text is going to go from the realm of the seen into the realm of the unseen. The last words of Revelation 20:10 are "for ever and ever." Verses 14-15 reveal the final and eternal separation. Jesus spoke of this aspect of "the lake of fire." He said in Mark 9:43-48: "And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."

Notice five times in six verses Jesus said "the fire that never shall be quenched" or "the fire is not quenched." This denotes the eternal fire after the Resurrection. We know that because Jesus spoke of "hands," "feet," and "eyes" being cast into "hell fire." The Greek word for "hell" in those verses is *Gehenna*. It is also used in Matthew 18:9. In verse 8, Jesus spoke of "everlasting fire."

That is the fire that is not quenched; that is hell (*Gehenna*). Some may question that "fire" is the Word during time, but it will be literal in eternity. Again, that is because prophecy has two fulfillments: spiritual and literal. The literal fire will still be a product of the Word. Second Peter 3:7 tells us that "the heavens and the earth ... are kept in store" by the "word," and the same will produce "fire" in "the day of judgment."

We can see the position and the perdition of false religion in our text. As the pressure intensifies in the midst of the final battle, and the saints are pushed together (Deuteronomy 33:17), it will affect a greater unity. It will produce "the lake of fire and brimstone" that will torment false religion. Finally, the "fire" on their position will turn into the fire of perdition. When God says, "It is enough," the same Word of God holding the heavens and the earth in place is going to turn loose the supernatural fire that has been reserved.

Let us consider the eternal side of the "lake of fire" spoken of in our text. The supernatural "fire" in our text is very similar to the fire portrayed in Exodus 3:2, which states, "And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed." A fire that does not consume is a supernatural fire. Likewise, the "lake of fire" in our text does not consume, but it torments.

There are many aspects to the torment of the "lake of fire." When Jesus uncapped eternity and let us look into Hades, one thing He brought up is what Abraham said to the rich man. In Luke 16:25 Abraham said, "Son, remember ...." That is part of the worm that "dieth not," the gnawing memory. Those in a lost eternity will remember the Word of God, remember the message, and remember their many opportunities. That will add to their torments.

In order for the truth of God's Word not to be a torment to us here or in the eternal realm, we need to make certain our name is "found written in the book of life" (Revelation 20:15). If we have become partakers of God's divine nature, truth is not a torment to us. Jeremiah 15:16 says, "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart." God's Word only burns those who are proud and those who do wickedly (Malachi 4:1). Thank God, those who follow truth, God will vindicate, because truth will be vindicated in the end.

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What Is Man?

The question posed by David, "What is man?" (Psalm 8:4) is a question the minds of men have mused upon since time immemorial and entertain yet today. The burden of this book is to thoroughly provide Biblical exposition concerning the truths on this subject. It is our prayer that the Lord will use this book to Biblically address questions such as:

Why is man?
Why did God create man?
What is man's composition?
What happens to man after death?

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Brother Borders counts it a great privilege to have sat under—and labored alongside—the ministries of Pastor Emerson A. Wilson and Pastor Roger L. Decker, of The Church of God, God's Acres, Newark, Ohio. He feels a tremendous debt of gratitude to these brethren.

Brother Borders is married to his wife of fifty-one years, Sandra, who has faithfully labored with him in the ministry. They have five children, twenty grandchildren, and five great-grandchildren.